

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Message Center Management application for a  
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and  
Public Need for the construction, maintenance,  
and operation of a replacement telecommunications  
facility located at 4 Dittmar Road, Redding, Connecticut

Docket No. 425

March 20, 2012

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF NATALIE KETCHAM, FIRST SELECTMAN  
TOWN OF REDDING, CONNECTICUT

Q1. Please state your name, position, and place of employment.

A1. My name is Natalie Ketcham, and I am First Selectman for the Town of Redding,  
Connecticut.

Q2. What is the purpose of your testimony in this Docket?

A2. The purpose of my testimony is to provide the Town's perspective on Message Center  
Management's (MCM) proposal to replace an existing guyed tower with a monopine-style tower  
(Tower) and make other alterations to the tower's compound (collectively, the Project) at 4  
Dittmar Road in Redding (Site).

Q3. Generally speaking, what is the Town's overall opinion of the Project?

A3. In general, the Town supports the Project, although with some reservations. The Project  
provides an opportunity for the Town, its residents, and MCM to work together to achieve  
mutually beneficial results. MCM must address some lingering issues, though, and we expect  
them to do so through their answers to the interrogatories we filed on March 2, 2012.

1 Q4. What sort of opportunities does the Project provide?

2 A4. For example, the existing guyed lattice tower is an eyesore. MCM's proposal to replace  
3 the lattice tower with a monopine-style tower represents an opportunity to significantly improve  
4 the appearance of the tower and reduce the visual impact of the tower on the surrounding  
5 properties. This is predicated on MCM installing the same model monopine as the tower in  
6 Windsor, Connecticut, which MCM showed to the current tower's abutting neighbors. This is a  
7 comparatively realistic design, while other styles can stand out on the horizon as extremely poor  
8 attempts at "stealth" a cell tower.

9

10 Q5. Would you briefly describe the visual shielding proposals?

11 A5. MCM proposes to shield the compound with an eight-foot-high wood slat fence  
12 surrounded by arborvitae for evergreen screening. The abutting property owners propose  
13 planting their own evergreen screening on their properties close to the shared property line.

14

15 Q6. What is the Town's position on the visual shielding proposals?

16 A6. The Town supports MCM's proposal as an acceptable minimum amount of visual  
17 screening. However, the Town believes that a different species of tree should be used to surround  
18 the compound, and I refer you to the testimony of the Town's Deputy Tree Warden for details on  
19 the specific species. The Town would certainly support more screening if MCM were willing to  
20 provide it. In addition, the Town supports the concept of property-line vegetative screening on  
21 abutting property as a reasonable way to prevent potential damage to such screening by Mr.  
22 Paradise. MCM should bear the cost of such screening. The neighbors have engaged the services  
23 of local arborists to assist them with this screening. The Town takes no position on specific

1 plans, designs, or proposals proposed by individual abutting property owners, only that screening  
2 should be made available to the extent supported by the Town Tree Warden. The Siting Council  
3 will hear from Sean McNamara, the Town's Tree Warden, regarding the requests by the various  
4 neighbors and the vegetative screening that the Town will support.

5

6 Q7. What are the Town's concerns regarding the Project's safety?

7 A7. The Town has three primary safety concerns. The first is the fall zone of the Tower. As it  
8 is currently proposed, the Tower can fall onto an abutting neighbor's property. MCM has not yet  
9 explained what safety measures it will take to address this issue. The second is the tower's  
10 resistance to high wind speeds. The Town is specifically concerned about a monopine design  
11 because of the additional surface area not found in a guyed lattice tower or a monopole tower.  
12 The Town would like to see engineering reports certifying the specific tower's capability to  
13 withstand high wind speeds. The third relates to the break points of a monopine tower. The Town  
14 needs to know how this type of tower will fall if it breaks, especially in light of the recent  
15 tropical storm and other strong weather. We expect MCM to provide all of this information in  
16 response to the interrogatories we issued on March 2, 2012.

17

18 Q8. Does the Town have any concerns about noise from the Project?

19 A8. Yes. Potential noise emitters at the Project include air conditioning compressors and  
20 diesel-powered generators for backup electrical power. MCM conducted a noise study and  
21 submitted it as part of their Application. That study concluded that noise from the Project will  
22 not exceed the State of Connecticut's applicable noise regulations. The Town appreciates  
23 MCM's effort to conduct this study, but the Town needs more information.

1

2 Q9. What additional noise-related information does the Town need?

3 A9. We need to know the peak decibel level of the equipment when it is operating at its  
4 noisiest as measured at the closest property line. MCM's noise study is not clear on whether the  
5 measurements were taken under these conditions. The Town is also asking MCM to provide  
6 information to the Siting Council on expanded noise reduction techniques such as additional  
7 insulation for the compressors and noise suppression caps on the compound.

8

9 Q10. Is the Town concerned about future expansion of the height of the tower?

10 A10. Yes. Previously, the Town strongly opposed the ten-foot expansion proposed in 2005  
11 through Petition Number 735. The Siting Council denied that Petition because that proposal  
12 could have had a "substantial adverse environmental effect" as compared to the need at that time.  
13 Under MCM's current proposal, the tower would reach 127 feet and would be extendable to 147  
14 feet to add additional carriers. At this time, the Town is prepared to accept a 127-foot tower  
15 provided that it meets the appearance requirements set forth below. The Town is extremely  
16 uncomfortable with the prospect of a 147-foot tower. In fact, we would fully support a Siting  
17 Council decision to prohibit future extension beyond 127 feet.

18

19 Q11. What about the final appearance of the monopine?

20 A11. As anyone who has driven around Connecticut knows, there is a wide range of  
21 appearance in monopine-designed cell towers. They all stand out from their surroundings to  
22 varying degrees. Some can be comparatively realistic, such as the tower I mentioned previously  
23 in Windsor, Connecticut, which MCM showed to the current tower's abutting neighbors. That

1 exact model and design would be acceptable to the Town. Any other model or design that is less  
2 comparatively realistic than the Windsor tower would be unacceptable to the Town.

3

4 Q12. Any final comments?

5 A12. I would like to reiterate that the Town sees this Project as a positive opportunity. The  
6 interests of many parties need to be balanced, however, and as First Selectman, my primary  
7 interest is the protection of the Town, in part by making sure that MCM, T-Mobile, and any other  
8 companies involved are good neighbors to the abutting property owners and the rest of the Town.  
9 Everyone involved is making progress toward that goal, and I hope we can maintain that forward  
10 momentum.

11

12

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

14

15 Natalie Ketcham  
16 Natalie Ketcham

March 20, 2012

17

18