

**Town of Haverhill
PLANNING BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 7:00 PM
R. E. Clifford Memorial Building
65 South Court St.
Woodsville, NH 03785
And on Zoom**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Gary Hebert, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Roll Call Attendance: Howard Hatch, Select Board liaison (Here); Joe Longacre, Vice Chair (Here); John Nelepovitz (Here); Gary Hebert, Chair (Here); Don Hammond (Excused). A quorum was met.

Town Employees Present:

- Jennifer Boucher, Assistant Town Manager
- Joanna Bligh, Planning Board Clerk, Project Coordinator

Members of the Public Present: Doug Henson, Francis Parisi (Vertex Towers), Randy Subjeck (Piermont Select Board), Mary Patridge, Susie Tann, Tom Johnson (Vertex Towers Surveyor).

2. Designation of Alternates: None.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

- Longacre asked if the landowner was present at the meeting.
- Hebert replied that this meeting is for a site review for conditional use permit only and the landowner is in agreement with the project.

MOTION #1: Longacre made a motion and Nelepovitz seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- Hatch and Nelepovitz offered revisions to the 9-28-21 minutes.

MOTION #2: Nelepovitz made a motion and Longacre seconded the motion to approve the Minutes from **September 28, 2021**, as amended.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

MOTION #3: Hebert made a motion and Nelepovitz seconded the motion to approve the Minutes from **October 12, 2021**, as written.

Voice Vote: Four approved, none opposed, one abstained. The motion passed.

5. PUBLIC APPEARANCES (previously scheduled): None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING:

Tann asked the Board of the meaning of “site review.”

Hebert stated that the Planning Board will review the site of the proposed tower and match the plans from Vertex to the Town's Subdivision Regulations.

MOTION #4: Longacre made a motion and Hatch seconded the motion to open the PUBLIC HEARING at 7:14 PM.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

Hebert introduced Fran Parisi to present the Vertex Towers site plan to the Board. Parisi introduced Tom Johnson who designed the project. Parisi noted that the Town of Haverhill calls this project a personal wireless facility, but it is a cell tower. The site is 23 acres of leased land at 12 Teepee Rd, in Haverhill.

Parisi offered some statistics, including that only 50% of the NH population has wireless connectivity, and not being connected to wireless service is a safety hazard for many residents. Parisi continued that the gaps in service are due to the topography of hills and ridges in the Upper Valley. Parisi stated that a few trees will be removed for the construction, but other than the 6 weeks of construction, there is little traffic to the site. The setback (657') from the road equals 125% of the tower height, which meets the regulations. The tower is 161 feet high, and the compound is 60' by 60' and fenced with a 6', barbed wire-topped fencing. The lattice structure meets all design standards from TIA, ASSE, and ANSI. The detailed construction plans will be brought before the Select Board once approved by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Parisi noted that on the knoll, there is an existing 80' public safety tower used by the Grafton County Complex. Parisi stated that the airport is 4 miles away, so no lights are needed on the tower per the FAA standards. Parisi cited additional safety criteria:

- Low power, 2-way communicator; <100 watts.
- <1% FCC emission standards.
- Passive installation – no smoke, no traffic, and no water runoff.

Parisi showed the Board and the attendees their photos of the balloon test and pictures of the conceptual tower from a 1-mile radius perimeter.

Parisi stated that in the 1996 federal Telecommunications Act states that local authorities cannot say "No" without a good reason.

Hebert summarized the process stating that the Planning Board is review the site plan, the ZBA will vote on the height and other variances, and the Select Board will vote on the building permit.

Public Comments:

Tann stated that the pictures fall short and do not show the properties impacted by the tower on the horizon. Tann continued that the balloon test should be on a weekend, the lattice tower is cheaper for the company, and the camouflage is an eye sore. Tann stated that the abutters are not here at the meeting.

Parisi stated that this tower will cover the north-south gaps in wireless service. Patridge asked the address of the tower in Bath. Johnson stated 132 Goose Lane near the power lines. Patridge noted that the Town of Newbury, VT, was not notified of the tower. Parisi stated that the NH statutes allow notification of towns in NH within 20 miles of the site.

