

R I C H M O N D S E L E C T B O A R D
R E G U L A R M E E T I N G
M a r c h 2 4 , 2 0 1 4 M I N U T E S

Members Present: Chris Granda; Ashley Lucht; David Sander; Taylor Yeates
 Absent: Bard Hill
 Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Harold Irish; Mary Houle; Caneve Campbell; Diane Prevo; Jim Prevo; Andy Squires; Clint Buxton, Moderator; Jeremy Hoff; Joe Linn; Audrey Linn; Jack Linn; S Gallimore; John Linn; Gunther Hetzel; Art Keppelman; Mark McClusky; Dave and Fran Thomas; Dolores and Fred Carter; Jeff Guilmette; John Hammerslough; Michael Hawkins; Emily and Jon Stebbins; Jacy Schuster; Tracy Rosen; Erik Filkorn; Joan Holman; Gary Holman; Jon Stebbins; Maggie Leuger; Michael Leuger; Stevie Rogers; Laurie Pearce; Rod West; Ann O'Brien, State Representative; Diane Wester; Earl Wester; Ezra Hall; Erik Hemmett; Jackie Washburn; June Heston, and others; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Clint Buxton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Welcome and Introduction of the Issue

Mr. Buxton opened the meeting and read some ground rules, which provided for a presentation from AT&T and questions and answers afterwards. Mr. Buxton would moderate the meeting, and all persons with a question would need to first be recognized. Following the first chance to speak, if there were no others, a second chance to speak would be given.

2. Cell Tower Proposals from AT&T

The representatives from AT&T were: William Dodge, an attorney with Downs Rachlin Martin; Elizabeth Kohler, of Downs Rachlin Martin; Andy Kingman, of AT&T; Ben Caron of Caron Design Associates; Sohail Usmani of AT&T; and Mike Lawton of SAI Communications.

Mr. Dodge and Ms. Kohler presented their proposals, using a computer slide show. There were originally three projects, for 2614 Cochran Road (owned by Houle), 1002 Williams Hill Road (owned by Linn Trust) and 1925 Jericho Road (owned by Peet). The service areas for the tower sites were Cochran Road and I-89 for the Cochran Road site; I-89 and Richmond Village for the Jericho Road site; and Hinesburg Road for the Williams Hill site. During the meeting, AT&T announced that the Williams Hill Road project was being withdrawn due to environmental and siting concerns. Their presentation included coverage maps for all three sites, noting that the coverage gaps in the Williams Hill area would remain but they were interested in finding a site nearby to serve the same area.

Mr. Dodge offered several insights:

- Since 2007, the iPhone has changed the telecommunications industry
- Voice communication was no longer the central goal of coverage; now it was data
- Data needs more signal coverage than does voice
- Wireless communication is taking the place of “wire line” communication for many people
- Project “VIP” was the name of AT&T’s efforts to increase data coverage

- Towers were the backbone of the LTE network, which provides data signal

Ms. Kohler's presentation was more site-specific and included how AT&T addressed the town's plans and zoning regulations. Mr. Dodge explained part of the "248a" process, which was the state regulation section governing telecommunications facilities. This process mandated that telecommunications projects apply to the Vermont Public Service Board instead of the local Development Review Board. The Public Service Board (aka PSB) made the determination of a certificate of Public Good, and could provide a hearing on significant issues related to the project, if those concerns were raised. If there were no significant issues, then the project approvals were expedited by the PSB. This helped meet the Vermont mandate for increased coverage for broadband across the state.

Following the presentations, Mr. Buxton opened the floor for questions.

Audrey Linn of Williams Hill said that AT&T had a "neighborhood" meeting yesterday but only for those opposed to the tower and not anyone pro-tower. She thought tonight was to be a Q&A and the tower wouldn't be shut down before the meeting.

Mr. Dodge replied that there were a lot of different aspects to this issue, not just neighbor concerns, and AT&T did think about the Linns in their decision. The combination of aesthetics, natural resources and converging objectives led to the withdrawal of the application.

Jack Linn said that this meeting yesterday was a noon and he got a call today from Mr. Dodge about the withdrawal. He felt that the Selectboard should be aware that AT&T met with the town in October and the town hasn't expressed any willingness to work with AT&T. This tower was not in Richmond and Richmond shouldn't apply.

A resident from Pinnacle View said his house was 400 yards away from the Jericho Road site and he wasn't happy with a fake tree in front of his home. He was concerned that the other trees may be impacted. Mr. Kingman said he would speak directly to him later.

Mr. Usmani explained the balloon testing

The Manager explained that in the Fall of last year, AT&T met with himself and the Town Planner regarding these proposals. At that time, only the Cochran Road site was identified and the other two were not revealed. However, the town took no position on these towers and did not endorse or object to any project. The proposals tonight were from AT&T and at this time the town had not taken any formal position for or against any of them.

Tracy Rosen said he felt these projects should move quicker. Is there an "app" for identifying areas where coverage needed improvement? You could show a "before and after" representation.

Mr. Kingman said there was no app, but AT&T did have signal coverage maps.

Eric Levowitz read a prepared statement. He worked with AT&T to provide a better location regarding the Cochran Road site. This project was very close to his development (Greystone) and both locations so far were very visible. He wasn't satisfied, however, he was optimistic that a solution could be found. He asked questions about EMF and health concerns. He asked what the long-term potential impact was from multiple antennas, especially on children. He asked if there were any population studies done on 4GLTE signals.

