Petition No. 1055

New Cingular Wireless

Torrington, Connecticut

Staff Report

January 23, 2013

On December 17, 2012, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC (AT&T) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for a proposed installation of a wireless telecommunications facility located on the Torrington campus of the University of Connecticut at 855 University Drive in Torrington, Connecticut. Council member Robert Hannon and Siting Analyst David Martin visited the site on January 23, 2013 to review the proposal. Michael Libertine and Dean Gustafson of All Points Technology (APT) represented AT&T at the field review. AT&T’s proposed installation was previously submitted to the Council as a tower share request (TS-CING-143-121022). At its meeting of November 15, 2012, the Council voted to deny the tower share request and have AT&T resubmit its proposal as a petition.

AT&T’s installation would consist of placing six antennas at a centerline height of 297 feet on an existing 300-foot guyed lattice tower owned and operated by Connecticut Public Broadcasting, which leases the area from the state. There are no wireless carriers now on this tower. Currently the base of the tower is enclosed within a small fenced-in area, approximately ten feet by ten feet with a six-foot high chain link fence. For its ground equipment, AT&T would enlarge this area significantly to accommodate its 11-foot by 20-foot shelter and backup diesel generator. AT&T would also bring a new gravel access drive, approximately 485 feet long, to the enlarged compound. This drive would follow an old cart path. Utilities would be brought to the compound underground within the easement for the access drive.

In order for the existing tower to be able to accommodate AT&T’s antennas, AT&T must reinforce it. The planned reinforcements include replacing two 20-foot sections of leg members and installing new guy wires and anchors.

The installation of the access drive and the new guy anchors will require some disturbance to the wetland system around the existing tower. Wetland impacts would include both permanent and temporary disturbance. APT has prepared plans to minimize the disturbance to the wetlands and to restore previous disturbances caused by the original installation of the tower. Cumulative wetland impacts associated with the project will require a permit from the Corps of Engineers, which APT is pursuing. The clearing associated with the new access drive and the new guy wires and anchors would require the removal of 130 trees with a diameter at breast height of six inches or more.

The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed AT&T’s proposal and determined that it will have no adverse effect on historic and cultural resources. DEEP has determined that the project will not impact any extant populations of threatened, endangered, or special concern species.

Council staff calculates that AT&T’s antennas would have a power density equivalent to 1.9% of the FCC limit for maximum permissible exposure.

Because AT&T is not extending the height of the tower, the addition of its antennas would have only a minor incremental impact on the existing tower’s visibility. In addition, the tower is located in a very sparsely developed area of Torrington that has little residential, or any other, development in the surrounding vicinity.

Although AT&T’s antenna installation will have some wetlands impacts, its project would mitigate impacts caused by the tower’s original erection and by a general lack of maintenance at the site. Overall, the proposed project is not expected to have any substantial adverse environmental impacts.