



**Stratham Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2017
Municipal Center, Hutton Room
10 Bunker Hill Avenue
Time: 7:00 PM**

Members Present: Mike Houghton, Chairman
Jameson Paine, Member
Tom House, Member
Nancy Ober, Alternate

Members Absent: David Canada, Selectmen's Representative
Bob Baskerville, Vice Chairman
Lee Paladino, Alternate

ZBA Board Members Present: Arol Charbonneau, Chairman
Garrett Dolan, Vice Chairman
Deidre Lawrence, Full Member
Phil Caparso, Full Member
Chris Brett, Full Member

Members Absent: Bruno Federico, Selectman's Representative
Chris Cavarretta, Alternate

Staff Present: Tavis Austin, Town Planner

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Chairman took roll call and asked Ms. Ober to be a full voting member in place of Mr. Baskerville. The Chairman stated for the record that Lee Paladino had recused herself for tonight's presentation.

The ZBA Chairman took roll call.

2. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. December 21, 2016

Mr. House made a motion to approve the December 21, 2016 minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Paine. Motion carried unanimously.

1 **3. Joint Public Hearing Planning Board/ZBA**

2 **a. Verizon Wireless, represented by McLane Law Firm, 900 Elm Street, Manchester, NH 03101**
3 **for the property located at 57 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 9 Lot 006.** Conditional Use Permit
4 application, Site Plan Review Application, and Special Exception Permit application pursuant to
5 Sections 19.4.2 and 19.7 of the Stratham Zoning Ordinance to construct a 150' tall monopole wireless
6 service facility, associated antennas and cabling, and installation of ground based telecommunications
7 equipment and fencing.

8 Chip Fredette, Verizon Wireless said at the end of the previous meeting they were tasked to do several
9 things: the site plan should be amended to show the tower at 130' rather than 150', they were asked to
10 consult with a landscape architect, and to perform a balloon test. He said he had the results of the
11 balloon test with him in the form of a presentation. In addition he thought it would be helpful to
12 assemble a slideshow of the commercial area bordering the proposed cell tower site. He said that
13 despite those commercial structures being on view every day, they have probably dropped into the
14 background for most people which he believes will be the same for the cell tower too.

15 Mr. Fredette talked through the balloon simulation slides next which depicted various views of the
16 proposed tower site. He described the tower; 130' tall, made of galvanized steel with an antenna array
17 at the top. He likened it to the Varsity Wireless tower on the north side of Stratham except the Varsity
18 Wireless tower is taller at 170'.

19 Mr. House confirmed that potentially in the future Verizon could have 5 more ports on the tower. Mr.
20 Fredette said probably not 5, but maybe 3 additional.

21 Mr. Fredette addressed the amended site plan next. He referred to sheet Z4 to highlight the changes
22 in the tower's height and plantings along the edges of the compound. He commented that they did
23 contact a local Landscape Architect, but they wanted \$9,925.00 which seemed like a lot. There are
24 only 2 places where plantings can be situated so they took the proposed plantings for the previous
25 application and chose to use the same types of trees here; Arbor Vitae and Colorado Spruce.

26 Mr. Paine said based on the plan, it shows that the proposed Verizon Wireless lease area is inside
27 which does not include the trees; he asked if Verizon would maintain the trees? Mr. Fredette said that
28 they would be and he would be talking to Mr. Karl Scamman about that.

29 Mr. Fredette said Mr. Keith Vallente was there to address any questions regarding radio frequency.

30 Mr. Houghton opened the floor up for public comments.

31 Mr. Brad Jones, Winnicutt Road said if this tower is approved for 130' is it true they can build it a
32 certain percentage higher legally without any approval. Mr. Houghton said he believed that the
33 regulations provide for that or the Board could place a condition on the approval. Mr. Jones continued
34 that the pictures seemed to be slanted to make the tower look a little bit higher than the telephone
35 poles.

36 Mr. Fredette assured everybody the photos were not rigged.

37 Mr. House guessed that the pole was about 200' from the street Mr. Fredette said he needed a scale to
38 confirm that.

39 Mr. Jones said this is one of the very worse places in the town to locate the tower. In his opinion this
40 will ruin the view shed and he finds that very sad.

41 Mr. House asked how tall the arbor vitae would be. Mr. Fredette replied that on average they start
42 with 5'– 7'. Mr. House inquired if this was to hide the fence which is taller than 5' – 7'. Mr. Fredette
43 said it is to disguise the compound or make it look nicer. Regardless of the height, it will still look
44 nicer if the arbor vitae aren't as tall as the fence. However, they would be willing to plant a different
45 type if the Board wished.

