

DOCKET NO. 132 - An application of Continental Cablevision Company of Western New England, Inc., for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction of a community antenna television tower in the Town of Hartland, Connecticut.

Connecticut  
Siting  
Council  
May 30, 1990

ORIGINAL

#### OPINION

On December 20, 1989, Continental Cablevision of Western New England, Inc., (Continental) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) for the construction of a community antenna television (CATV) tower in the Town of Hartland, Connecticut. The proposed tower would be 220 feet in height and support one 10-foot dish antenna. This antenna would receive signals from Continental's existing CATV tower in Stafford. The proposed Hartland tower would distribute the television signals to customers in the West Hartland section of the Town of Hartland. West Hartland presently does not have cable television service.

On March 1, 1990, the Council held a hearing on the construction of the proposed tower in the Town of Hartland. The Council was troubled by the applicant's lack of preparation and documentation at this hearing. Such basic information as the proposed tower's marking and lighting requirements, and the surroundings of the proposed site was not available at the time of the hearing; moreover, the applicant was uncertain as to other aspects of CATV tower construction and tower alternatives.

What is certain, however, is that the construction of this tower at the proposed site behind the West Hartland Fire Department building would have a significant visual effect on this small rural community.

The Town of Hartland Planning and Zoning Commission is opposed to the proposed tower site and recommends that Continental explore other options. One alternative method of providing cable service to the people of West Hartland would be to turn the provision of cable service in West Hartland over to AMRAC, which has a cable franchise in nearby Riverton, Connecticut. Continental does not oppose such a resolution and has had discussions with AMRAC representatives about this.

Such a transfer of a franchise area would require the approval of the Department of Public Utility Control. The Council encourages such a resolution, in order that the people of West Hartland obtain cable television service as soon as possible.

Continental had investigated the possibility of stringing cable from an existing East Hartland facility either around or through the Barkhamsted Reservoir. This option is not viable because the Metropolitan District Commission, owner and operator of the Barkhamsted Reservoir, refused Continental's request to embark on such a project. Continental also investigated several alternative tower sites in the Hartland area, but these were rejected due to insufficient elevation, unavailability, or insufficient size. A signal relay system between Stafford, East Hartland, and West Hartland was investigated, but such a system would require a higher tower and would degrade the transmitted signals.

In conclusion, the placement of the proposed 220-foot CATV tower within the village of West Hartland would be a significant visual intrusion and does not yet appear to be the best solution to the problem of providing cable television service to this community. The visual intrusion of this obstruction marked and lighted tower would outweigh the benefits of the immediate provision of cable television service to this rural community. Clearly, the erection of this tower at the proposed site might not be the best solution to the problem of providing cable television service to this community, if the AMRAC system could serve the West Hartland area. The Council will therefore deny the proposed tower site without prejudice, and encourage Continental to explore all other alternatives, including the option of cable service by AMRAC.