

**Mount Holly Special Select Board Meeting**  
**October 15, 2019**  
**Minutes**

**Present: Select Board:** Mark Turco (chair), Ron Tarbell, Jennifer Matthews

**Town Officials:** Dan Connor, Susan Covalla, Carol Garrow-Woolley, Diana Garrow, Russ Garrow, David Johnson, Jon McCann, Clinton Woolley

**Members of Public:** Nancy Connor, Jim Corven, Diane Deegan, Dennis Devereux, Francis DeVine, Barbara Hazelton, Steve Hazelton, James Heald, Annette Lynch, Kevin Plew, Patti Plew, Jim Porter, Sandra Predom, Don Richardson, Kelly Tarbell, Linda Tarbell, Ray Tarbell, Amy Turco, Brett Wright

**For AT&T Presentation:** Will Dodge, Esq., Sohail Usimani, Rachel Scott, Greg Terrien

1. **Call to Order** by chair Mark Turco at 7:00 p.m.

All stood for the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

2. **AT&T Presentation on Proposed Cell Tower** (<https://www.mounthollyvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019.10.15.ATT-PPT.Mt.-Holly-3.pdf>) – Will Dodge of Downs Rachlin Martin made the presentation on behalf of AT&T. He began with an overview of the FirstNet project with its origins in 9/11 and the problems first responders encountered on that day in attempting to communicate with each other.

Mr. Dodge showed part of a video on FirstNet, which can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-zyDCSaDug&feature=youtu.be> Mr. Dodge explained the public-private partnership established by FirstNet with AT&T to provide nationwide coverage for first responders. He went on to explain that the proposed project in Mount Holly is part of this public-private partnership focused on first responders and public safety.

Mr. Dodge gave an overview of the facility to be located at 581 Stewart Road South, on property of the Tarbell family. He discussed the terrain and its features, the access road and its relocation from that previously planned when the project was first proposed and approved in 2011 (a new house has been constructed near the original proposed access road). He discussed the design of the 130' monopole with a top tier of nine antennae and the availability of three additional tiers for other providers if interested in the future.

Mr. Dodge explained the coverage that would be provided along VT Route 103, and Healdville, Shunpike, and Old Turnpike Roads as well as ancillary roads connected with those. He reviewed the results of the drive test done on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, going over maps and diagrams of coverage, both current coverage and coverage provided if the facility was constructed.

Mr. Dodge reviewed the environmental impacts, noting as little clearing as possible to be done on an existing path in the woods for the access road with one intermittent stream crossing necessary with an ANR-approved culvert, and no critical habitat disturbed.

Mr. Dodge reviewed the visual impacts of the tower with diagrams, simulations, and photos from the balloon test taken at various locations around town. He also reviewed photos taken from the 2010 "leaf-off" balloon test. Photos of the proposed tower as a monopole and as a monopine were also shown.

Mr. Dodge briefly discussed the Section 248a review process with the request to the Town for its recommendation on the project. He noted the desire to strengthen telecommunications in town cited in both Mount Holly's Town Plan and the Rutland Regional plan. He pointed out the facility had received the support of the Select Board in 2011 with a stated desire to eventually add coverage for VT Route 155 and Belmont. Mr. Dodge closed noting that coverage for those areas may follow using this project as a building block for further coverage.

**3. Question-and-Answer Period** – Dennis Devereux spoke of the legislative history surrounding cell service in the State and the desire expressed to him by so many so often for cell service in town.

Brett Wright showed a number of photos with the monopole photo-shopped in, photos from Fenn Road, Stewart Road North, VT Route 103, and Hortonville Road. He stated that he and a number of the abutters to the project would like to see the tower disguised or camouflaged in some way. Sandra Predom stated that the tower would affect the views of surrounding landowners, and she/they would like to see the tower disguised. Dan Connor echoed this sentiment asking the Select Board to do whatever possible to minimize the visual impact and advocate for a disguised tower.

Jennifer Matthews asked what other options were available to disguise the tower. Mr. Dodge responded that it could be painted brown like one in Perkinsville; blue was tried in South Hero and panned.

Much discussion ensued on the monopine design in Weston with other trees around it and behind it, on the option of a dark chocolate brown monopole or a gray one which blends in with the often overcast skies. Mr. Dodge explained that AT&T tries to adopt what the town asks for in terms of design of the tower with no additional cost to the town for any disguise of the tower desired.

Steve Hazelton asked about the lack of coverage on VT Route 155 for first responders. Mr. Dodge explained that FirstNet identified 31 sites in VT as high priority with VT Route 103 in Mount Holly as one of them; VT Route 155 had less priority. That may change in the future with coverage for VT Route 155 provided by another tower in that area.

Mr. Dodge will provide the town with a variety of designs and simulations for residents to review.

Ron Tarbell stated that he would recuse himself from any vote on the proposed cell tower.

The Select Board thanked Mr. Dodge and his associates for the presentation and thanked residents in attendance for their thoughts, ideas, comments, suggestions and participation.

Respectfully submitted: Jennifer Matthews

Minutes Approved: 11.12.2019