



DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Michael H. Knuppel
Acting Chief Information Officer

MINUTES OF TFCG MEETING

To: Distribution

From: Bob Hunnicutt, Tower Coordinator, Columbia Telecommunications

A meeting of the Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TFCG) was held on May 2, 2007. The following people were in attendance:

MEMBERS

Jane Lawton	OCCS	(240) 777-3724
Mary Pat Wilson	MCPS	(240) 314-4707
Martin Rookard	WSSC	(301) 206-8979
David Niblock	DPS	(240) 777-6252
Jennifer Bryant	OMB	(240) 777-2768

STAFF

Marjorie Williams	OCCS	(240) 777-3724
Bob Hunnicutt	CTC	(410) 964-5700
Carol Watson	CTC	(410) 964-5700

OTHER ATTENDEES

Adam Knubel	NBC/Clearwire
Chris Brown	NextG Networks
Ed Donohue	Donohue & Blue
Gordon Hubley	WFI/Clearwire
Jeff Ott	Sprint
Jeremy M. Joyce	NextG Networks
Katie Oppenheimer	T-Mobile
M.G. Diamond	Verizon
Steven Kinley	Sprint/Nextel/GD/ACO
Christopher Sinclair	NextG Networks

Action Item – Meeting Minutes: David Niblock moved the minutes be approved as written. Jennifer Bryant seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Discussion Item – NextG DAS System: Jane Lawton recognized Christopher Sinclair representing NextG and asked him to present information to the group about NextG's system design.

Mr. Sinclair noted that Sprint/Nextel had approached NextG to design a network to meet their coverage objective along the proposed route, an area presently underserved and difficult to site a tall structure for antennas. Mr. Sinclair noted that NextG is a nationwide company and that they have a franchise from the County to place their facilities in the County right-of-way.

Ms. Lawton asked how high the equipment cabinets would be on the utility poles. Bob Hunnicutt responded that the applicant reported that the equipment cabinets would be ten feet above the ground, which would meet the NESC requirement for an eight-foot clearance for those kinds of facilities. Ms. Lawton also asked about the ability for placement of these facilities in residential areas without obtaining a Special Exception. Mr. Hunnicutt stated that the equipment would be attached to existing or replacement PEPCO or Verizon utility poles which can be replaced without meeting the zoning requirements pursuant to case law cited in the Zoning Code. Mr. Hunnicutt noted that he had checked with Cliff Royalty about whether Verizon could replace their poles like PEPCO is permitted per the Zoning Ordinance. He said Mr. Royalty had advised him that he thought Verizon probably could do so as well.

Mary Pat Wilson asked about the size of the equipment cabinets. Mr. Sinclair explained that the cabinets were 24" x 30" in size. Ms. Wilson also asked if the Petruccelli property was a residence. Mr. Hunnicutt explained that the Petruccelli property (where one of the two hubs is to be located) is residential property located at the intersection of Darnestown Road and Route 28. He noted that a Special Exception had been approved to place a monopole screened by a board-on-board fence on that property.

Consent Agenda Applications:

1. Sprint-Nextel application to attach twelve 49" panel antennas, eight at the 75' level atop the roof, and four on the penthouse walls at the 84' level at the Montgomery White Oak Apartments located at 11550 Stewart Lane in Silver Spring (Application #200701-03).
2. FiberTower application to attach two 13" dish antennas at the 135' level on an existing 173' high lattice tower atop the roof of the 107' high World Building Tower located at 8121 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring (Application #200703-01).
3. T-Mobile application to attach nine 53" panel antennas at the 170' level on a 210' lattice tower at the WSSC Damascus Plant located at 23720 Log House Road in Gaithersburg (Application #200704-04).

Motion: Mary Pat Wilson moved the consent agenda items be recommended. David Niblock seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Clearwire application to attach four 3' panel antennas at the 115' level and four 2' dish antennas at the 111' level on a 121' PEPCO transmission line tower #97-S located at Montgomery Village Avenue in Gaithersburg (Application # 200703-02).

Bob Hunnicutt summarized the application and noted that the Tower Coordinator's recommendation was conditioned on obtaining approval from the Montgomery Village Foundation (MVF). He explained that he had contacted Sharon Levine of the MVF who advised him that the applicant was working closely with their organization to address issues regarding screening the equipment area at the base of the PEPCO facility. Adam Knubel interjected that the MVF had scheduled a preliminary meeting to obtain information from Clearwire and he was preparing a presentation for that meeting. He said the matter would be decided at the June MVF meeting. Mr. Hunnicutt explained he had advised Ms. Levine that he would like to put this application on this meeting's agenda conditioned on obtaining the MVF's approval of the screening, and that she had agreed to that recommendation.

