

Town of Florida Select Board
Public Hearing Meeting
Florida Town Hall
379 Mohawk Trail
Drury, MA 01343

November 17, 2022

6:01 pm meeting called to order by Neil Oleson.

Select Board members present: Neil Oleson, Mike Bedini, Terry I. Green

Select board members absent: none

Others present: Jill Hurley, Ron Hurley, Hilary Garivaltis, Roger Randall, Sean Sambucci, Kip Divito, Ron Bosley, Seth Bean, Tim Zelazo, Mark Carradi, Suzie Oleson, Zachary Sambucci, Vicki Winchell, Charlie Bohl, Carlo Pellegrini Timothy Bartlett, Janet Bartlett, Lawrence Cote, Lori Cote, Joan Lewis, Carl Gehring, Danielle Sabourin

PUBLIC HEARING MEETING

6:01 pm meeting called to order by Neil Oleson

Neil Oleson opened the meeting by reading the Public Hearing Notice.

Carl Gehring of Verizon presented the cell tower information. Carl clarified this is a special permit requiring a unanimous vote of the selectboard under MGL. and explained the reason for the address and change as the lot was recently subdivided. He presented pictures for viewing for the public as well as explained the reason for the location choice of the cell tower and how it meets the requirements of the town bylaws. He reviewed the FCC licensing information. The pole they would like to place on the property is planned to be a 145' monopole that is a sleeker design and will be suitable for co-application if others come on board. This is the perfect location to connect the west and the southeast and addresses a large lacking in service in the area. Carl explained the harmful radio frequency emissions under environmental law showing Verizon complies with the law showing they will emit .77%, which is less than 1% of the limit. If the pole was fully loaded it would go up to 3.59% meaning you could have 25 fully loaded monopoles on this site and still be complying with the law, showing how low power and how much of a non-issue the pole is. Verizon is still broadcasting on the same frequency even though there are all the "g's". The difference is the equipment has a different language and is high tech. Pole would not need to have a light. The pole itself does not give off any noise. There will be two equipment cabins. One would have a fan that may kick on during the summer months for cooling. The only source of noise would be a back up generator if the power were to go out making it sound compliant. Carl addressed home market value concerns having a tower close as well as public safety issues. Pictures of the balloon float showed it could be seen from some areas and not from others. Carl completed his presentation showing Verizon has met all town by law requirements to build this tower on the property.

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The meeting was opened to the public for questions.

Tim Barlett, 40 Moores Road, asked how many Kilowatts the backup generator is. Carl responded 30 kw. Tim also shared his health concerns and unknown future health effects of having a cell tower close to his property.

Ron Hurley, Moores Road, expressed concerns for property values and health as he hopes his children will one day take over his home. Ron was able to see the balloon float from his property and questioned the distance from the pole to his property at 31 Moores Road. Carl responded they are over 450 feet away which was compliant. Ron felt it was supposed to be meters.

Jill Hurley, Moores Road, expressed concerns for health issues and noise. Does not want to see a tower from her yard. Jill questioned the effects on nature as well.

Carlo Pellagrini, 1 and 3 Moores Road, questioned how far the tower was from his property ,the trees regarding coverage and what guarantee there is they will not put 99 other carriers on the pole. Carl responded the trees have no effect on frequency as the pole is above the trees. There are only 3 other carriers right now and the by law requires the pole to hold 4 total (Verizon plus 3) and the property at 1 and 3 Moores Road is 600 feet to the lot line. Carlo then discussed his research showing property values fell 7% but past 1500 feet is no issue and asked if they can push it back past 1500 feet. Carl explained this is their spot on that property. Carlo asked what 500' difference it would make. Neil responded they're discussing this property and location on it. If it got denied then they would have to think about what they would want to do then. Carlo added he is personally not opposed to a tower going in because he could use the service. No research he found showed there is no definitive cause of cancer but everyone finds different research.

Hillary Garivaltis of 20 Moores Road asked what the needs assessment was for this? If it is just for Verizon customers and why is it needed? She feels her ATT service coverage is good and questions why put another thing up in a neighborhood that is deeply affected by technology. She also questions 5G and the limited data out there around it. Carl clarified it is the one tower they are proposing to connect the other areas.

Zach Sambucchi, Mt. Anthony Road, questioned the by laws as well as the use of an existing structure. He discussed another tower and its use. The audience responded it is not a public tower and is used for the windmills only.

Charlie Bohl, South Street, shared he has been living about 300 yards from a cell tower for the last 22 years as well as working as an installation technician for the last 15 years, working with 900 megahertz up to 60 gigahertz with no health effects to himself or his family. He has not seen any problems working in the business for over 15 years.