1 Mr. Charbonneau asked how often it would be serviced. Mr. Fredette said once a month.

2 Mr. Jeremy Riecks, Doe Run Lane said at the previous meeting there was talk about getting a third
3 party RF report paid for by the applicant. He asked if the Board has received a report yet. Mr.
4 Houghton said that report hasn't come back to the Town yet, but it is due on January 6, 2017. Mr.
5 Riecks said he had sent a link to staff about small cells to increase coverage in areas that are not
6 covered. He said they are doing it in Haverhill, MA and if they can do it there, he feels they could do
7 it in Stratham. It will be interesting to see if the RF engineer comes back with any changes to any of
8 the existing poles that Verizon or other co locators may have. He knows that Verizon has an antenna
9 over on Continental Drive that is 170', but their antenna candelabra is not at a 170' level; there's one
10 more above it. He finds it ugly and he has heard the generator so he has a concern with the location
11 of the generator and its exhaust in that compound. Mr. Riecks said he knows the applicant keeps
12 shaking his head over the idea of using small cells instead, but until it can be empirically proven that
13 it can't be done, Mr. Riecks feels it should be considered.

14 Mr. Riecks said there was a picture taken from the 101 overhang where you could see the balloon. He
15 said he was driving that way on the day of the balloon test and you could see it from the stop light at
16 Stratham Heights road. If the trees are cut down in the area by Market Basket, there will be a straight
17 view from the 101 all the way up.

18 Mr. Riecks said in one of the photos a telephone pole can be seen with a utility light that illuminates
19 part of the Scamman property. He said will any size or relocation of that pole be necessary to
20 accommodate the cabling that will be needed to serve the back of the antenna and at that point would
21 it be possible for the Town to have some restriction put on that unshielded light on that pole. He
22 agrees with the comments made by Mr. Jones about the location.

23 A resident from Frying Pan Lane said she didn't see the balloon test and feels more people would be
24 at the meeting if the balloon test had been done at a better time of day. Many people work during the
25 day so didn't have the opportunity to see it. She shared that she drives to Vermont regularly and you
26 can't see cell towers there as they are so discreetly placed. She asked if there were any plans to help
27 this tower blend into the environment. Mr. Fredette repeated the arbor vitae would be 5' -7' and
28 observed he doesn't have to do that, but it was a request from the Board. He explained that they had
29 applied to put one on Bunker Hill which would have been a discreet location, but the Town voted it
30 down.

31 Ms. Pat Elwell, Stratham Conservation Commission said that other than the fact that this pole was
32 going to be directly adjacent to the multi-million dollar easement that has been put in on the Scamman
33 Farm so there would be a nice view shed, were there any height restrictions on structures in the
34 commercial zone along this corridor. If so wouldn't it be applicable to this tower. Mr. Houghton said
35 the height restriction under the telecommunications section of the ordinance is 150'.

36 Mr. Stephen Lankler, Gifford Farm Road thanked the applicant for sharing the renderings and said
37 they just reiterated his feelings that this is sad to put the cell tower at this proposed location. He
38 understands they need to improve the coverage, but this one view in this Town is a nugget that the
39 residents can enjoy and now they will have to see this cell tower.

40 Mr, Kyle Hollasch, Gretas Way, off of River Road which would be behind this tower said he enjoys
41 the view shed. There is already a tremendous degree of visual pollution by strip malls and a lot of
42 noise and light pollution so he supports this application. There is a commercial district in the Town
43 and if you are going to put a cell tower up, he feels putting it in what is already a commercial district,
44 is an ideal spot. He said when he wanted to buy his house, one of the things he checked was the
45 coverage and it's terrible. When you think of a generation of young homeowners, they are going to
46 check their coverage. He talked about technology of the future like self-driving cars or the ability to
47 monitor water or soil quality which is not possible without good coverage. He continued that the

1 problem with small cells is that you have to a rather dense back haul structure of fiber optics. Everyone
2 would need a wire that connects to the main cell network.

