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May 18, 2021

Melanie Bachman, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
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Dear Ms. Bachman

I am writing to request a 90 day continuance of the hearing on Docket #499, **Homeland Towers, LLC and New Cingular Wirelss d/b/a AT&T application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a telecommunications facility located at 16 Coote Hill Road, Sherman Connecticut**, scheduled for May 25, 2021, pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 9L, that

“all statutory and regulatory administrative time requirements and deadlines under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, the Public Utility Environmental Standards Act and the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, including, but not limited to, final decision deadlines and any other time limitations for applications, petitions, Development & Management Plans, requests for tower sharing and requests for exempt modifications shall be extended for a period not to exceed 90 days.”

On June 12, 2013, AT&T submitted a Technical Report (“AT&T’s 2013 Technical Report”) to the Town of Sherman proposing a wireless telecommunications tower facility at 16 Coote Hill Road. Shortly thereafter, following a Town Meeting to approve the funds, the Town of Sherman engaged RCC Consultants at a cost of almost \$15,000.00 to assist the Town and the previously appointed Public Safety Communications Committee in analyzing Cellular Communications in Sherman. In 2012, they did a similar analysis, also for \$15,000.00 to analyze radio frequency communications to enable improved communications for the emergency services and public works providers in Sherman. Their analysis was reported to the Board of Selectmen on January 24, 2013 by the Public Safety Communications Committee. The cellular communications analysis was reported to the Board of Selectmen on September 26, 2013.

An alternative site was proposed by the Public Safety Communications Committee following the analysis by RCC Consultants. RCC found that a 100' tower at that site would cover 30.85% of the Town whereas the Coote Hill site at 170' only covered 17.8% of the Town. AT&T sent representatives to the site, identified as 26 Wagon Wheel Road, the 8th site they considered in this application. The site was owned, at the time, by the Naromi Land Trust. The 10.47 acres site was part of a 4 lot subdivision with an approved access road design, approved by both the Sherman Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inlands and Wetlands Commission. AT&T felt that a grade of 20% on part of the approved access road was too steep. No adverse or contradictory finding was made by the AT&T Radio Frequency Engineer as alleged in this application. Furthermore, Homeland Towers, LLC was not involved in these discussions.

In the current application, Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T state that "this parcel was reviewed by the AT&T Radio Frequency Engineer and was rejected as it did not provide adequate coverage to the intended area" directly contradicting the RCC Consultants' analysis. The Town of Sherman paid for a balloon float study at this site. The balloon had to be raised to 120' to clear the top of the tree line at that location, 20' higher than the elevation in the RCC Consultants' analysis.

Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T also state that they walked the 9th site, identified as 28 Wagon Wheel Road. They incorrectly identify the owner at the time as the Naromi Land Trust. They did not walk that property at that time. It was not owned by the Naromi Land Trust until December 2019, some 6 ½ years later.

With respect to both of these sites, the Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T application goes on to state that "After further meetings and discussions, the Naromi Board Members voted to not enter into a lease with Homeland Towers on any of Naromi's properties." As a former Vice President of the Naromi Land Trust, present at Naromi Board meetings in 2013 and 2014, I can state that this was not the case at that time. There was no follow-up by AT&T after the site visit in the summer of 2013 other than to say that the section of access road at a 20% grade was steeper than they wanted to develop.

Ray Vergatti of Homeland Towers, LLC engaged with Naromi in 2015. He visited several sites. One promising site would have required a silo and barn structure and Naromi was prepared to consider a lower lease payment in exchange for barn space that could be used by a tenant farmer. Mr. Vergatti did not pursue the matter and Naromi informed him subsequently that they could not consider a cell tower on their property at that time.

The current Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T application clearly states that AT&T put their 2013 proposal on deferred action status in 2014 for business reasons.

“AT&T completed the municipal consultation process and had intended to file a certificate application for a tower site on the Parcel. In 2014, AT&T made a business decision to simply defer the site and an application was not filed with the Siting Council at that time.” (page 6 of application).

This is a sample of the problems with this application as presented. There are many more environmental, wetland, habitat and issues that have not been adequately addressed in the application.

I and an ad hoc group of other Sherman residents has formed an informal organization that we are calling Sherman Citizens for Responsible Telecommunications Sites. We have raised money and hired the same Radio Frequency Engineer, Richard Tourjounian, that did the analyses for the Town of Sherman in 2012 and 2013. Mr. Tourjounian has previously worked for the Town of New Fairfield as well. His company is Allegiant Wireless. Mr. Tourjounian has suggested that we make an effort to collaborate with Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T to better understand their objectives in this application and to see if we can collaborate on either modifying the application for this site or finding a more suitable site in the area. Mr. Tourjounian has pointed out that no mention has been made of a tower owned by the Town of New Fairfield (the tower is in Patterson, NY) that is located 2.4 miles west southwest from the proposed location. The Town of Sherman has previously identified that tower as a very good location for emergency services and department of public works radio antenna but was unable to reach a lease agreement with the Town of New Fairfield.

Mr. Tourjounian has further proposed that AT&T give their radio frequency consultants, C², permission to speak with Mr. Tourjounian to answer radio frequency questions that are not supported by data in the application.

Though we know that there are gaps in service, there have been some significant technological improvements that have enabled residents in the southern part of Sherman to be able to use their cell phones. More homes have expanded their broadband wireless networks through the use of mesh network routers that newer cell phones are able to use to complete phone calls.

While Homeland Towers, LLC and AT&T have generously offered to host the two 20' whip antennas for emergency services and the department of public works at no cost to the Town of Sherman, we are of the opinion that there is a more agreeable solution to this problem.

The pandemic has significantly compromised the ability of local residents to communicate and organize to achieve these goals in a manner more satisfactory to all parties concerned.

AT&T put this project on deferred action status in 2014 as a business decision. Engaging with the community for another 90 days ought not to be a significant hardship given the timeframe forecast for this project.

While the Pre-hearing interrogatories, dated April 21, 2021, address some of the concerns that we have, I and the ad hoc members of the Sherman Citizens for Responsible Telecommunications Sites respectfully request that this matter be continued for 90 days to August 24, 2021, pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 9L, to enable our radio frequency engineer to communicate with the AT&T engineers, C² or others, to try to collaboratively arrive at a more agreeable solution.

Cordially,

Stan Greenbaum

Stan Greenbaum

ATTACHMENTS:

Sherman Public Safety Communications: Report on Phase 1, January 24, 2013

RCC Consultants' Analysis of Cell Phone Coverage, Town of Sherman: (Report on Phase 2, Board of Selectmen, September 26, 2013

Draft of letter from Public Safety Communications Committee to AT&T, shared at Board of Selectmen's meeting, September 26, 2013

CC:

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Attorneys for the Applicants

A copy of all correspondence shall also be sent to:

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Attention: Raymond Vergati
Manuel Vicente

AT&T
84 Deerfield Lane
Meriden, CT 06450
Attention: Brian Leyden \
Harry Carey

Don Lowe, First Selectman
Town of Sherman
Mallory Town Hall

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