

TTFCG Meeting Minutes October 10, 2001

To: Distribution  
From: Bob Hunnicutt, Tower Coordinator, Columbia  
Telecommunications

A meeting of the Telecommunications Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TTFCG) was held on October 10, 2001. The following people were in attendance:

MEMBERS

Jane Lawton OCA (240) 777-3724  
Willem Van Aller DIST (240) 777-2994  
Pat Hanehan MCPS (301) 279-3609  
Gene Dombrowski DFS  
Eric Carzon OMB (240) 777-2763

STAFF

Robert Hunnicutt CTC (410) 964-5700  
Julie Modlin CTC (410) 964-5700  
Amy Rowan OCA (240) 777-3684

OTHER ATTENDEES

Lee Jarmon Nextel (410) 953-7440 (FAX) 953-7406  
Tom King Darnestown Assoc. (301) 417-9789  
Valerie Grigg Davis WFI  
Richard Muscarella WFI (703) 563-7162  
Bill O'Brien VoiceStream  
Maureen Kane Smith VoiceStream  
Steve Weber VoiceStream  
Carolyn Mitchell Cingular Wireless  
Abdul Azad Nextel  
Jim Michal Jackson, Campbell

Discussion Item - MPT Proposed Tower: Jane Lawton briefed the TTFCG members on MPT's proposal to place a new tower in northern Montgomery County. She stated that the Tower Coordinator had sent a series of questions to MPT and she expected answers very soon. She noted that Nancy Dacek's office had received a few complaints regarding this tower being erected in this agricultural preserve area.

Discussion Item - M-NCPPC Emergency Number: Jane Lawton advised the group that she had attended a meeting today at which Lt. Manley from the Park Police met with a number of representatives from the major carriers to follow-up from the last TTFCG meeting. Lt. Manley is working to establish a #55 cellular number to reach Park Police directly to report emergency situations in the Park. She noted that Nextel and Verizon had already voluntarily agreed to participate in the program, and that Lt. Manley is working to get the other carriers involved as well. She noted that the project couldn't go forward until all carriers agreed to participate. She stated that the carriers' representatives agreed to pass along the information to their managers for their consideration.

Discussion Item - Park and Planning Commission Hearing on

AT&T/Barnhart Property Application: Jane Lawton announced there was a meeting at the Park and Planning Commission on October 11, 2001 at 7:15 p.m. to review the AT&T Special Exception application to erect a monopole on the Barnhart property. She noted that this application was reviewed at the last TTF CG meeting and was recommended.

Tom King asked why the Park and Planning hearing was so close to the date of the TTF CG meeting. Jane Lawton explained that the application had been before the group twice previously in response to the TTF CG's request for additional information about the siting. She noted that the last outstanding issue was with regard to the location of the monopole on the property. She said that the TTF CG had suggested moving the monopole further into the wooded area, and a special meeting on October 3 was held to discuss that issue to meet the Park and Planning Commission hearing date previously scheduled for October 11, one day before the next regularly scheduled TTF CG meeting.

Mr. King stated that he believed that residents should have had more notice regarding that meeting. Ms. Lawton replied that the Park and Planning meeting had been scheduled for quite some time and that citizens were afforded as much notice as they were for any hearing on a Special Exception at the Park and Planning Commission. In response to further comments from Mr. King, she added that since the inception of the TTF CG, it was agreed that an application could be filed for Special Exception concurrent with an application being filed with the TTF CG.

Action Item: Approval of September 19, 2001 minutes: Amy Rowan stated she had corrections to the minutes and provided Bob Hunnicutt with a marked-up copy of the minutes.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the minutes be approved as amended. Pat Hanehan seconded the motion and the minutes were approved as amended.

Consent Agenda Item:

Jane Lawton asked that item #1 be removed from the consent agenda list as she had questions about that application.

2. VoiceStream Wireless application to replace six 54" antennas with six 72" antennas at the 185' and 191' level of an existing Berkshire Towers building located at 11235 Oak Leaf Drive in Silver Spring (Application #200109-05).