Planning Board Members' Comments:

Tann interjected stating that pictures should be taken from the Ladd School, a historic site.

Longacre asked about the camouflage used for towers. Parisi stated that making the tower look like a tree often backfires and the 12' simulated pine boughs make the tower look like a "pipe cleaner." Longacre asked about towns that denied the tower installation. Parisi stated that in Thornton, the town went to court and the judge dismissed the case.

Longacre asked about the taking down of the tower. Parisi stated that they will post a bond and Johnson discussed the reclamation of the ground surface.

MOTION #5: Longacre made a motion and Hatch seconded the motion to close the PUBLIC HEARING at 9:15 PM.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

Board Discussion:

Hebert introduced a suggested criteria for discussion listed in the Town of Haverhill *Personal Wireless Service Facilities Ordinance*, page 10, paragraph 4, items *a* through *k*. Hebert noted that *a* is applicable to the ZBA. The Board discussed the *nature of uses*, and Parisi noted that area is mixed use. Regarding the *d*. Historic Resources, Parisi noted that the state and local historical associations are notified.

Nelepovitz asked the color of the tower and if brown was optional. Parisi stated that galvanized steel is the color, and he has found that brown is more visible unless it was backdropped by wooded areas.

Longacre cited wording from the Haverhill Master Plan stating that enhanced telecommunications was specifically included. Hebert noted that the lack of cell access often is the biggest complaint. Tann asked the Board to work with Vertex to minimize the visual effects of the tower. Hebert stated that the goal in the Master Plan is 100% wireless service coverage. Patridge asked if the tower could be placed somewhere else. Parisi noted that because of the river valley and hills and ridges, the height would provide the best coverage.

The Board suggested the balloon test be extended per the *Ordinance* for 48 hours, and Tann recommended a weekend day. Parisi stated that he will do another balloon test for the ZBA, but the logistics are challenging. Nelepovitz suggested announcing the test on

the radio. Tann suggested a test for 20 miles away, and Parisi stated that 7 miles is the maximum distance. Parisi agreed to redo the balloon test.

MOTION #6: Hatch made a motion and Longacre seconded the motion to approve the site plan for Vertex Towers for the site on 12 Teepee Rd, Haverhill, with conditions:

- Approval by the ZBA of the variances cited in the application.
- Provide an additional balloon test for the ZBA.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

The Board recessed the meeting for 10 minutes.

MOTION #7: Hebert made a motion and Longacre seconded the motion to reconvene the meeting at 9:26 PM.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

7. NEW BUSINESS: None.

8. PENDING BUSINESS:

Town of Haverhill Subdivision Regulations / Work Session Report

MOTION #8: Hebert made a motion and Longacre seconded the motion to table the report on the *Subdivision Regulations* until the next meeting.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

Woodsville Pit Update

Hebert stated that he was able to visit the Woodsville Town Administrator to discuss the Woodsville pit, and they discussed the need for fencing at the top of the pit slope.

Town Pit Update

Boucher stated that the Road Foreman Colton Grant will install orange construction fencing along the berm at the top of the slope at the Town pit, but he found the fencing knocked down by deer.

9. CORRESPONDENCE / COMMUNICATION: None.

10. COMMENTS OF TOWN STAFF:

- Boucher stated that the meeting room in the JRM building has a new larger table suitable for meetings. Hatch suggested that there would be no room for attendees.
- Bligh tabled the discussion of answers to questions from the Working Session until the next meeting.

11. COMMENTS of the PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

Nelepovitz: Nelepovitz requested dates for the next two meetings.

Hebert: Hebert discussed rescheduling the meetings that are near the holidays to the weeks afterwards. November meeting will be Tuesday, the 30th, and the December meeting will be Tuesday, the 28th.

Longacre: None.

Hatch: None.

12. NEXT MEETINGS: Tuesday, November 30, 2021, and Tuesday, December 28, 2021, at the Clifford Building.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #5: Hatch made a motion and Longacre seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM.

Voice Vote: All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

Joanna Bligh, Transcriptionist