

Petition No. 1102

Cellco

139 North Main Street, West Hartford

Staff Report

May 29, 2014

Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless (Cellco) and New Cingular Wireless, PCS, LLC (AT&T) currently maintain an existing telecommunications facility inside an existing cupola on the Gallaudet Hall building at American School for the Deaf (ASD) at 139 North Main Street, West Hartford. As a result of extensive renovations at ASD, Gallaudet Hall is scheduled to be demolished. In order to maintain continuity of service, on January 18, 2013, Cellco applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a 90-foot (stand-alone) clock tower telecommunications facility that would replace the cupola facility at Gallaudet Hall which became Docket No. 434.

On June 27, 2013, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) granted a Certificate to Cellco for the new 90-foot clock tower telecommunications facility at ASD. On October 21, 2013, Cellco submitted a Development and Management Plan (D&M Plan) to the Council. The Council approved the D&M Plan on October 31, 2013. Construction of the clock tower commenced on or about February 3, 2014, and due to weather conditions this past winter, is currently behind schedule. At the same time, ASD's scheduled demolition of Gallaudet Hall has been moving forward, requiring Cellco and AT&T to remove their existing antennas and related equipment before construction of the clock tower site will be completed.

In order to maintain critical wireless services in the area without interruption, Cellco and AT&T (collectively the Petitioners) submitted a petition to the Council for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate is required for the proposed installation of a temporary ballast tower and associated equipment at ASD. This temporary tower would be needed for an approximately five-month time period, from June 1, 2014 through October 1, 2014 while the construction of the permanent clock tower facility is completed and brought into operation.

The temporary tower would be a monopole design with an antenna mast at the top that would reach approximately 85 feet in height. The temporary tower would be located roughly 110 feet north of the clock tower location. AT&T would install three panel antennas at the 82-foot level of the tower. AT&T would also install three tower mounted amplifiers. Cellco would install six panel antennas at the 72-foot level of the tower. A total of 16 concrete blocks approximately 6-feet by 6-feet by 1-foot thick each would be used to provide weight on the ballast frame to act as the tower's temporary "foundation." A Professional Engineer duly licensed in the State of Connecticut has certified that the temporary ballast monopole tower is structurally adequate to support the proposed loading.

AT&T would set a temporary 12-foot by 20-foot equipment shelter at the site on top of eight-inch by eight-inch wooden timbers. Cellco would park a trailer at the site to include its equipment. Both Cellco and AT&T would each have battery backup systems to provide four to six hours of backup power. Portable generators could be used for supplemental backup power if needed. Utility service would be overhead and would utilize four new, temporary poles to access existing utility service on the subject property.

The site is a grassy area adjacent to a soccer field. There are no existing trees at the site to be removed. The visual impact of the proposed temporary facility is not expected to be more than that of the future clock

tower. The temporary tower, at 85 feet, would be shorter than the 90-foot clock tower. The temporary tower, as a monopole, also has a more narrow profile than the clock tower. The overall viewshed of this temporary facility would be comparable or slightly less than that of the already approved permanent facility.

The maximum worst-case power density would be 73.8 percent of the applicable limit. No marking or lighting or notice to the Federal Aviation Administration is required for this temporary facility. The project is expected to meet applicable noise standards.

By letter dated March 19, 2014, ASD granted AT&T and Cellco permission to file for any required permitting to install the temporary facility. Cellco has provided notice to all abutting property owners, the Town of West Hartford, and others as required on May 2, 2014. No comments have been received to date.