3 Ms. Alison Knab, Conservation Commission said she knows at the last meeting using Audi as a
4 location instead was discussed which would provide more blending than a wide open field. She thinks
5 to say this is the last spot is disingenuous. Ms. Knab said she understands this application has to run
6 out, but wanted to know about further vetting of other options and asked when that would happen.
7 Mr. Houghton said that it is underway. At the last meeting the Board said they would reach out to a
8 third party reviewer to study the RF report provided by the applicant which would also canvas the area
9 to identify potential suitable alternatives. That report is due on Friday. Mr. Houghton said discussions
10 about other locations should be deferred for now because the facts will be in the Board's possession
11 when they come back for the next meeting which will drive where the discussion goes next. Ms. Knab
12 asked if there is a point where the applicant can compromise. Mr. Fredette said at the last meeting he
13 shared the search ring which are parameters the engineer sets for them which will provide coverage
14 for the gap in the area. Stratham has been pulling coverage from all the sites around it. They have
15 looked at 5 alternative locations as suggested by the Planning Board and had to rule out 4 of them just
16 based on design issues alone. The Audi dealership would work, but he can guarantee that the people
17 who opposed the Bunker Hill site would not be happy. Ms. Knab observed that the difference this
18 time is Audi is private property.

19 Mr. Paine confirmed with the applicant they were only looking for a single tower and not 2 smaller
20 towers or anything to dissipate the visual impacts that may occur. Mr. Fredette said they were only
21 looking for a single tower site.

22 Mr. Fredette addressed the micro cells inquiry and explained it wouldn't work in this situation. He
23 referred to Haverhill, Massachusetts and explained it works there because there are multiple roof top
24 sites which are tall enough to serve the area. Macro goes on roof tops, micro cells go mostly on utility
25 poles. Mr. Riecks asked if the applicant would be using fiber as he has some at his house. He thinks
26 the Town can support another fiber cable.

27 Another resident talked about how if a land line is still plugged in regardless of whether there is an
28 actual phone service, you can still dial 911 so cell phones aren't needed for that.

29 Another resident asked about having multiple shorter towers. Mr. Fredette said they would need to
30 find at least one other site and one of them would be in the heart of Stratham; at least here they are in
31 the commercial zone. The resident asked what the height of the sites were in places like Haverhill.
32 Mr. Fredette said Haverhill has no hills so he doesn't know. He stressed again that Stratham needs
33 the coverage and said they were able to take care of some of the gap in coverage by co-locating on the
34 Varsity Wireless tower. This is the first time Verizon has proposed to build its own tower to provide
35 coverage to Stratham.

36 A resident voiced his concern that this application will go through, millions of dollars were spent for
37 this view. He can't believe this is the only solution for better coverage with the standard of technology
38 today.

39 The Zoning Chair said the public hearing portion for the ZBA should be closed.

40 Mr. Dolan moved to close the public session for Case Number 634 for the special exception for the
41 monopole at 57 Portsmouth Avenue. Motion seconded by Mr. Caparso. Motion carried unanimously.

42 The Board ran through the criteria for a special exception per Section 17.8.2.c

- 43
44 i Standards provided by this Ordinance for the particular use permitted by special
45 exception;

1 Mr. Charbonneau explained the applicant has to meet certain standards under Section
2 19 which is under the purview of the Planning Board.

- 3 ii. No hazard to the public or adjacent property on account of potential fire, explosion, or
4 release of toxic materials;

5 The ZBA agreed they couldn't see any problems with this criteria and Mr.
6 Charbonneau added that they do have to meet certain Federal regulations.

- 7 iii. No detriment to property values in the vicinity or change in the essential characteristics
8 of a residential neighborhood on account of the location or scale of buildings and other
9 structures, parking area, access ways, odor, smoke, gas, dust, or other pollutant, noise,
10 glare, heat, vibration, or unsightly outdoor storage of equipment, vehicles or other
11 materials;

12 The Board agreed there was no detriment to property values and Ms. Lawrence stated
13 that a property value report has been submitted which shows that property values will
14 not be measurably impacted by the cell tower and there hasn't been a counter report.
15 Mr. Charbonneau said there is a residential component to the zone, but the study
16 indicates there is no diminution of value.

- 17 iv. No creation of a traffic safety hazard or a substantial increase in the level of traffic
18 congestion in the vicinity;

19 Mr. Dolan said once it has been completed, the site will only be visited once a month
20 by a technician so he doesn't see any traffic impacts; the rest of the Board agreed.

- 21 v. No excessive demand on municipal services, including, but not limited to, water,
22 sewer, waste disposal, police and fire protection, and schools;

23 Mr. Dolan said it will be a single point facility so there won't be any impact on water, sewer,
24 waste disposal, police and fire protection, and schools. The rest of the Board agreed.

