

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

IN RE:

APPLICATION OF OPTASITE TOWERS LLC
AND OMNIPOINT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND
OPERATION OF A TELECOMMUNICATIONS
FACILITY AT 58 MONTANO ROAD/
618 NEIPSIC ROAD IN THE TOWN OF
GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT

DOCKET NO. 359

Date: JUNE 12, 2008

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL LIBERTINE

Q1. Mr. Libertine, please state your name and position.

A. Michael Libertine and I am Director of Environmental Services for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. ("VHB"). I am also a Licensed Environmental Professional in the State of Connecticut. VHB is located at 54 Tuttle Place in Middletown, Connecticut.

Q2. Please state your qualifications.

A. I have a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut with a concentration in Natural Resources Management and Bachelor of Arts degree from Stonehill College in Business. My background includes over 25 years of professional experience, including 17 years of environmental engineering consulting. I have been Project Manager for more than 1600 environmental site assessments and field investigations for property transfers in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Florida and Canada. In addition, I have assisted in the permitting of more

than 500 wireless telecommunication facilities in New England during the past ten years. My responsibilities include: coordination and oversight of site screenings and environmental assessments to fulfill NEPA requirements, environmental site assessments, wetland delineations and assessments, vegetative/biological surveys, noise analyses, visual impacts analyses and regulatory permitting support.

Q3. Please describe your involvement in this matter.

A. VHB was responsible for preparing a Visual Resources Evaluation report for the two proposed, alternate sites at 58 Montano Road ("Site A") and 618 Neipsic Road ("Site B"). The purpose of this Visual Resources Evaluation Report was to evaluate the potential visibility of the proposed telecommunications facility ("Facility") from the surrounding areas from either Site.

VHB was also responsible for conducting the NEPA screen for the property locate at 497A Wickham Road (Site B) (found in the Application at Exhibit Q) and reviewing the wetlands report and culvert design for the wetlands crossing proposed at Site B (found in the Application at Exhibit L). In addition, VHB has reviewed and adopted the NEPA screen prepared by Kleinfelder East, Inc. for the property located at 58 Montano Road (Site A) (found in the Application at Exhibit P).

Q4. Please describe the process for conducting the Visual Resource Evaluation.

A. At the request of Optasite, VHB conducted the Visual Resource Evaluation (found at Exhibit M of the Application), which included the preparation of a computer-generated viewshed map and performing a balloon float test at

each of the two alternate sites on February 24, 2008. The predictive model is employed to assess potential visibility throughout the entire Study Area (a two mile radius surrounding the site), including private property and/or otherwise inaccessible areas for field verification. The “balloon float” test and Study Area drive-through reconnaissance are conducted to obtain location and height representations of the proposed Facility, back-check the initial computer model results and provide documentation from publicly accessible areas. Results of both activities are analyzed and incorporated into the final viewshed map and report.

Q5. Please describe how you prepared the viewshed analysis for the Visual Resources Evaluation.

A. Using ERSI’s ArcView® Spatial Analyst, a computer modeling tool, the areas from which the top of the tower is expected to be visible are calculated. This is based on information entered into the computer model, such as tower height, its ground elevation, existing vegetation and surrounding topography. Data incorporated in the model includes 7.5 minute digital elevation models (“DEMs”) and a digital forest layer for the project area. The forested areas within the study area are overlaid on the DEMs and then a series of constraints are applied to the computer model to achieve a realistic estimate of where the tower will be visible from within the surrounding landscape.

Also included in the viewshed model is a data layer, obtained from the Connecticut State Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”), which depicts various land and water resources such as state parks and forests, recreational facilities, dedicated open space and DEP boat launches.

Additionally, information is gathered from the Connecticut State Department of Transportation (“DOT”) and local officials to determine if there are any state or locally designated scenic or historic roadways.

Q6. Please describe how you conducted the balloon test.

A. The balloon float test consisted of raising a helium-filled weather balloon, approximately four feet in diameter, to the height of 120 feet at Site A and 130 feet at Site B. Once the balloons were aloft, VHB personnel drove the public road system within a two-mile radius (the “Study Area”) to inventory those areas where the balloons were visible and photograph the balloons from numerous vantage points to document representative locations where the proposed tower will be visible from either site. The location of each photograph was recorded using a hand-held GPS receiver and subsequently plotted on a USGS 7.5 Minute topographic quad map, utilizing ESRI's ArcView® Spatial Analyst software, to indicate their approximate distance and relative location to the proposed Facility at either Site.

Q7. How were the representative locations chosen?

A. Several photo locations were selected prior to the in-field evaluation, utilizing a preliminary version of the viewshed map to identify areas adjacent to public roads from where the proposed Facility (at either Site) might be visible. Other locations were identified based on in-field observations made during the time of the balloon float.

Q8. Please describe the visibility of the proposed Facility at Site A and Site B.

A. Areas from which the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible from Site A year-round comprise only 24 acres or less than 1% of the entire study area. We expect the proposed Facility at Site A to be visible along portions of Route 2, Wickham Road, Neipsic Road and Old Stage Road. We estimate approximately 6 residential properties may have partial views of the proposed Facility from portions of their parcels. In addition, the proposed Facility at Site A may be at least partially visible seasonally (during “leaf off” conditions) from an additional 7 acres and portions of approximately 4 additional residential properties.

At Site B, the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible year-round from 19 acres or less than 1% of the entire study area. We expect the proposed Facility at Site B to be visible along Route 2, Wickham Road, Neipsic Road and Oakwood Drive. We estimate approximately 9 residences may have partial views of the proposed Facility from portions of their parcels. In addition, the proposed Facility at Site B may be at least partially visible seasonally (during “leaf off” conditions) from an additional 10 acres and portions of approximately 6 additional residential properties.

Q9. Please describe any features of the Site A Property or Site B Property that will assist in reducing any potential visual impact of the proposed Facility.

A. Existing topography and mature vegetation in the area surrounding both Sites serve to reduce potential visual impacts of the proposed Facility from the surrounding areas. In addition, Route 2 is proximate to both Site A and Site B, limiting the amount of residential receptors within the project vicinity.

Q10. Will the proposed Facility at either site have any impact on any sensitive visual receptors such as scenic, historic or recreational sites or parks?

A. No, the proposed Facility at either site will not impact any sensitive visual receptors. While there are parks and hiking trails within the study area, including J. B. Williams Park, the proposed Facility at either Site will not be visible from those areas.

Q11. Based upon your experience, can you please describe what impact, if any, the proposed Facility (at either Site) will have on wildlife in the area, including bird migration and breeding?

A. The construction and operation of the proposed Facility (at either Site) would have no permanent adverse impacts on wildlife in the area, including bird migration and breeding. The construction area is minimal (significantly less than that of a residence) and the facility is proximate to similar habitats that would allow for natural relocation of potential wildlife from the construction zone. The facility generates very little traffic once operative; a technician might visit the site on a monthly basis, post-construction.

6-11-08
Date


Michael Libertine

Subscribed and sworn before me this 11 day of June, 2008.

By: 
Notary
My Commission
expires: August 31, 2010