

MINUTES
Hamilton Historic District Commission
March 9, 2017

Members Present: Tom Catalano, Chair, Stefanie Serafini, Edwin Howard , George Connolly, and Jack Hauck.

Staff Present: Dorr Fox

Tom Catalano opened the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

MINUTES

Jack Hauck requested modifications to the minutes of the November 3, 2016 meeting. Ed Howard made a motion to approve the minutes with Mr. Hauck's modifications. Stefanie Serafini seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

PROPOSED CELL TOWER – 577 BAY ROAD

Francis Parisi, representing Varsity Wireless, reviewed the history of the project. He explained that the Town of Hamilton issued an RFP to build a cell tower behind Town Hall or the Public Safety Building. Varsity Wireless was the successful bidder. Town Meeting has approved their lease. His company is filing a special permit application to the Planning Board next week. The tower will be 109 feet in height. They will be putting up a balloon on April 8th in the morning to demonstrate the height and visibility of the tower. If the weather is poor, they will move the balloon test to April 9th. They will then take photographs to show the visibility of the tower from various locations near the cell tower. He will present the findings to the Planning Board on April 18th. He would like them to give them locations to take the photos from.

Mr. Howard inquired why they were not looking to locate the tower at the old landfill site. Mr. Parisi stated that the Town had given them only two sites for the tower. These sites included the DPW Yard at Town Hall or the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Catalano stated that he would like to know the height of the steeple of the First Congregational Church, the highest building in the district. He stated that he would like to see a photo from the edge of the district that included both the steeple and the proposed tower.

Mr. Parisi stated that in order to construct the tower, they need to go through the NEPA review process. This federal review process requires they provide information on the impact to historic resources. While the Massachusetts Historic Commission will complete the review, they are looking towards the local historic district commission for comments. There was a discussion on the review process.

Mr. Catalano explained that they will be giving comments regarding the impacts to the district.

Mr. Catalano inquired about the construction of the tower, and whether it would be a monopole. He inquired how many arrays the tower would have. Mr. Parisi stated the state would like them to build a tower that could accommodate multiple carriers. Mr. Catalano would like them to show photos of a tower that had the most number of anticipated arrays to see the maximum impact of the tower.

Steve Homer, an abutter, inquired whether they could do a crane test instead of the balloon test, noting that it may be more accurate to determine the height. A balloon can move with the wind. There was a discussion regarding whether a crane test was better than a balloon test. Mr. Parisi stated that they are very careful to take pictures when the balloon is at the correct height. It was noted that it is not always easy to move a crane to the site.

Mr. Howard inquired whether there would be guy wires for the tower. Mr. Parisi stated that there would be no guy wires. Mr. Howard stated that he believes there is a wetland on the site. Mr. Parisi stated that he believes that they will not require Conservation Commission review.

Mr. Parisi stated that his primary interest at this time is for the Historic District Commission to give him locations where he can take photographs of the balloon to show the impact on the historic district.

Bill Deery inquired why they would not locate the tower at the dump. He stated that he is running for the Hamilton Planning Board. He is opposed to the tower behind Town Hall. He also noted that he does not believe that a balloon on a wire will accurately demonstrate the visual impact of the tower. Mr. Homer inquired whether the Historic District Commission would be making an impact statement at a public hearing.

Mr. Catalano inquired whether the tower could be placed within the steeple of the First Congregational Church. Mr. Parisi stated that they would not be able to build as high, not be able to locate as many arrays and it would be an engineering nightmare.

Mr. Hauck inquired how the tower would impact the proposed expansion of the Town Hall. He also inquired whether the driveway around Town Hall is considered a public way. Mr. Catalano stated that he would look into this question with Town Counsel. Mr. Homer inquired whether it was appropriate to locate the tower adjacent to the Town Hall, which is the signature building of the Town, especially considering the impacts to the historic district. He stated that the people who established the district would be dismayed that the district would be impacted by the cell tower. There was a discussion regarding the location of the tower within the historic district. Mr. Parisi reminded them that the Town had originally approached Varsity Wireless. Mr. Hauck stated that the Town Manager and the

Selectmen should be at the meeting since they are the people who want the tower. Mr. Catalano concurred with this comment.

Mr. Homer wanted verification that the Historic District Commission would take a position on the tower. Mr. Catalano stated that the Historic District Commission will take a position on the tower.

Mr. Fox inquired whether they had preliminary locations for photos. Mr. Catalano stated that he believes that there should be photos from both Town Hall driveways. Mr. Parisi inquired whether they would like photos from the cemetery. Mr. Parisi stated that he would take photos from Paddock Lane and Kinsman Lane. Mr. Catalano stated that he would put together a map showing the locations for photos.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.