Petition No. 1027

Connecticut Light & Power

Haddam, Connecticut

Staff Report

May 10, 2012

On April 5, 2012, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from The Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed replacement of an existing guyed lattice communications tower in Haddam, Connecticut. Council member Phil Ashton and Siting Analyst David Martin visited the site on May 4, 2012 to review the proposal. John Morissette and Steve Florio represented CL&P at the field review.

CL&P currently owns and operates a 280-foot guyed lattice wireless communications tower at 330 Pokorny Road in Haddam. The tower is host for a number of different antennas for several different users, including CL&P, the Connecticut State Police, Valley Shore Communications, and Sprint/Nextel. It provides critical microwave communication links for both CL&P and the State Police. A detailed structural analysis of the existing tower determined that it was overstressed and that there was no practical way of reinforcing the tower to bring it into compliance with state building code and CL&P engineering requirements.

CL&P proposes to replace the existing tower with a self-supporting lattice tower at the same height. The center of the replacement tower would be located approximately 50 feet to the west of the existing tower, which is the only location where it is possible to erect the new tower between the existing guy wires. CL&P would relocate the antennas on the existing tower onto the replacement tower. The replacement tower would also include a yield point to effectively reduce its potential fall zone and would be lit to comply with FAA requirements.

There are two fence lines on the CL&P property on which the existing tower is located. An outer fence encloses the locations where the guy wires are anchored to the ground. A smaller, inner fence encloses the existing tower and several equipment shelters. This inner fence would have to be extended a short distance to surround the proposed replacement tower. But the outer fence would remain at its current dimensions.

A number of large, single family homes have been built in the area surrounding CL&P’s tower within the last twenty years. However, mature deciduous trees around the perimeter of CL&P’s property help to minimize the visible impact of the tower on the nearest homes. Council member Ashton recommended that CL&P submit a D&M plan to show additional evergreen trees that would be planted within the facility’s outer fence to help augment the existing vegetative screening of the tower.

The proposed replacement tower is not expected to have any substantial adverse environmental impacts. In fact, eliminating the existing guy wires will greatly reduce this wireless communications tower’s potential for causing bird fatalities.