Motion: Martin Rookard moved the application be recommended. Mary Pat Wilson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Clearwire application to attach up to four 3' panel antennas and two 2' dish antennas at the 155' and 159' levels on an existing 160' monopole on Fire Station #31 property located at 12100 Darnestown Road in Gaithersburg (Application #200704-22).

Carol Watson summarized the application and noted that the applicant provided a structural analysis which showed that the structure failed for the proposed attachment. She stated that there was no information provided about any modifications that might be possible to the structure to permit the attachment. The applicant expressed that they were working with the tower owner to ensure that they could devise some modifications that might be able to support both their antennas and additional work required for Cingular's attachment needs.

Mr. Hunnicutt stated that the monopole is quite full and the exterior of the monopole was covered with cables that run from the ground equipment up the monopole to the existing antennas. He added that for some previous applications, the recommendation had been conditioned on submission of a structural analysis; however, in this case, the analysis provided clearly shows the structure fails and there are no recommendations for remedy. Mr. Hunnicutt stated that he could not imagine what modification might be made to accommodate the proposed attachment and that he was unwilling to condition the recommendation on submission of a structural modification since he had no idea what the modifications might look like and how the structure might appear in the community. Consequently, he did not recommend this application.

Motion: Jennifer Bryant moved that the application be tabled pending additional information from the applicant regarding the structural capacity of the facility to accommodate the proposed antennas. David Niblock seconded the motion to table was unanimously approved.

Action Item: NextG application to install a distributed antenna system (DAS) with two base stations and attach twelve 24" panel antennas and twenty-two 57" whip antennas atop 34 existing

or replacement wooden utility poles along Seneca Road and River Road from Darnestown to Potomac. The two proposed hub sites are at the Petruccelli property at 14120 Darnestown Road in Germantown and at Fire Station #30 property at 9404 Falls Road in Cabin John (Application #200704-23).

Mr. Hunnicutt summarized the application and noted that this was the NextG proposal which had been discussed at the start of today's meeting. Mr. Hunnicutt stated that the Tower Coordinator's recommendation for this application was conditioned on the applicant obtaining any necessary approvals from the Historical Preservation Committee relative to any historic structures near the antenna locations or the National Park Service for poles next to any park land, and on resolving any signal interference with County communications services or cease transmissions from the sites causing the interference. Mr. Hunnicutt noted that during the review of the Invisible Tower application near Old Angler's Inn, he had noted there were some historical properties as well as the Canal nearby that may warrant review by the Historical Preservation Committee.

Motion: David Niblock moved that the application be approved conditioned on 1) resolving any signal interference with County communications services or cease transmissions from the sites causing the interference; and, 2) on obtaining any approvals that may be needed from the Historical Preservation Committee relative to any historic structures near the antenna locations or the National Park Service for poles next to any park land. Martin Rookard seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: WSSC application to construct a new 100' monopole and attach two 23" Yagi antennas, one at the 100' level and one at the 87' level at the WSSC Pumping Station located at 8606 Snouffer School Road in Gaithersburg (Application #200704-03).

Carol Watson summarized the application and noted that there had been a Sprint/Nextel application two years ago for a similar monopole at this site. Ms. Watson stated that based on her engineering review, she agreed it appeared as though the transmit antennas would need to be at the 100' level to successfully link this site with the intended WSSC facility at Pleasant Avenue in Gaithersburg. However, Ms. Watson noted that the Tower Coordinator did not recommend this application because the location of the tower as proposed does not meet the Zoning requirements for setback or for being 300' from a residence.

Jane Lawton asked Mr. Rookard why the WSSC submitted an application that did not meet those requirements. Mr. Rookard replied that since the September 11th attacks there had been increased interest in improving security at WSSC facilities, especially the unmanned remote pumping stations like this one near the Airpark, and he noted that this site provides clean water services to approximately 20,000 people in the Gaithersburg area. He stated that the structure was needed to link this site with WSSC's security command center in Laurel. The antennas would transmit video monitoring and telemetry to ensure a quick response if there was a detected breach in security. He added that the WSSC had held community meetings in January and that they had received no negative feedback. He stated that this application would go through the Mandatory Referral process.

Jennifer Bryant asked how the WSSC planned to address security at other remote sites such as this one. Mr. Rookard replied that the WSSC would be taking similar initiatives at those other facilities.

David Niblock asked if FAA approval had been obtained. Mr. Rookard replied that the FAA had determined that this monopole posed no threat to air navigation at the Montgomery County Airpark.

Mr. Hunnicutt added that he had spoken with John Luke of the Revenue Authority who stated that their aeronautical contractor also agreed there was no threat to air navigation as far as the FAA regulations were concerned. He said Mr. Luke had stated that the Revenue Authority preferred that this monopole be lit once constructed, but had not specified whether the lighting be strobe, flashing red, or steady-burning red.