Motion: Pat Hanehan moved item #2 be recommended. Willem Van Aller seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item:

1. Core Communications application to attach a microwave dish at the 120' level of the existing 250' County lattice tower located 26149 Ridge Road in Damascus (Application #200109-01).

Julie Modlin summarized the application. In response to questions, Ms. Modlin explained that Core Communications was a CLEC using this tower to attach a microwave dish to link to another Core

Communications site. Mr. Van Aller noted that the Core business facility was next to the County's Damascus tower and he believed this was a good siting.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended. Gene Dombrowski seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Verizon Wireless application to attach antennas at the 270' level of a 480' guyed lattice tower on the Shumaker property located at 16700 Barnesville Road in Barnesville (Application #200106-06).

Bob Hunnicutt explained that the group had tabled this application pending receipt of information from Verizon which would answer the Tower Coordinator's questions on the recommendation. He stated that Verizon had provided the information and the last issue to be resolved was whether or not a fence had been erected around the guy wire anchors. Pinnacle representatives had stated the fences were in place. He contacted them and explained that during his August site visit he noticed that there were no fences. He has since received a letter of clarification from Pinnacle which stated that the fences had now been installed and they provided photos of one fence at the site. He noted that the Special Exception called for a ten foot high fence around the guy wire anchors but Pinnacle had installed an approximately three foot high rectangular fence that extended further away from the guy wire anchor and beneath the guy wires in the direction of the base of the tower. He explained that Pinnacle had stated this fence would preclude a vehicle from coming in close proximity to the overhead wires and thus, eliminate the possible recurrence of the accidental snagging of wires. He explained that was the cause of the tower collapse over the Memorial Day weekend.

Jane Lawton stated she would have preferred that the Tower Coordinator had included that information in the Recommendation Form, and asked that a revised Recommendation Form be prepared which includes that information. Mr. Hunnicutt agreed to amend the Recommendation Form.

Mr. King asked what it would take to require the tower to go through Special Exception. Ms. Lawton explained that changes to the zoning code would be necessary because a Special Exception hearing was not currently required for this case. Mr. Hunnicutt added that the tower was previously granted a Special Exception, that the tower had collapsed, and that what was erected was a replacement tower at the same height as the original tower. He stated that it was determined that since the tower already had a Special Exception it did not need to go through another Special Exception process, but only needed to obtain another construction permit for the replacement tower, which Pinnacle had done.

Mr. Hunnicutt noted that he had advised the Department of Permitting Services of the height of the fence that was installed.

Richard Muscarella, the Verizon representative, explained that the height of the fence installed was actually four feet tall. He added

that Pinnacle and not Verizon provided the information.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended as recommended by the Tower Coordinator and conditioned on the Tower Coordinator making appropriate revisions to the Recommendation Form. Gene Dombrowski seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Sprint PCS application to attach antennas at the 160' level of an existing 170' FEMA communications tower located at 5321 Riggs Road in Gaithersburg (Application #200108-12).

Julie Modlin summarized the application. Bob Hunnicutt explained that use of the FEMA tower was originally proposed when Nextel applied to construct a new monopole in that area. Mr. Hunnicutt stated Nextel had identified the FEMA tower but Nextel claimed that FEMA would not permit attachment by carriers. He stated that he then spoke to the FEMA facility staff and they agreed to consider a carrier proposal to attach antennas to their facility. He noted that Sprint is the first carrier to attach to this site, but because FEMA has declined to divulge any information about existing antennas on the tower for security reasons, the Tower Coordinator did not conduct an engineering review for potential physical or RF conflicts in this siting. He noted that Jim Michal had provided a letter which stated that Sprint and FEMA had discussed those issues and both parties agreed Sprint's antennas would not present any conflict with existing antennas on the tower.

Jim Michal commended the Tower Coordinator for helping to facilitate this attachment.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended. Gene Dombrowski seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: VoiceStream Wireless application to attach antennas at the 165' level of an existing 190' CNS lattice tower located at 15030 Frederick Road in Rockville (Application #200109-02).

Julie Modlin summarized the application. Willem Van Aller noted that the structural analysis attached to the application was a current analysis.

