

DOCKET NO. 33

AN APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY UNITED CABLE : CONNECTICUT SITING
TELEVISION CORPORATION OF EASTERN :
CONNECTICUT FOR A CERTIFICATE OF : COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC :
NEED FOR THE ERECTION OF A COMMUNITY :
ANTENNA TELEVISION HEAD-END TOWER AND :
EARTH STATION IN THE TOWN OF BOLTON. : July 12, 1983

O P I N I O N

United Cable Television Corporation of Eastern Connecticut applied for a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need for the construction of a cable antenna television tower, earth station, and associated equipment at 200 Boston Turnpike, Bolton. The tower is proposed to support a microwave antenna to receive signals from a transmitter in Hartford and off-air antennas to receive broadcast signals. The earth station is proposed to receive signals from satellites. These facilities are proposed to serve the entire Area 12 Cable TV franchise.

Following the issuance of due notice, Council members inspected the proposed site and held a public hearing on the application at the Town Hall in Bolton on June 8, 1983. The applicant presented testimony and exhibits to support its claim that the facilities were necessary, that adverse environmental effects would be minimal, and that alternative sites and technologies were not available or appropriate. The Bolton Board of Selectmen, in a limited appearance, supported the proposal. The Department of Environmental Protection, in written comments, noted the possible esthetic impacts but concluded that the site was an adequate and logical choice for the proposed head-end. The Department of Economic Development commented that the facility would benefit the public.

The Council considered the potential adverse environmental effects of the proposed tower and concludes that they are not sufficient to deny the proposal. The proposed facilities are not incompatible with the land

uses in the surrounding area, nor with the local zoning of the area. The facilities will be largely screened from view, and no important historic or recreational areas are in the immediate vicinity. Additionally, there are no wetlands on the site and tree clearing will be minimal. Potential hazards from tower collapse are minimal if they exist at all. The structure is designed to collapse on itself in such an accident and in any event no facilities other than those of the applicant are within striking distance of the tower.

Since the facilities are to receive signals only, the microwave frequency power densities are calculated to be well within accepted safety standards. However, the Council will specify that no microwave facilities may be added to the tower without the prior approval of the Council to assure that any new developments in this field are considered. The public need for CATV service has been established by the state legislature and the state Department of Public Utility Control which awarded United the franchise for this area. The applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposed facilities are necessary to meet that need.

The applicant investigated not only alternative technologies but also several alternative sites. None of these were available or suitable for the proposed facilities. The selected site is centrally located, which will allow the entire service area to be wired from one head-end facility, thus reducing the number of towers on the Connecticut landscape. The selection of a multi-beam earth station will allow one such structure where several would otherwise be required.

The applicant noted that the only nearby tower was unsuitable for the proposed facilities and no effort for a sharing arrangement was made.

However, United stated their willingness to negotiate with public and private utilities for the use of space on their tower, and the Council commends this attitude.

Based on the foregoing, the Council will order that a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need be issued to United Cablevision for the construction of a CATV tower, earth station, and other associated equipment as proposed.