

January 14, 2016
7:00 PM

The Verizon Cell Tower Workshop of the Monroe Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman Kehoe.

ATTENDANCE

Phil Kehoe, Chairman
A.W. Castle, Vice-Chairman
Carl Kuhl, Supervisor

Michael Pykosh, Solicitor
Mark Bruening, Engineer
Greg Rogalski, Zoning Officer
Karen Lowery, Recording Secretary

Mr. Kehoe stated that this will be an informal workshop. We will start with an overview of the proposed project and then open the floor for questions from the audience. There are also representatives here from Verizon to answer questions.

Mr. Kehoe stated that Verizon approached the township to lease a 100' x 100' area behind the fire company to place a tower that would improve service in the area since there is weak cell service in the area. Over the past 6 to 7 months the Supervisors and Mr. Pykosh have been talking with Verizon to work out a lease agreement items such as terms, care, insurance, indemnification and landscaping. One advantage to this project is that would be a revenue generator for the township that could offset inflation and cost of living increases that normally relies on tax income. At the start of the lease the annual income would be \$21,000 and there would be an inflation adjustment for the life of the agreement. In addition other cell phone companies could add an antenna to the tower, which would be additional revenue. Mr. Rogalski and Mr. Pykosh have been working with Verizon to work out the details. An agreement has not been signed or finalized at this time. A radius around the proposed cell tower location was determined and letters were sent out to invite residents to this workshop.

Doreen Mohr, 1200 Brandt Road, is against the cell tower. She doesn't not want to look out her window, past a dog kennel to see a tower. South Middleton Township has a Verizon cell tower that was proposed in a residential area. They fought it and ended up putting the tower in the park. Move the tower over to the peak at the Joe Carr Park where it will affect the least amount of residents. All types of landscaping can be done, but you are still going to see the tower.

James Strong, from Verizon stated that the tower was proposed by Karn's. It is a Shentell tower, which works with Sprint. Verizon has co-located their tower on Shentell's tower. Verizon does have existing towers in the area, which are providing service. The main issue the Verizon has is smart phones, data capacity, such as, videos and email was identified as a need in the township. The original location was right outside of Churchtown, but Verizon has

worked with the township to determine a suitable site and possibly revenue to the township.

Mr. Rogalski added that there were conversations with Verizon about the site behind the Fire Company and a site behind the township building. Verizon performed a feasibility analysis and determined the best coverage would be at the highest point behind the Fire Company.

Kathy Stump, 1215 Peffer Road, stated that placing the tower at the Joe Carr Park wouldn't affect as many residents and its still and elevated area. If the tower is placed behind the Fire Company it would be 155' from her home and there is much more direct contact with individual homes.

Mr. Strong stated that the distance from the tower to Peffer Road is 657' and 350' from the fire house.

Charles Hollister, 1211 Peffer Road, asked if any sites on the South Mountain have been looked at like the other towers.

Mr. Strong stated that the mid to late 1990's the mountain was a good idea, however, now phones are low powered and can't cover that distance. Also the area would be too large for the number of subscribers in the area. Moving the tower to the mountain won't address objectives trying to be met in this area.

Mr. Kehoe stated if it's over the hill it may blend in to look like a tree at Joe Carr, but this would limit the area Verizon was trying to optimize. The Fire Company location provides a better benefit.

Ms. Stump added that her property would be 155' from the site. The tower would decrease her property value by 20%. Not just her, but all of her neighbors too. The site at Joe Carr is also elevated.

Werner Schmidt, 779 Dogwood Terrace, asked if there was a map showing the proximity of the tower to the surrounding residents. Mr. Strong stated that the nearest property was 155' away. Mr. Schmidt asked what the distant would be from the Joe Carr location site to the property off of Old Stone House Road that had been approved for a development. Mr. Rogalski said it could possibly be the same distance. Mr. Schmidt said there aren't homes there now, but the zoning is there for homes to be there in the future. Mr. Schmidt stated that he has a cell tower, water tower and some type of antenna very close to his house. He lives on the South Mountain and there is no flip phone cell coverage.

Tom Vogelsong, 323 Old Stone House Road, concern would be to keep it as far away from the people because of EMF radiation. Cell phones have warnings, so I wouldn't want one of these towers in my back yard.

A gentleman asked how close the tower is to the ballfields. Mr. Strong said the tower is

220' away from the first ball field. Mr. Kehoe said that the tower would be off the parking lot opposite of the soccer field.

Mr. Kehoe asked that if the towers along the mountain ridge have the same type of technology and equipment that would go in. Mr. Strong isn't sure what those towers are. In respect to emissions, the Federal Communications commission establishes what the maximum permitted operating levels are at these facilities. Those are the standard that applies across the country for communications companies. Normally these types of facilities are below what the maximum standards are as mandated by the Federal Communications.

