

Heath Planning Board

28 June 2021

Called to Order at 7:01

Recorded

Board Members Present: Doug Mason, Bob Viarengo, Jo Travis, Peter Charow  
Meeting is quorate

Board Consultant: David Maxson

Representatives of Applicant: Ed Pare, Bill Fontes, John Carney (sp?), Jeff Dellcolli, Simon Brighenti, Mike Gentile

Abutters and Residents: Weigands, Tara Mason, Jane McHale, Kevin Maloney, Nina Marshall, Ed Whitaker, Jonathan Mirin

Mr.Pare:

- Provided materials on previous Friday to address the concerns of the abutters
- Facility complies with FCC standards
- Real Estate appraisal assessed potential impact on property values
- Balloon test results showing that the proposed tower would not be visible from homes of abutters
- Letter from Commonwealth of Massachusetts supporting the building of a communication network to provide coverage in rural areas
- Maps showing incremental cellular coverage from tower at different heights
- Requested public comments so AT&T reps can respond to them (Doug noted he would distribute all letters received)
- Revised plans seeking to address wetlands issues raised by Bill Lattrell
- Focus of revision is shift of access road to the southeast to move it away from the streambed and address storm runoff
- Road remains 12 feet wide but not within 200 feet of wetlands
- Viewshed analysis to demonstrate visibility of tower from adjacent properties (43 Knott Road has the greatest visibility)

Review of list of questions from Mr.Gran

1. Primary objective of tower? Not just for Heath residents. Meant to enhance emergency coverage along Route 8A in line with FirstNet program
2. Why 180 feet? This height provides the most coverage in the area. At 140 feet the tower will not provide AT&T the coverage it is seeking and will not provide colocation

opportunities to other carriers. At 180 feet will support 4 additional carriers (Mr. Viarengo noted that the tower company can extend the height by an additional 20 feet at its discretion without seeking approval from the town.)

Mr. Maxson suggested it may be possible to approve the construction of the tower 20 feet shorter than the current proposal with the assumption an additional 20 feet will then be added. Not clear if this approach will stand up to legal review.

Question regarding rights and obligations of the parties to any agreement.

Only agreement is between the tower company and the landowner which is a commercial agreement between the parties and not subject to public review. Otherwise the permitting, construction and maintenance of the tower is governed only by federal and state laws and local bylaws.

Mr. Maloney noted the need to review the findings of the wetlands issues during the growing season.

Mr. Pare noted his desire to get the Conservation Commission comfortable with the revised plan and suggested that the Board continue the open meeting for several more weeks.

Discussion of the size and shape of the access road and the style and placement of the proposed gate.

Mr. Weigand stated that the proposed facility is totally at odds with the character and values of the community and the neighborhood.

Mr. Mason suggested conducting a drone test for the abutters to demonstrate the visibility of the tower at different heights as many abutters were not aware of the original balloon test. Drone test was scheduled for Wednesday July 7 at 6:30 pm (?).

Ms Marshall Requested to be included in any historical review process as a member of the Heath Historical Commission.

Mr. Whitaker suggested that the Board has a responsibility to get external, objective advice on the impact of the proposed tower on the character of the community and property values in Heath.

Mr. Mirin provided a link to an evaluation of such towers on property values. He also asked who is responsible and liable should there be a fire at the facility. Answer is unclear and likely dependent on who is responsible. He further asked if AT&T had received federal grant money to erect the tower as part of the FirstNet program. Answer is probably but no details provided.

Mr. Viarengo moved that the public comment period be extended to July 28 and Mr. Charow seconded. Motion was passed unanimously at 8:41 pm.