

Petition No. 1130  
DESPP  
East Haddam, Connecticut  
Staff Report  
February 19, 2015

On December 23, 2014, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the replacement of an existing 120-foot tall monopole tower with a self-supporting lattice tower of the same height. The tower site is at 194 Mount Parnassus Road in East Haddam, Connecticut. Council members Phil Ashton and Larry Levesque with Siting Analyst David Martin and Supervising Siting Analyst Christina Walsh visited the site on February 4, 2015 to review the proposal. Brian Benito and Matt Valleau represented DESPP at the field review. Craig Mansfield, the Emergency Management Director of the Town of East Haddam, was also present.

The existing 120-foot monopole was erected prior to the 1960s and currently hosts antennas of the DESPP and the Department of Transportation (DOT). DESPP is now working with DOT and the Town of East Haddam to upgrade their respective public safety telecommunications systems. The three parties are interested in using the Mt. Parnassus Road site, but the existing tower is structurally deficient and not capable of supporting all of the anticipated antenna systems. DESPP seeks to replace the existing monopole with a 120-foot lattice tower, designed to the Revision G tower standard that could accommodate all of the intended antenna systems as well potentially hosting commercial wireless antenna systems in the future. A lattice tower would provide the stability needed by DESPP to maintain microwave links between its adjacent sites. This location would also provide much improved public safety coverage for the Town of East Haddam, which encompasses a large area with topography that is difficult for wireless telecommunications.

In addition to replacing the existing tower, DESPP would replace an existing 80 square foot equipment building with an 882 square foot equipment building that would be used by each of the three parties. The new equipment building would include a 70 kW generator, which would provide back up power for all three tower users. The generator would run on propane, which would be supplied from an 1,800 gallon propane tank to be buried at the site.

The new tower and equipment building would be enclosed by an eight-foot tall chain link fence within a compound area of approximately 6,500 square feet. When asked, the DESPP representatives said they could specify a small mesh size to make climbing the fence more difficult.

DESPP submitted its plans to the State Historic Preservation Office for its review. SHPO determined that no historic properties would be affected by the proposal. A review of the Natural Diversity Data Base map for East Haddam indicates that no State or Federal Listed Species occur in the vicinity of the site.

The area around the Mount Parnassus site is heavily wooded with sparse single family residential development. The existing tower is scarcely visible amid the trees, so much so that Council representatives drove past it even though they were looking for it. The replacement tower, although it would present a broader profile, will be set further back from the road and should not be significantly more visible, even to the nearest neighbors.

DESPP calculates that the power density of the antennas to be located on the replacement tower would equal approximately 2.5% of the FCC's Maximum Permissible Emissions limit.

For this petition, DESPP notified the Town and abutting property owners. No comments have been received from any neighbors. The Town fully endorses the proposal.

This proposed tower replacement is not expected to have any substantial adverse environmental effects. Staff recommends approval with the condition that the Council shall be notified in writing when the existing tower is removed and the new self-supporting lattice tower is operational.

**Aerial view of tower site vicinity**



**View of existing monopole**

