

**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 39 MAENNERCHOR AVENUE
NORWICH (TAFTVILLE), CONNECTICUT**

DOCKET NO. 365

Date: AUGUST 14, 2008

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KOPERWHATS

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

A. Michael Koperwhats and I am a planner working at Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. ("VHB"). VHB is located at 54 Tuttle Place in Middletown, Connecticut.

Q2. Please state your qualifications.

A. I have a masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Hunter College of the City University of New York. My background includes nearly twelve years of professional planning experience, including over eight years of experience of various telecommunications regulatory and support work. As such, I have assisted in the permitting of more than 300 wireless telecommunications facilities in New York and New England during the past eight years. My responsibilities include coordination and oversight of site screenings and environmental assessments to fulfill National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") requirements, visual impact 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 proposed site at 39 Maennerchor Avenue in Norwich (the "Site"), which is located on property owned by the Maennerchor Club (the "Property"). The Property is currently developed with the Club's building and associated parking area. The purpose of this Visual Resources Evaluation Report was to evaluate the potential visibility of the proposed telecommunications facility ("Facility") from the surrounding areas.

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 J of the Application), which included the preparation of a computer-generated viewshed map and performing a balloon test at the Site on July 18 and 19 of 2007. The balloon tests consisted of raising a balloon, four feet in diameter, to the height of 120 feet at the Site. Once the balloon was aloft, VHB staff photographed the balloon from numerous vantage points within a two-mile radius (the "Study Area") to determine the actual locations where the proposed tower will be visible. 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.

Q5. 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 might be visible. Other locations were identified based on in-field observations made during the time that the photographic documentation was being conducted, including areas along public roadways where the tower may be partially visible.

Q6. 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 were 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.

Q7. Please describe the visibility of the proposed Facility.

A. Areas from which the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible year-round comprise only 175 acres or just over 2% of the entire Study Area, with a significant portion of that visibility occurring over the open water of the Shetucket River and open fields to the southeast of that river. The proposed Facility will be visible along portions of Route 12 commercial corridor. The topography found within the Study Area and the existing mature vegetation on the host Property serve to minimize the visual effects of the proposed Facility. We estimate approximately 30 residences will have partial views of the proposed Facility.

In addition, the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible seasonally (during “leaf off” conditions) from an additional 64 acres and approximately an additional 14 residences.

Q8. Will the proposed Facility have any impact on any sensitive visual receptors such as scenic, historic or recreational sites or parks?

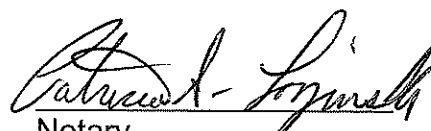
A. No, the proposed Facility will not impact any sensitive visual receptors. There are no state or locally designated scenic roads within a 2-mile radius of the proposed Facility.

The statements above are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

08/12/08
Date


Michael Koperwhats

Subscribed and sworn before me this 12 day of August, 2008.

By: 
Notary

My Commission expires: August 31, 2010