

Town of Northumberland
Planning Board
Location; Town Hall
Accepted by the Planning Board
Monday, July 25, 2022
7:00 pm
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Planning Board Members Present: Melanie Eggleston, Marybeth McGarrahan, Brit Basinger, Lisa Black and Chair Susan Martindale

Members Absent: Jeff King & Holly Rippon – Butler and Vice Chair James Heber

Town Employees Present: Michael Terry Code Enforcement Officer and Tia Kilburn, Clerk

Chair Martindale opened the meeting and addressed all in attendance and asked them to stand and salute the flag at 7:03 pm. Quorum established.

Chair Martindale stated the only item on the agenda was a new business application for MasTec Network Solutions, collocation of a T-Mobile antennae on the new AT & T Cell Tower located at 5 & 7 Blue Heron Ter. , property owners Peter and Linda Marshall, Application #: 0003-22

Kirstie DiBella, Agent for T-Mobile with Aerosmith Development representing the applicant. MasTec is the general contractor for the entire project, T-Mobile is proposing to collocate on the AT & T Tillman tower, she explained they are looking to go at the 2nd centerline which she believes is 177', install 9 antennae, 6 ru's and 3 cables and on the ground, they are looking to do a 10' x 15' lease area which consist of 2 cabinets and electric panel on the concrete pad. On the drawing they have a proposed standby generator, eventually they will do that but T-Mobile nationally they do things a little differently, they break off the generator project into a separate project. She stated they looked at the Verizon tower the mono pole next door and they could get better coverage off the AT & T Tillman tower so that is what they choose to go with.

Chair Martindale reiterated there are two towers existing there now, and they are going to add to one. Ms. DiBella agreed and said adding equipment cabinets on the pad within a fenced in compound on the ground.

Ms. Eggleston asked if AT & T approved this, Ms. DiBella explained they have assigned their rights to the tower out to Tillman Infrastructure so T-Mobile has a lease with Tillman Infrastructure and that is who their lease is with. It is very common within the wireless industry, AT & T will lease land and then assign it to a tower owner, instead of building the tower out right themselves. She explained in this case their landlord is Tillman instead of AT & T, because they are the ones that built the tower for AT & T. Ms. Eggleston stated they did not see that during the review for AT & T, she asked the Board if they recall that. Ms. DiBella said they probably did it after the fact, they probably got it zoned and permitted and then assigned it to Tillman, that is typically the case. AT & T will go upfront and do all the zoning, all the permitting and then package it up and hand it to the company that is actually going to build the tower, all the jurisdictional approvals and they sign it over for the lease and then the tower company goes in and build the structure. They do it that way so the carriers don't own the actual towers they just pay rent on them so they don't have to do the maintenance and up keep on them, they become a tenant instead of a landlord.

Chair Martindale asked because they are adding onto an existing tower what is this Board's review, the Clerk responded that town attorney, Mr. Brennan wanted to make sure the Board was aware of it and it was documented in the file as an approved modification to the site plan, she explained they do not need a public hearing or anything. Mr. Basinger asked if they were adding any height? Ms. DiBella replied no, AT & T will be the first set on the top of the tower at 185', they are like 8' antennas and then there is an 8' to 10' clearance and then T-Mobile will be below, the second set of antennas down on the tower. Mr. Terry interjected it is designed for it, in the site plan there are provisions for 3 additional antennae. Ms. DiBella stated she read the minutes prior to this and that is

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why this tower got approved because the Verizon one isn't tall enough, when other carriers looked at it they couldn't get high enough for coverage they were shooting into the trees.

Ms. Eggleston asked if the town engineer, Mr. Baker needs to look at this? The Clerk replied no, this review is purposely to be documented.

Chair Martindale asked Mr. Terry if he has looked at it and what they are planning to build, Mr. Terry replied yes, and he has been in touch with Mr. Brennan and he said they just come to the Planning Board and no public hearing is needed, because when they built it they made provisions to add another antennae so this is just to give the Board formal notice they are adding and antennae. Chair Martindale reiterated this makes it part of public record by being here this evening.

Chair Martindale stated it is helping the community because they will be able to receive signal from T-Mobile, Ms. DiBella agreed and said Sprint merged with T-Mobile and they still have a Sprint network so it does actually do Sprint and T-Mobile because they have not shut off Sprint yet.

Chair Martindale asked if the antenna that are there are on the same frequency, Ms. DiBella replied no, they all have different license bands that they are on, they do not interfere with each other that is all FCC regulated.

Chair Martindale asked if with the research they have done and because they are not the first antenna up are they still going to get a good range of coverage? Ms. DiBella stated T-Mobiles' main objective was to shoot towards the Northway, and that is the reason the Verizon mono pole wouldn't work because they were to low and shooting into the trees. Chair Martindale reiterated the antenna will be able to reach it, Ms. DiBella agreed.

Chair Martindale stated it was a win, win, she asked if there were any questions, Mr. Basinger reiterated the tower is already approved, the implementation is lower than the height of the tower, sounds good to him. Ms. Eggleston asked how long would it take, when would the construction start? Ms. DiBella replied they would like to start around September, as soon as they can get approval, get the building permit and hand everything off to the contractor, they are hoping to have it on air operating by December of this year. Ms. Eggleston asked if it took three months. Ms. DiBella said no, it takes a couple weeks and then the RF Engineers remotely log in and make sure all the frequencies are valid make sure everything is operating properly, it is usually a six week process from the time they start construction to the end.

Ms. Eggleston questioned the generator at the bottom? Ms. DiBella explained that other carriers that she has worked with do it all at once and for some reason T-Mobile breaks it into two different projects and basically the standby generator is so if the power goes down this stays up and running, it is a self-contained generator unit so if the power goes out the tower is still active and everyone can still get cell phone coverage. Ms. Eggleston asked if there is a generator there now? Ms. DiBella stated she was unsure but she would assume T-Mobile does, Ms. Eggleston stated she does not recall previous reviews containing a generator. Ms. Eggleston asked if they are gas or propane? Ms. DiBella said the ones they use are self-contained diesel units, the diesel tank is on the bottom and the generator itself sits on top that way there is not a separate tank anywhere on the compound it is all on the 4' x 8' pad. Ms. Eggleston asked if that is far enough away from the collapse zone, Ms. DiBella replied yes, they have to follow all the building and electrical regulations, she believes it has to have a 10' clearance from everything and whatever other standards there are on it.

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Ms. Eggleston asked if somebody goes out and maintains it? Ms. DiBella said T-Mobile has a yearly maintenance schedule, someone goes out and does a site audit to make sure everything looks good and then they also have their own maintenance techs that will go onsite and do all the generator service like change the oil and they have test over all the equipment and cabinets to make sure nothing is wrong, no loose wires, nobody has broken into the cabinet and such. Ms. DiBella stated most sites do have battery backup, one cabinet is usually a battery cabinet if the power goes out but that is only so strong and will only last so long.

Chair Martindale asked if there was a motion for this application,

Ms. McGarrahan made a motion to approve the collocation of the T-Mobile antennae on the AT & T cell tower located at 5 & 7 Blue Heron Ter.

Ms. Black 2nd the motion,

All in attendance unanimously agreed.

Chair Martindale asked if there were any additional business for the Board, none was noted.

Ms. McGarrahan made a motion to adjourn at 7:19 pm,

Mr. Basinger 2nd the motion,

All in attendance unanimously agreed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tia Kilburn

Planning Board Clerk