Eric Long, 1198 Peffer Road, asked how many channels will be on this tower. Mr. Strong stated that is a question for the radio frequency engineer, but a typical tower has 12 panel antennas and may have different channels. Mr. Long asked how many watts per channel. Mr. Strong said that would be a question for the radio frequency engineer, but it is a low wattage.

Scott Devlin, a consultant for Verizon, explained that he has been doing this for 20 years. The electro-magnetic radiation only goes out so far and it dissipates. The technicians are taught not to go within 30' of the radiation area, after that it's manageable. Your microwave oven produces more radiation.

Roger Mohr, 1200 Brandt asked what the range of tower coverage is for Verizon. Mr. Devlin said it depends topography, the height of the tower, and how much traffic is on a tower, but normally 1 -2 miles. If there is a straight path with no obstructions the range could be further spacing. Mr. Kehoe added that this was the jist of the site selection because it was the ideal spot.

Mrs. Stump asked if this is going to be the first of many towers. Mr. Rogalski said with the wave of the future it would be more likely to see micro cell towers. They have done this in Philadelphia and they look like street lights. Mechanicsburg Borough is allowing antennas on the street lights. He added that there is a Shentell tower on Nixon Drive and there has been a flurry of activity in the past five years. Mr. Rogalski has talked with several people over the past year and has not had one person object to the tower, they may not live next to the tower, but they are residents of the township.

Mrs. Mohr said she is not arguing against the progress or for the township to get the revenue, she just wants them in a place where less people are affected.

Deb Bender, 1414 Zimmerman Road, said if the objections are about the view, her neighbor built a shed that obstructs her view of the farms. Can the shed be moved? She didn't have any say in that and people can plant trees right in your line of sight.

Mr. Kehoe said that the conversations have been going on is not isolated to Monroe Township or Central Pennsylvania. The items being brought up about opposition to visual

pollution, unknown health risks are part of the conversations or debates on any type modernization that may occur. These are not easy decisions to make and we are trying to benefit as many people as possible.

Mr. Hollister stated that the southern district of Monroe Township is the most affected by the sewer and now will be the most affected by a cell tower. It would be a nice break for the residents to move the tower to an area that would least affected those who live here.

Mrs. Stump asked if research was done on other sites. Is there more than one option. Mr. Rogalski stated he worked as a liaison for the township and Verizon did a study and gave the option of the area they are pursuing.

Mrs. Stump said she has been a resident for 20+ years and 14 of those at her current location. Was the devaluation of the properties taken into consideration and researched.

Mr. Strong said that Verizon initially looked at a sight closer to Churchtown. Verizon's goal is to work cooperatively for residents of the area and Verizon subscribers. The proposed site works well for Verizon. This has now been presented to the residents and the concerns have been heard, which is what the purpose was of this meeting.

Mr. Kehoe said it would be reasonable to ask Verizon to review the original site selection process and provide what the major difference in the sights were. Moving the site may be a disqualifier with Verizon. Mr. Kuhl asked if the alternative site would be acceptable.

Christine Pulgar, 1219 Peffer Road, said that the residents in this area are getting dumped on. There was an issue with the White Rock sewer, which this area then had to benefit from and now taking away more of their property value by putting this tower close their homes. Who is going to want to buy our houses with the highest sewer rates, a dog rescue and a cell tower?

Mr. Strong asked if the Joe Carr location would be viable and acceptable to the Supervisors, would that be an area to move forward with if the residents were comfortable with it. He doesn't want to move the proposed location and then the people in that area will also have concerns, but that may be the case.

Mr. Schmidt asked if the tower was moved to a sight that was 100' lower would it change the effectiveness. Would the tower need to be built higher and would it have to be something other than a monopole. It may be lesser of two evils to leave it at the proposed sight. Mr. Strong said that shifting the location affects the interaction with other sites.

Mr. Long asked what the max wind speed is for towers 150' tall. Mr. Eric said that the towers are built to the UCC code standard for wind speeds.

Mr. Strong said if the tower is approved for Verizon service other carriers may establish a lease agreement with Verizon to add an antenna to the tower. The other providers will have to

negotiate a lease agreement with the township.

Mr. Kehoe said it has been established that we will go back to Verizon and ask why not in the park. It may not change the direction, but we will have a firmer answer of why here and not there. Several people have shared their concerns and not everyone is against the tower.

Mr. Hollister said he is a Verizon customer and has no problems. He also has no problems with this landline. Mr. Strong said he had one to two bars is a low signal for service on a cell phone. Verizon forecasts sites with too many subscribers in the area, which affects the level of service. Mr. Strong added that there a number of households that are wireless only is much higher than you would expect, so reliability for calls to 911 important. And E911 is able to triangulate to where a call was made if someone doesn't know exactly where they are. Mr. Kehoe added that Cumberland County has invested in E911 to support homes and residences. Verizon also makes space available on their towers for emergency services.

