

MINUTES  
**Hamilton Historic District Commission**  
July 10, 2017

Members Present: Tom Catalano, Chair, Stefanie Serafini, Edwin Howard, Jack Hauck, Elizabeth Wheaton and George Connolly.

Staff Present: Dorr Fox

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Tom Catalano opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Jack Hauck made a motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2017. Ed Howard seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

PROPOSED CELL TOWER AT REAR OF 577 BAY ROAD (TOWN DPW YARD)

Fran Parisi, representing Varsity Wireless Investors, explained that the Hamilton Historic District Commission does not have direct jurisdiction over the project, however, is giving a recommendation to the Planning Board and the Massachusetts Historical Commission who are reviewing the proposal. Mr. Parisi explained that the Town issued an RFP and he was the successful bidder. They are proposing the tower at the invitation of the Town. He explained that they are a real estate developer and must build towers to accommodate multiple carriers in order to make a profit. They have already signed Verizon to locate on this tower. He explained that there is a need for the tower. People are using their cell phones differently than they did when wireless first was being established. He noted that people used to use their cell phones when travelling in cars, however, they are now also using them when they are stationary in their homes and businesses. They are using phones for their data capabilities now that smart phones are more common, such as using them for email and the internet. They also use phones to contact 911, which makes the construction of the tower a public safety issue. He noted that Hamilton has poor cell service in the vicinity of Town Hall.

Mr. Howard stated that he understands that the Town needs a cell tower. However, he believes that other sites should be investigated.

Mr. Parisi noted that they had held a balloon test for the site and had completed an extensive visual analysis to determine where you could see it from. He showed a map where they thought people would be able to see the tower. They went to these locations and took a photo of the balloon. They took these photos and made images of what a tower might look like. He explained that the impacted views include the driveways at Town Hall and Kinsman Lane. He stated that there should be no impact from Paddock Lane. He stated that people would not be able to see it from

other locations. He stated that one would not see the tower when standing in front of Town Hall because the cupola would block it.

Mr. Catalano inquired about the size of the structure, fence and compound and noted that it would be visible. Mr. Parisi stated that the fence would be 70' x 70' and that the compound would be shielded from view by deciduous trees.

Mr. Howard stated that they should ask Town Counsel whether they have jurisdiction over the project since the only access is through land that is within the district. He also stated that based upon the visual analysis that he is concerned that the cell tower will loom over the Town Hall like a spaceship. He believes this issue should be addressed. Mr. Parisi stated that the balloon test was done to complete a visual analysis. Mr. Hauck stated that the image showing the tower down the driveway is the clearest picture of what the tower will look like. Mr. Parisi concurred, but he noted that it will not be as visible from other locations. Mr. Catalano noted that pedestrians will also be able to see the tower, not just people driving in cars.

Mr. Parisi stated that Bay Road is like a tunnel and that people will not see the tower while driving. Their view will be shielded by the trees. Mr. Hauck stated that the Historic District Commission should consider the perspective of the people who live in the vicinity of the tower. Mr. Parisi stated that the neighbors will not be able to see the tower, except through trees. Mr. Hauck asked if this will be the case in both winter and summer. Mr. Parisi stated that they only took photos in the summer. Mr. Hauck stated that the views in the winter are an issue.

Mr. Parisi noted that the tower is only 109 feet in height, which is considered short for a cell tower. He cannot make the tower invisible. Mr. Catalano inquired about how the height was determined. Mr. Parisi stated that the zoning bylaw requires a variance if the tower is greater than 110 feet. There is also a required setback from abutting properties. Mr. Catalano inquired whether it would be more effective to have a tower at the seminary. Mr. Parisi stated that while it is always best to use existing infrastructure, they could not accommodate all of the carriers in the cupola at the seminary. They also looked into the steeple of churches, but this would not work. They looked at the church up the street, but there was not enough room.

Mr. Hauck asked how many carriers would be located on the tower. Mr. Parisi stated that at the present time Verizon has signed on. There is enough room to have a maximum of four carriers and they are hoping that they will eventually have all four.

Stefanie Serafini inquired about other locations that they had looked at. Mr. Parisi stated that they have entered into an agreement to locate a tower at the Public Safety Building. However, there is a lot of infrastructure located below ground that has complicated this site.

Steve Homer of 563 Bay Road noted that Town Meeting did not authorize the Town Hall site for a tower. Town Meeting only authorized the town manager to enter into

a lease agreement on town land. He noted that 100 people have signed a petition in opposition to the cell tower at Town Hall. He stated that the historic district was created to prevent projects such as this tower from happening. He noted that the RFP only mentioned two sites. He inquired why Patton Park was not included. He stated that the balloon test does not give the true sense of the impact of the tower. He noted that the photos were taken in June when all of the leaves were on the trees. He noted that there will not be leaves on the trees for seven months of the year. He believes that the simulation does not give the true impact of the tower.

Mary Green inquired about the size of each array and the distance between the arrays. This issue was clarified. Mr. Homer noted that the memorial parks would be impacted by the tower.

Mr. Hauck inquired who the letter they were preparing would be sent to. It was noted that there would be a letter to the Planning Board and a letter to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Mr. Catalano asked the Commission members about their position on the tower. Mr. Howard stated that he believes that siting the tower behind Town Hall is a bad idea. He believes that there are other town owned sites that may be more suitable, such as the reservoir or the dump.

Mr. Catalano noted that there is a planning process currently going on for the restoration of Town Hall, which also possibly includes an addition. Since this process is incomplete, no-one knows the future of the Town Hall campus. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the impact of the tower on Town Hall.

Mr. Hauck stated that he does not know if he has enough information to make a decision.

Mr. Catalano believes the tower is an ill conceived idea. He believes that the Town Hall is the crown jewel of the historic district and that it is a bad idea to locate a tower behind the architectural crown jewel of the historic district. He believes that the tower will denigrate the district.

Elizabeth Wheaton stated that she believes that the tower will have a detrimental impact on the historic district.

Mr. Parisi stated that in other towns he has often received comments from landowners that they should locate a tower on their land. He has never received these comments from people in Hamilton. He believes that the reservoir is not an appropriate site because he would need to take down trees to build the tower. The town does not have many other sites where a tower could be located.

Mr. Howard made a motion to recommend that the tower should not be constructed in the DPW yard because it will impact Town Hall, the crown jewel of the historic district. Ms. Serafini seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

## DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW

Mr. Hauck stated that he would like to see changes to the draft of the demolition delay bylaw that was circulated. He stated that he would make modifications to it and send it to Mr. Fox to send it Donna Brewer for review and to determine how it could proceed to Town Meeting.

## OTHER BUSINESS

There several topics that were briefly discussed including changing their name to recognize that they are also the Historical Commission for the town; noting that the Historic District sign has been completed and should be installed soon; the new website needs a lot of work and the Commission's minutes should be added to it; and there has been a request to paint the cannons in Patton Park as an Eagle Scout project.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.