

Granville Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes - Public Hearing for the First Net Cell Tower - December 17, 2020 via Zoom Meeting ID#83893368099

APPROVED

In attendance: Bruce Hyde, Chair, Jennifer Page and James Dague; Selectboard, Rachel Grigorian and Stephanie Walker; Planning Commission, Marilyn Dougherty, Website Manager, Diane & Mike Eramo; Property Owners, Judith Wood, James Bailey, Jeff Glassen, Will Dodge; Downs Rachlin & Martin, Jennelle Smith; AT&T Project Manager, Shawn Dougherty, Siobhan Neil, Don Hayes; Centerline Communications Radio Frequency Engineer, Eric Guzman; Public Service Board, Terry LaValley; Department of Public Safety, Kevin Geiger; Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission, as well as many unidentified individuals and Cheryl L. Sargeant, Clerk

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m. with Bruce reading a paragraph regarding holding public meetings using video conferencing as recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT).

Public Communication and Comments:

- Jeff asked that when people spoke to disclose if they would financially gain by the project being approved. Bruce agreed with that request. Judy asked how those on their computers would be allowed to ask questions. Jim explained that the computer would have to be set so everyone could see you. Bruce then turned the meeting over to Will.

Will explained that the project is in the 248A Advance Notification Stage and is proposed to be located on the Mike and Diane Eramo property on North Hollow Road. There is no application currently pending with the State of Vermont Public Service Board. He then described how AT&T and First Net joined forces to install the cell towers around the United States.

The proposed site would have a 180 foot monopole tower, on a half acre clearing with a 2,700 foot long road way with underground electric and telephone along an existing logging road. This would allow coverage in the Granville Gulf and points north and would be the last cell tower installed in Granville. There are plans for a First Net Cell Tower at the Middlebury Snowbowl on VT Route 125 in Middlebury.

Aesthetics concerns; he projects that 22.1 acres of lost space which is difficult to see from North Hollow Road and VT Route 100. Balloons not seen in the Gulf, but can see from Post Office Hill Road and at locations along North Hollow Road.

Don spoke of the concerns regarding radiation which is in his report beginning on page 11. He went on to say he works for Centerline Communications and per FCC regulations are the lowest allowed and your handheld devices are 20% higher than the cell tower emissions.

Will then explained that the Town can make recommendations to the Public Service Board and they also understand that a 30 day public comment time extension is being requested and would wait until that passes before submitting their application.

Bruce the current cell tower was upgraded and lost signal strength. Don explained that is caused by the handheld device defaulting to another frequency. Are there other sites planned in Granville and the thoughts of the Public Service Board? No we look for existing roads and less of an impact on the environment and wildlife.

Jim there are individuals in the Chat Room can you follow that discussion? No

Eric this is in the early stages of the process and therefore we have no comment at this time and I am only listening to the Town and public comments for future reference.

Stephanie inquired about the number and types of trees to be cut, wetlands and beaver impact, type of generator and how often serviced and lastly why 300 people would need 2 towers. Terry explained that this First Net Cell Tower is very important and would tie into the other towers around the state to improve EMS coverage.

Judy opposed to the tower and pictures taken failed to show the tower is actually in your face on North Hollow Road and Post Office Hill Road. Jim asked if Kevin Geiger from Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission was on the call. Kevin explained that they were concerned with forest blocks and they need to show cuts and road improvements. Will asked if it would be better gated and to show bear and deer habitat. Kevin agreed that it would be best gated.

Jeff asked about reduced land values for those surrounding property. Eric, Public Service Board is not concerned with land values. Will AT&T covers the landowners increased value and property taxes.

Kim is concerned with the amount of increased truck traffic and the number of times trucks would go into the compound. Will it is a 6 to 8 week construction period with trucks, a crane and then once a month thereafter with a pickup truck.

Judy can you please verify that First Net is on the current tower. Will it is and even if you made the current tower taller it would not improve the coverage in the Gulf.

Mike explained that they were not doing this just for better cell service but for EMS and 911 coverage improvements.

Rachel is not in the view shed and considering how it will do in emergency situations. Would like to hear from other towns, EMS if First Net would help them. Will explained that they would not be here if it were not for First Net funding. Terry indicated that towers have been installed along VT Route 114 in the Northeast Kingdom and they have helped them improve communications.

Judy asked if James Bailey was present and he was. He owns the easement and is not sure how he feels about the project and needs more information.

Shawn during the balloon test it was a foggy day so we went up West Hill by Patterson Brook. Once the fog lifted you could see the balloon clearly and wondered how campers would like being able to see a cell tower in the woods. Bruce incidented that they only took pictures from a mile radius. Will will look back through photographs and will take under advisement.

Jennifer if driving VT Route 100 can someone with Verizon or Sprint be able to call 911. Will not sure. Judy we would like a firmer answer.

Jennifer can you explain colocation? Will antennas 10 feet apart on the tower. The tower will interconnect with the one on Butz Road we just need to show the tower can colocate.

Cheryl just wanted it to be known that they have tried to get Verizon to colocate on the Butz Road tower but have yet to hear anything.

Marilyn asked if they could still pursue if there is a deed issue. Will that is beyond this stage and not an issue.

Bruce the Selectboard will be asking for a 30 day extension and another hearing will be scheduled.

Will we appreciate everyone's opinions even though we do not agree. Thank you everyone.

Bruce thank you everyone for attending and glad there are so many involved.

Public Comment

Will discuss at our January meeting and schedule another public hearing.

Bruce made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. And Jennifer seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl L. Sargeant
Selectboard Clerk