Mr. Strong has heard the concerns that have been expressed. This was the site that Verizon had settled on, but we have heard the concerns. Verizon has been looking for a site for a long time. They would like to work cooperatively with the township, resident and subscribers. He will take these concerns back and look at the Joe Carr property and see what can be done.

Joan Long, 1198 Peffer Road, asked for an explanation of the lease works and how long it will be. Are you going to raise the rent since our sewage no more increases. Mr. Kehoe said it is to be the last sewer increase associate with the South Middleton plan expansion. Mrs. Long asked if the Verizon lease would offset our fees.

Mr. Strong said the lease is in 5 year terms and one final term for 4 years 11 months. The total amount of the lease could be for 29 years and 11 months. If approved the first two years of the lease payments will be made up front in the amount of \$43,200. Future lease payments will increase by 3% per year. Mr. Kehoe added that the township is not responsible for maintenance or up-keep of the tower. When the tower has met its life expectancy it will be dismantled, removed and the site will be put back to the way it was.

Mrs. Long asked if the Board of Supervisors have a plan or schedule of what will be done with this revenue. Mr. Kehoe said the plan was to allocate the money to the general fund, which is where most of the expenses are paid from. There was also talk to allocate a percentage of this money and the cable franchise fee money to be put aside for capital projects. It would be the ideal situation to have this money set aside for when a structure fails or if there is a major sewer project. He is talking vaguely because it is still being sorted out. The sewers have been talked about how to reduce the sewer without affecting the residents, either through grants or opportunities like this. Mr. Kehoe understands the visual concerns and such, but this helps Monroe operate and helps fund the operation and control the cost of living. He understands the sewer is god awful, but what he dislikes more is the feeling that we are not in control of sewer costs. Some money could be set aside so that money doesn't need to be borrowed. The user fees are at a point of saturation.

Mr. Long asked is the school and county were aware of this cell tower project. If this goes through he will have his property reassessed, which could mean less taxes for the school and county. Mr. Kehoe was not aware of a conversation with the school.

Mr. Kuhl said he hears the resident's pain. PPL want to run towers in his backyard. Mr. Long said that falls under eminent domain, the cell tower does not.

Mrs. Bender said they travel a lot and have seen the towers camouflaged, would this be an option. Mr. Kehoe said they had brought that up, but because the tower would be too far from the tree line it would stick out.

Carlton Parry, 1301 Church Street, stated if this goes through, at a later time the sewer should be addressed and how much percentage it could decrease. Mr. Kuhl asked if \$24,000 was relevant to the 16 million in debt. Mr. Parry said that anything helps. He asked Mr. Strong if he is aware of a 20% property value decrease. Mr. Strong doesn't see this as being such a big issue. Some homeowners look forward to cell towers so that they have coverage, everyone has dramatically different views on this matter.

Clyde Forbes, 1276 Alma Lane, asked if the tower could be placed on private land. Mr. Strong said the originally they looked at private land and looked at public property. By having the tower on public property it would benefit the township and their residents. If the tower is on private property it will only benefit the property owner.

Mr. Castle understands how the residents feel. The Supervisors will ask Verizon to look at the Joe Carr site and come back with that information and then we could hold another meeting once we have the information to answer all of your questions. Mr. Castle said it is a tough time for everyone and this is a way of generating funds and not having to raise taxes and this was one of those options. A paid fire fighter was added at the Fire Company for \$36,000 a year, which was absorbed by the township, not a tax increase.

Mr. Kehoe asked how do we do this and keep ourselves going. We are healthy, but coming up with creativity like this helps. He also understands human concerns of health, welfare, peace and comfort of living in a rural township.

Mr. Kehoe stated that there have been news articles, as costs increase for a lot of families with reliable cell phone service, cost savings are seen by elimination of landlines. Then there is the affordability of internet service. There are a lot of homes that the cell phone is becoming the internet service provider to save money.

Mr. Long asked if the tower will be run by Verizon or a management company. Mr. Strong said it will be a Verizon tower, but at some point in the future there may be a management company. Mr. Kehoe added that the requirements of the lease will remain the same

either way.

Mr. Long asked what happens if the fence gets knocked down and kids are at the ballfields can get into the property. Mr. Kehoe said risks are always a concern. He asked how CV was able to install high power solar panels right beside the school. Mr. Kehoe said that part of our facilities are over there and the road crew would be in the area on a regular basis. Mr. Strong said Verizon would want the integrity of the fence to remain uncompromised as a security measure.

Mr. Kehoe thanked the residents for coming out. Once we hear back from Verizon we will figure out the best ways to distribute the information either through a meeting, the website or a mailer.

ADJOURN

Mr. Kehoe adjourned the workshop at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Karen M. Lowery
Recording Secretary