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2 Mike Lawton said that the equipment would comply with FCC regulations. The question was how do
3 FCC regulations affect safety? He couldn't say precisely, but there have been theoretical exposure
4 studies. It is hard to analyze what we don't know, but he noted that signal strength was lower than 1%
5 of the exposure standard at the base of the tower.
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- 7 Mr. Dodge added that he did have some data from the "Burlington Broadcasters" case on this, and he
8 would provide it.
9
- 10 Ezra Hall said that the maximum exposure study assumes a "flat earth" and RF "beams" but the
11 geography here is known and homes are above the elevation of the base, in the line of sight of the
12 "beams." He can't argue health effects without data but asked for a new analysis, saying the former
13 analysis was misleading.
14
- 15 Mike Lawton said that Mr. Hall wants to look at data and he wanted to see analysis on all for carriers
16 with altitudes of homes, etc.
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- 18 Andy Kingman and Mr. Dodge agreed to provide a new analysis.
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- 20 Diane Wester spoke for Amanda Rapp, who was a cellular biologist (and resident of Greystone) who
21 did cancer research. Her home was close to the proposed tower. She said that children's bedroom
22 windows were at the same height as the towers. The PSB was only worried about aesthetics.
23 Greystone neighbors hired their own aesthetics expert, and the town needs to do the same.
24
- 25 Gary Holman didn't know what Richmond did to get all this attention from AT&T to get five new
26 towers in the area with four in Richmond.
27
- 28 Erin Wagg approached the front of the room and stood. She said she could hear better from there.
29 She asked why Richmond was a "pin cushion?" From a distance, the tower would look like a tree, but
30 up close it would not. She made a statement about being close was not blending in. Ms. Wagg spent
31 the remainder of the meeting standing at the front of the room.
32
- 33 Lauren Esserman said she frequented Cochran Road a lot, and the tower would affect views and
34 landscapes she loves the most. She asked if we were over-building?
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- 36 Mr. Dodge spoke about user demand for data and explained the difference between voice signal and
37 data signal. There was a need for more data signal, and more towers. He noted that most of the
38 coverage in Richmond today originates from towers in other towns – outside of Richmond.
39
- 40 Dolores Carter asked where the Right of Way through the Houle property be? Will the Right of Way
41 go through the buyout property? The manager said no, it would not.
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- 43 Ms. Kohler explained a little more about this location, and where the access road would go through.
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- 45 Mr. Carter followed up by asking why would drivers on I-89 need coverage if they couldn't use their
46 devices because of legal restrictions? Mr. Kingman noted there was wireless GPS, music, etc.
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- 48 Ann Cousins asked if any of the towers would support microwave antennas.
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- 50 Mr. Dodge said they had no plans to use microwave, and would instead connect to fiber connections.

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Jeremy Hoff said he appreciated AT&T being open and willing to share their plans and rethink the decision on the Williams Hill tower. His criticism of the process was a lack of due diligence on AT&T's part. He said that the Linns were good neighbors but now there was bad energy. AT&T needed to do more homework before making proposals.

Fran Thomas asked why the Robbins Mountain tower couldn't be used.

Mr. Dodge replied first that AT&T did not own that tower and could not make improvements. Mr. Usmani said that the tower was too far to provide good data range.

Ms. Thomas asked if AT&T could use natural trees and shrubs to screen the Jericho Road tower, instead of a wooden fence.

Mr. Dodge said he wanted to preserve the trees in the area now. There could be a "no cutting" easement, and more landscaping added.

Earl Wester appreciated all of AT&T's work with the neighborhood (Greystone). The original site impacted several homeowners in close proximity. He also wanted to advance the due diligence issue and was willing to consider alternate sites.

Mr. Kingman and Mr. Dodge agreed that some sites were not suitable and were willing to work with the proposed lessor.

Mr. Wester asked about the 850% growth in 10 years projection for data. When he went back to Pennsylvania recently he counted 35 towers on the top of one mountain where he grew up. He knew what we were up against with the State, but maybe other towns should get together with us and file suit to change the law. The state was usurping local laws, and this was the wrong way.

Cheryl Owens spoke about the view of the tower. She said that in a half year they will be forced to look at a fake tree. She has AT&T cell service and hates dropped calls. As a resident and consumer, she wanted responsible placement of cell towers but they must be located a reasonable distance from homes. She disputed that there was no economic impact related to towers. She talked about a recent \$1 million settlement in a VELCO case regarding a tower next to a home. She said if towers were built with no concerns about residents, the residents would sue, or the tower builders could work with the town to find locations suitable and agreeable. She said that if their property values dropped, then tax revenue would drop and everyone else would have to pick up the difference.

A resident from Huntington Road said that "monopine" towers were uglier than regular towers. He would rather see a gray metal tower.

Erin Wagg said that we were in a state that wanted to see technology, but what was our need? Why not just put towers in along the highway?

Ezra Hall said that the location from his house was 300 feet. He thanked AT&T for engaging the neighbors. He said if the town and residents engage on this issue, make sure we don't rush judgment. He proposed an alternate location but the second proposed site was still too close.

There was some additional dialogue, and comment ended.

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3. Adjourn

Mr. Buxton adjourned the meeting at 9:08 pm.