The Public Meeting of the Town of Essex Planning Board was held at the Essex Town Hall 3rd Floor Auditorium, 30 Martin Street.

In person attendance restriction has been lifted and Town Hall is open to the public as of June 1, 2021. Effective 9/14/2021, masks are again required in Town of Essex Municipal Facilities.

At 7:30 PM the Planning Board meeting was called to order by Chair, Kimberly Drake.

**Board Members present at Town Hall:** Kim Drake, Lisa O’Donnell, Westley Burnham, Michael McConnell, Matt Greco, S. Sturgis Crocker, Shelly Bradbury

There were also a number of members of the public in attendance.

**Administrative Assistant**: Mary Heeney

**BUILDING INSPECTOR’S REPORT:**

**10 Centennial Grove Road, Map-143, Lot 31**

The Building Inspector presented a building application for 10 Centennial Grove Road to replace an existing house that is to be demolished. A demo permit has not yet been issued.

Condition: Existing house must be demolished before a new house is started.

Lisa O’Donnell made a motion to approve the siting of a two family house at 10 Centennial Grove Road pending the issue of a demo permit.

Matt Greco seconded the motion.

The Board vote was unanimous.

**BOARD REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES:**

The board reviewed the Meeting Minutes of October 6, 2021

Michael McConnell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented

Lisa O’Donnell seconded the motion. The board approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING: 7:45 PM**

At 7:47 board Chair Kim Drake and board member Shelly Bradbury recused themselves from the Public Hearing citing that they were both abutters.

Vice chair, Lisa O’Donnell assumed Chairmanship for the Public Hearing.

The Chair asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing

Michael McConnell made a motion to open the Public Hearing on an application for a special permit filed by Tower North Development, LLC to install a 150’ free standing Monopole Tower and fencing to be located at 65 and 73 Eastern Avenue. Wes Burnham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lisa O’Donnell informed the public that the hearing was being recorded. She then read the

*Preamble for Public Hearings* and shared with those in attendance how the Public Hearing would be conducted. She also informed the audience that the Planning Board web page had several items listed that would provide additional information. These can be found under *Telecommunications Tower Applicant Information*

There were several attendees present speaking on behalf of Tower North Development.

* Dan Klasnick, Attorney Duval & Klasnick, LLC
* Elizabeth Rutkowski, Tower North Development
* Scott Adams, Advanced Engineering Group
* Keith Vellante, RF Engineer C Squared Systems, LLC

The Chair introduced Dan Klasnick who presented a power point on the Application for Special Permit for Monopole Telecommunications Tower. Dan Klasnick informed those present that on October 4, 2021 the Essex Zoning Board of Appeals voted unanimously to grant the four variances requested by Tower North for a free standing Monopole Tower.

The power point presentation started with the location of the Monopole Tower and the site selection process. It continued with the Bylaw 6-3.4.2 *Uses Requiring Special Permit* and how the installation of the free standing Telecommunications Tower is in compliance. Dan Klasnick discussed how by providing improved wireless service, the proposed cell tower will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning bylaw. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was presented showing five major limitations on municipalities with respect to decisions regarding wireless telecommunications facilities. One of the areas that generated discussion was the location of the Tower and the possibility of alternative sites. Tower North stated that they had reviewed numerous properties within the designated search area. There were also a number of maps provided addressing the location of the proposed Tower as well as the other sites. Tower North determined that the identified sites would not be feasible alternatives. Dan Klasnick reviewed these maps and informed those in attendance why some sites were rejected.

On August 28, Tower North conducted a balloon test:

A balloon test is used as a visual reference with a 3 ft. diameter helium filled balloon flown at the top elevation of the tower. 15 different photo locations were selected to illustrate tower visibility. These photographs were presented. There was visibility or partial visibility from only 7 locations.

The power point also included Verizon Wireless Installation information as well as Verizon Wireless RF report.

Verizon Wireless Installation:

* 6 panel antennas
* Equipment cabinets located on concrete pad within fenced area
* Propane powered backup generator on concrete pad – 500 gal. tank on separate pad

Verizon Wireless RF Report:

* Verizon Wireless determined that downtown Essex and surrounding area do not have reliable service.
* Based upon radio frequency studies, reports and computer models, Verizon Wireless determined they would be able to fill gaps in coverage through the installation of the facility at 73 Eastern Ave.

There was also a real estate market study completed to investigate potential impact that cell towers may have on adjacent residential properties. The study consisted a viewing of the area around the tower site, a review of the materials relating to the proposed tower and research into sales of properties that are located in close proximity or have visual exposure to a cell tower. Based on the study, the proposed tower will have no measurable impact on surrounding property values.

Lisa O’Donnell asked if the Planning board members had any questions.

Wes Burnham asked about having additional antennas if necessary for emergency services. Lisa O’Donnell replied that the tower is designed to accommodate three additional providers.

The floor was then opened up to questions or comments from the members of the audience.

 Questions

* Question: Where is the location of the coverage gap?

Answer: All on Main Street as well as Rt. 133 between Essex and Gloucester. Maps were presented showing the locations discussed.

* Question: Why is there a lot of coverage on marshlands?

Answer: Tower North reviewed many locations including the portion of 133 that crossed into West Gloucester. The topography of other areas of interest was reviewed as well. Certain areas would not address the necessary requirements.

Comments

* Comment: On the engineer drawing for the road. Asked that the road remain gravel . Also, what is the current coverage of impervious surface on land?
* Answer: Wes Burnham answered 25% for building coverage
* Comment: A resident is concerned on the possibility of many trees being cut down. Stated that even though the company says they will try to leave up as many as possible, would like to see an oversite on trees.
* Answer: Amy Kwesell asked to see plans that would show the trees to be cut down.

Lisa O’Donnell asked if there were any more questions or comments from the public on the Cell Tower presentation. There were none.

The Planning Board discussed the process to be used in making a decision on the Special Permit application filed by Tower North Development, LLC. Part of the discussion included the decision of the Board of Appeals to approve the four variances requested by the applicant.

Lisa O’Donnell asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Wes Burnham made a motion to close the Public Hearing for a special permit application to install a Wireless Communications Facility on the property located at 73 Eastern Avenue and 65 Eastern Avenue.

Michael McConnell seconded the motion.

The Board approved unanimously.

The Chair declared the Public Hearing closed at 9:30 PM

**Adjourn:**

Wes Burnham made a motion to adjourn the meeting

S. Sturgis Crocker seconded the motion

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members The Chair declared the Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.