- 25 vi. No significant increase of storm water runoff onto adjacent property or streets.

26 Mr. Dolan said that Planning Board has jurisdiction over the site and they will make sure
27 that the water run-off is compliant with the Town's Zoning Ordinance. All the ZBA
28 members agreed.

29 Ms. Lawrence made a motion in connection with Case Number 634 application that a special
30 exception be granted. Motion seconded by Mr. Caparso. Motion carried unanimously.

31 Mr. Caparso made a motion to accept the minutes of the meeting June 14, 2016. Motion seconded
32 by Mr. Brett. Motion carried unanimously.

33 Mr. Caparso made a motion to close Case Number 634. Motion seconded by Mr. Dolan. Motion
34 carried unanimously.

35 Mr. Houghton said the Board isn't prepared to conclude the Site Plan and Conditional Use Permit
36 applications as they haven't received the third party RF report yet.

37 Mr. House said the plans are showing a diesel generator and asked where the fuel was stored. Mr.
38 Fredette apologized as the plan shows a double walled self-contained diesel generator when it should
39 be shown as a propane generator. Mr. Houghton asked for a cut sheet to be included as part of the
40 plans as well as decibel ratings.

1 Mr. Houghton said there was a question earlier about lighting. Mr. Fredette said it can be shielded
2 downward and have a motion sensor.

3 Mr. Houghton said they were looking at a continuation and asked what would be on the next agenda.
4 Mr. Austin said there is a subdivision application, 2 preliminary subdivision application and 2
5 preliminary cell site location applications. Mr. Fredette said they would prefer January 18, 2017.
6 Mr. Austin offered to contact a couple of the preliminary applicants to see if they would be willing
7 to postpone.

8 Mr. Paine made a motion to continue the Verizon Wireless application until January 18, 2017.
9 Motion seconded by Mr. House. Motion carried unanimously.

10 Mr. Houghton said to Mr. Austin if something could be deferred he recommended it.

11 Mr. House asked if all the Verizon Wireless information could be put on line. Mr. Austin explained
12 that he had just confirmed with the applicant that he will send digital copies of the correct updated
13 site plans and elevations along with all the slides presented today and he will make it all available on
14 the web site.

16 4. Miscellaneous

17 Mr. Austin said he had the Mylar of the approved site plan for 313 Portsmouth Avenue and wanted the
18 Board's input about one of the conditions from the Notice of Decision which states landscaping details
19 should be on the recorded plan. There are some landscaping details on the plan; Mr. Austin said he
20 recalls Mr. Baskerville asking where the landscape details were for the landscaping that will go in front
21 of the stone wall. Mr. Austin asked the Board if a specific landscaping plan needed to be on the
22 recorded Mylar for the areas in front of the stone wall or is the landscape details as submitted on what
23 would become the file version of the approved plan which details the plantings and quantities sufficient.
24 He offered 2 more suggestions: a note could be added to the Mylar referring to the sheet that is on the
25 staff file copy of the site plan or if knowing there is an enforceable landscape plan on the paper copy
26 sufficient.

27 Mr. Houghton said taking the history for this particular site into consideration, he would want the plan
28 that gets recorded to include everything the Planning Board agreed to and required and posed as
29 conditions.

30 Mr. Austin said the sheet on the paper copy of the plan is D1 – the shrub planting detail, the Mylar itself
31 would have to be redrawn or Sheet D1 could be referenced as a note on the plan. Ms. Ober asked if they
32 didn't have it put on the Mylar, where it would be kept and doesn't the possibility of it disappearing
33 exist. Mr. Austin said it would be in a file labelled 313 Portsmouth Avenue in the Planning Office and
34 electronically it would be on the Avatar document management where everything electronically will be
35 stored so it won't disappear, but it will not physically be on Rockingham County's deeds.

36 Mr. Paine said because of the concerns previously stated and with future changes of software, Mylars are
37 computer driven and it could be scaled down and make room to incorporate the landscaping details. He
38 would ask them to redo the Mylar and include the landscaping details. Mr. House agreed.

39 Mr. Paine made a motion to incorporate the landscaping details on the Mylar for recordation. Motion
40 seconded by Mr. House. Motion carried unanimously.

41 5. Adjournment.

42 Mr. House made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm. Motion seconded by Ms. Ober. Motion carried
43 unanimously.