Jennifer Bryant asked how WSSC would address the lighting issue. Mr. Rookard replied that the WSSC did not believe the monopole would create a navigational hazard and did not plan to light the structure. He added that if the Revenue Authority wished to have the structure lit, he suggested that the Authority schedule community meetings to advise the residents of that intent. He added that he thought the helicopter requirements limited height to 500' above the ground, which would be far above the top of this monopole.

Ms. Lawton asked with which community organizations the WSSC had met. Mr. Rookard replied he could not say exactly which organizations had attended their meetings. He noted that they had invited community associations to the meeting and that one representative had attended but he did not know which association was represented. With regard to the residents who live immediately adjacent to this site, he said that WSSC personnel had knocked on the doors of those residences to advise them of the proposal. Ms. Lawton asked if they were able to talk to the residents. Mr. Rookard said he did not know.

Mary Pat Wilson asked if there were alternative ways to transmit the signals to the WSSC command center. Mr. Rookard replied that the structure was needed to place antennas at a height sufficient to gain the line-of-sight to the Gaithersburg facility for clear transmission of the signals. Mr. Hunnicutt added that he had discussed other options with Jim Krause of the WSSC. He said those included the use of fiber-optic cables, to which Mr. Krause replied that there were no FiberNet cables available in the area for the WSSC to use and that the WSSC preferred to maintain control over their own transmission capabilities for security reasons. Mr. Hunnicutt said that he also discussed with CTC engineers placing the receiving antennae at a higher elevation on the state monopole next to the WSSC water tank. He said they had concluded that because the obstruction to the signal transmission was the near field terrain of the transmission origination site, even if the receiving antenna was at a higher elevation, the transmitting antenna would still need to be at approximately the 100' level.

Ms. Bryant stated she believed that FiberNet plant would be available in the near future, since the Strawberry Knolls Elementary School was scheduled for connection to FiberNet in FY07 and that school is near the WSSC station and could provide the transmission path.

When Ms. Bryant asked how WSSC would address lighting the monopole, Mr. Rookard said that if the M-NCPPC required that the structure be lit, WSSC would provide lights.

Motion: Martin Rookard moved the application be recommended. The motion died for lack of a second.

Ms. Lawton noted that the record for this application should reflect that there was no TFCG support for the application because of a number of unresolved issues including: 1) it appeared that FiberNet would be available to the site and could perhaps carry the transmission signals to the WSSC site in Laurel; 2) the monopole did not meet setback or the 300' distance from a dwelling unit; and 3) the Airpark preferred that the structure be lit but the WSSC had no plans to light it.

Action Item: Verizon Wireless application to construct a new 140' monopole and attach 12 panel antennas (six 48" high and six 71" high) at the 138' level at the Trolley Museum property located at 1313 Bonifant Road in Colesville. (Application #200505-07)

Bob Hunnicutt explained that this application was on the agenda because the TFCG Recommendation from June 8, 2005, which was conditioned on attaining an approval of a Special Exception from the Board of Appeals, had expired. He noted that the applicant needed a current record of action on this application in order to file for the Special Exception pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance requirements.

M.G. Diamond commented that the application as proposed by Verizon had not changed and that the reason for the delay in filing for a Special Exception was due to the time it took to negotiate a lease with the M-NCPPC. The monopole proposed will be 140' high and disguised as a tree at the Trolley Car Museum on property owned by the M-NCPPC. There was some discussion regarding the height of the monopole but based on the review of the minutes from that meeting, it was determined that the TFCG recommended the structure at the 140' level to meet Verizon's coverage requirements.

Motion: David Niblock moved that the application be recommended conditioned on obtaining a Special Exception from the M-NCPPC. Mary Pat Wilson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: T-Mobile application to construct a new 120' monopole and attach up to nine 59" panel antennas at the 118' level at the Watkins Mill High School located at 10301 Apple Ridge Road in Gaithersburg (Application #200702-04).

Bob Hunnicutt explained that just prior to this meeting the applicant had requested that the application be removed from today's agenda. He said the applicant had stated they planned to conduct a drive test at lower elevations for that location.

Discussion Item: Clearwire's notice of change of antenna elevation on Suburban Propane's tower (Application # 200608-03 recommended 9/6/06).

Bob Hunnicutt explained that Clearwire had advised him that they were placing their antennas at a different elevation on the Columbia Gas lattice tower than what was approved by the TFCG. This was just a point of information for the group and there was no action necessary.

Discussion Item - Monopole applications on public school property: Jane Lawton noted that the Director of the M-NCPPC had issued an opinion on the need for a Special Exception for two applications before the Commission for telecommunications facilities on public school property, and that a copy had been provided in the member's packets for review.

Discussion Item – Next Meeting: The next meeting of the TFCG is scheduled for Wednesday, June 6, 2007 at 2 p.m. in the second floor conference room #225 of the COB.