Motion: Gene Dombrowski moved the application be recommended. Pat Hanehan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Cingular Wireless application to pole mount antennas on the penthouse roof at the 90' level of an existing building located at 6400 Goldsboro Road in Bethesda (Application #200109-03).

Julie Modlin summarized the application and noted that this application could have gone on the consent agenda because it is a by-right attachment on an existing rooftop, but noted that Cingular plans to put a stealth screening around the antennas on top of the penthouse of this building. She stated this would essentially double the height of the existing penthouse, and

wanted to bring that to the group's attention.

Jane Lawton stated that even though the structure would make the penthouse taller, she believed that this was a good siting and she appreciated the use of stealth screening.

Motion: Gene Dombrowski moved the application be recommended. Willem Van Aller seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Nextel Communications application to construct a new 98' monopole/lightpole at the ball field of Walter Johnson High School located at 6400 Rock Spring Drive in Bethesda (Application #200108-05).

Julie Modlin summarized the application. She noted that this was a new monopole which would also be used to support stadium lights at a school ball field. She noted, however, that the monopole was only designed to accommodate one carrier due to limited ground space. She noted that there was also a letter of interest from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) attached to the application. She said the Tower Coordinator recommends this application conditioned on the structure being constructed to support at least one additional carrier.

Mr. Van Aller noted that the site plan showed the carrier's equipment shed and a storage shed, and asked about the purpose of the storage shed. Pat Hanehan explained that the School agreed to site the monopole on its property but they would also need to have room for an equipment storage building planned by the School for that area. He stated that if another carrier wanted to attach to the monopole, perhaps it could agree to relocate the storage shed elsewhere on the property and use the planned storage space for its equipment shelter.

Jane Lawton asked why the ground space was limited. Pat Hanehan explained that the terrain drops off right next to the monopole site and it would be difficult to locate additional facilities there because of the hill. He noted that he doubted that MCPS would have a problem if the TTFCG recommended the application with modifications to accommodate additional carriers and equipment, and that MCPS could consider that in their review. He noted the School did want a two-door storage shed erected on the field. He stated that as there was a single applicant, it was satisfactory to the School because it left room for a storage shed.

Willem Van Aller noted that new monopoles are usually required to accommodate at least three carriers. Jane Lawton noted that this new structure was also designed to accommodate lights. Mr. Van Aller suggested that a compromise might be appropriate because the ball field lights are equivalent to a second set of antennas. He suggested that if the monopole was designed to accommodate one additional carrier, that would be a reasonable solution. Pat Hanehan noted that the standard MCPS lease requires the carrier to be open to co-location.

Julie Modlin noted that a review of carriers' annual plans showed that other carriers wanted to site facilities in this area, but most

of them were considering other existing buildings.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended conditioned on the monopole being designed and constructed to accommodate additional carriers. Eric Carzon seconded the motion and it was approved with Pat Hanehan abstaining.

Discussion Item - XM Satellite Applications: Willem Van Aller asked the group to review the newspaper article distributed by the Tower Coordinator. He noted that he had previously expressed concerns about potential conflicts between XM Satellite's facilities and the County's microwave system. He noted that evidently, the County was not alone in expressing concerns about potential XM conflicts with other systems as well.

Pat Hanehan added that XM had backed out of its lease arrangement with the Board of Education to attach facilities to the monopole at Sherwood High School.

Discussion Item - MPT Tower: Tom King asked what Government Agency would fight the MPT tower siting. Jane Lawton stated that the Tower Coordinator had asked some very pointed engineering questions regarding the placement of that tower in Montgomery County, but there had been little input from citizens on this matter. She suggested that if Mr. King was concerned about this tower, he should voice his concerns to the State elected officials, including the Governor, the Comptroller, and the Treasurer.

Mr. Van Aller noted that this group would "evaluate", not "fight" this application.

Jane Lawton added that Nancy Dacek had also asked some questions regarding the tower's placement in the County. She noted that the State limited itself to only considering state-owned property as potential locations for new towers. She stated that the Tower Coordinator had asked about the use of nearby Federal property that was on higher ground which may allow a shorter tower to be constructed.

The next meeting of the TTFCG is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room #225 of the COB.