

Meeting of Review Board
9-17-19

In attendance: Craig Modisher, Susan Pearce-Kelling, Bruce Murray, Don Barber, Ellen Harrison
Audience: Mark Fuentes (AT&T contractor, AiroSmith); 8 members of the public
Recording Secretary: Mark Witmer

7:02 pm. Meeting called to order by Chair Modisher and began discussion of possible vote tonight to accept SEQR Parts II and III. Ms. Pearce-Kelling asked about whether height variances would impact judgement on this; Mr. Modisher said that 135 ft. vs. 195 ft. doesn't impact the issues considered by SEQR.

Ms. Harrison asked for written application from Mr. Fuentes of applicant's proposal to reduce environmental impact. Mr. Fuentes responded that AT&T had originally proposed a 250 ft. tower, then reduced to 140 ft. 195 feet is the highest tower that can be built without requiring lighting.

Motion by Mr. Barber (second by Mr. Modisher):

Resolved, the Review Board approves SEQR Parts II and III as complete; and further be it Resolved, the Review Board authorizes Chair Modisher to sign a negative declaration of environmental impact; and further be it

Resolved, the height of the tower is immaterial to this judgement if the tower height is 195 ft. or less.

Vote:

Aye: Modisher, Pearce-Kelling, Barber, Harrison

Nay: Murray

Ms. Harrison and Mr. Murray expressed frustration that information requested at 8/20/19 meeting had only been provided today; not confident of information. Specifically, cell-signal coverage for 135 vs. 195 ft tower is not clear.

Mr. Murray and Ms. Pearce-Kelling feel information still lacking on East Miller Road Tower because it meets the 4-mile radius threshold for being evaluated as a possible co-location site. Mr. Fuentes responded that he failed to notice this tower in his project development.

Ms. Pearce-Kelling noted that the FCC application is for a higher tower and asked the question of whether this would allow the tower to build higher than what the Review Board approved. Mr. Modisher replied that this would not occur. Mr. Fuentes responded that the approved height is the height to be built.

Ms. Harrison brought up lighting. Ms. Wil Lawrence, in attendance, offered information she had obtained about lighting. FAA could require lighting if an air travel pathway was near enough to trigger, so the structure must be built to receive lighting if later required. Discussion to clarify when FAA provides final approval regarding lighting. Mr. Fuentes responded that FAA approval occurs prior to tower construction. Mr. Modisher clarified that construction doesn't occur until the Town approves tower height and form. Mr. Murray asked why impact of Ithaca airport has not been considered; Mr. Fuentes responded that it is not within 8-mi. triggering threshold.

Mr. Barber recommended that the Review Board ask the town attorney to clarify how the FAA participates in this process.

Ms. Harrison asked to have FCC application amended for 195 ft. tower height. She and Mr. Murray want assurance that a 195 ft. tower will not be required to have lights by the FAA.

Mr. Modisher amplified the two issues to be clarified:

1. FAA approval process
2. Amendment of FCC application to 195 ft.

Ms. Pearce-Kelling asked how future increases in local air travel might impact the tower and lighting. Mr. Fuentes responded that he will inquire with the local airport. A board member pointed out that the Ithaca airport is indeed within an 8-mile radius of the proposed tower site. Mr. Fuentes replied that it did not show up in his TOWAIR report.

Mr. Modisher offered that the two separate coverage maps are very unconvincing and difficult to compare. The written summary was helpful, but more information is needed, such as a map showing where cell signal coverage would be added.

Mr. Barber proposed that the Review Board seek another engineering review of the propagation maps. Review Board members unanimously requested a map that illustrates the coverage differences between 135- and 195-tower height. Mr. Murray asked that road names be provided on the map(s).

Ms. Harrison asked about requesting similar information for East Miller Road Tower.

Mr. Barber recommended the engineering firm that provided analyses for Clarity Connect broadband proposal.

Mr. Barber asked that the Review Board seek information from the town attorney on options the Review Board has for requesting extensions.

Next Review Board meeting set for Monday, October 21, at 7 pm. Requested information to be provided by Monday, October 14, and immediately posted to the town website.

Ms. Harrison asked that large format maps be provided: 24 x 36 inch.

Mr. Murray brought to attention FirstNet information provided by Code Officer Greenhouse.

Mr. Modisher will send a letter to Mr. Fuentes detailing tonight's requests of the Review Board

7:50 Meeting Adjourned