Joan Lewis, South Street, urged residents to accept technology as it can save lives.

Neil Oleson, South County Road, shared he can see a tower and gets one bar. Suzie Oleson added their daughter has no service as well and has to run outside to get ATT to use her cell phone if there is an emergency.

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Cindy Bosley, Whitcomb Hill, commented others have said switch to ATT. Cindy cannot get ATT at her house and also has bad landline service as so many do. She is hopeful this pole will allow better service in her area. People need this who are desperate for good phone services and in emergencies you're running from neighbor to neighbor to find phone service. People need this and anytime coverage can be expanded in town the better.

Janet Barlett, 40 Moores Road discussed how Verizon's reputation is in town regarding service and landlines. If they cannot maintain landline service how can they be trusted with this? Janet also questioned fiber optics.

Tim Bartlett, 40 Moores Road discussed fiber and it's suitability for telephones. Carl responded yes, they will connect to that fiber for that site. Cindy Bosley responded the trouble with fiber is it is not going to help you in an emergency in the middle of the woods or if you get in a car accident if you do not have cell service. Fiber is not the same as having cell service.

Mike Bedini, North County Road, questioned building the tower to hold 4 different companies. Carl responded it is being built that way because that is what the town bylaws require. They are planning to put their gear on there and have no proposals for others to join. Neil clarified that is the bylaw and at a later date if accompany wants to Verizon can add them. Carl clarified there is a coverage gap and that is why they want to build this. The town cannot discriminate against carriers and Verizon has met the bylaws.

Tim Zelazo, 55 Monroe Road, asked if Florida's bylaw was more restrictive than other towns. Carl responded all the town bylaws are different and they followed the rules. Compared to some towns, yes. Tim also questioned 5G distance. Carl clarified he cannot get into a health discussion but added Verizon's 5G uses the same frequency that was used for 2, 3 and 4G, it's just a different way of talking through the radio.

Charlie Bohl, South St, asked who would be allowed on the pole? Carl responded they have to be FCC licensee.

Terry Green polled the audience to see how many are abutters. Of the 16 notices mailed to abutters and 8 towns, 10 of the audience members present were abutters.

Jill Hurley, Moores Road, questioned how far from 31 Moores Road it would be. She questioned direct exposure, as well as noise, property values and esthetics. Carl addressed the noise question. There is no noise unless there is a power failure and the generator comes on and would not be heard over their own generator. Jill feels strongly it will give off something and there could be health issue down the road. Charlie Bohl responded he recently sold his house above market value.

Larry Cote, 14 Moores Road, asked how many decibels the emergency backup generator put out? Carl responded it was a standard generator and depends how far away you are. Larry felt a ground level generator surrounded by trees will not be heard.

Mark Carraddi spoke on behalf of Verizon regarding real estate values. There are many buyers who do not have a problem living near a cell tower and will buy homes and the buyers are the market makers. This property is on 45 acres and the tower has a low visual impact.

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Kip Divito, Radio Frequency Engineer on behalf of Verizon discussed the need for this site and confirmed there is a significant coverage gap.

Zach Sambucci, Mt. Anthony Road, asked how does ATT have better coverage? The reply was height matters so if they are higher they will propagate better.

Terry Green, South County Road questioned if this would help River Road, Whitcomb Hill Road, Tunnel areas. Carl showed a map of areas it would help.

Ron Bosley, Whitcomb Hill Road, commented they have followed the bylaws and questioned if it goes through what is the time frame for construction? Carl could not speak on behalf of construction.

Sean Zambucci, Mt. Anthony Road, asked what the terms of the agreement are. Is it a land lease? If property sells does the next owner inherit? Carl responded they have a land lease with an easement for a 5 yr term with options for additional terms.

Discussions took place how the land owner would build on the property if she chose too.

Ron Hurley, Moores Road, questioned how long it will take to build. Carl responded 6 weeks to a couple months. It would be like building a house, there'd be some noise then it is done.

Zach Sambucci, Mt. Anthony Rd, questioned if there was any effort to hide the tower as suggested in the bylaws to minimize the visual impact. Carl responded the bylaws say try to minimize if possible. There is nothing that can be done to hide it but they have lowered it 50' from a previous company's proposal. It is surrounded by woods and is a sleek, straight monopole.

Terry Green asked how many people present do not want the tower for any reason. 3 raised their hands.

Neil asked the other board members opinions. Mike felt they should take it under advisement and speak with the attorneys.

The board agreed to end the public meeting and deliberate at the next selectboard meeting on December 7, 2022.

Terry I. Green made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 8:02 pm. Mike Bedini seconded. Unanimous.

Neil Oleson, Chair

Michael Bedini

Terry I. Green

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