

DOCKET NO. 75

AN APPLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND : CONNECTICUT SITING  
TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR A CERTIFICATE OF :  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC : COUNCIL  
NEED FOR CELLULAR TELEPHONE FACILITIES IN :  
THE CITY OF DANBURY AND EITHER THE TOWN OF :  
BROOKFIELD OR TOWN OF NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT. : May 13, 1987

O P I N I O N

Southern New England Telephone Cellular, Inc., (SNET) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council on December 1, 1986, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction, operation, and maintenance of telecommunication towers and associated equipment to provide cellular telephone coverage from a tower site in the City of Danbury and a tower site in either the Town of Brookfield or the Town of Newtown.

When considering cellular telephone towers, under section 16-50p of the General Statutes of Connecticut, the Council must weigh the need for such towers against the nature of their probable environmental impact, "including a specification of every significant adverse effect, whether alone or cumulatively with other effects on, and conflict with, the policies of the state concerning the natural environment, ecological balance, public health and safety, scenic, historic, and recreational values, forests and parks, air and water purity, and fish and wildlife . . ." The Council may not grant a certificate unless it finds that such adverse effects or conflicts with state policies are not sufficient to deny the application.

The proposed Danbury tower site is atop a building owned by SNET, and within a commercially-zoned area. The proposed 20-foot lattice structure to be mounted on this building would be 55 feet from the nearest edge of the building. The structure would total 37 feet in height, including antennas. A six-foot microwave dish is presently on the rooftop. The associated electronics equipment would be installed in the basement of the building. This site would provide coverage to nearby portions of Routes 6, 7, 37, 39, 53, 202, 302, I-84, and the center of Danbury. In its site selection process, SNET considered and rejected ten potential alternative sites in the Danbury area.

The Brookfield site is within a residentially-zoned area near the Whisconier Middle School. The proposed 150-foot lattice tower would be shared with the Town of Brookfield for use by local municipal agencies. A 1,200-foot road would be required to obtain access to the site. A 21-foot by 21-foot equipment building would be located at the base of the tower, and a 15-foot fence would surround the tower and building. The Brookfield Board of Education requested a fence of this height because of the site's proximity to the Whisconier Middle School.

This tower would provide coverage to nearby portions of Routes 6, 7, 25, 133, 202, 302, and I-84. Lowering the tower height to 130 feet would result in significant coverage losses along these roads.

The proposed Brookfield tower would be visible from many of the 91 homes within a 2,000-foot radius of the proposed site. Significant visibility would occur from Route 25, High Meadow Lane, Fawn Ridge Road, Whisconier Road, Squire Court, Red Barn Lane, and Fox Trail Lane.

SNET considered ten other potential sites in the Brookfield area, among them a site on the Brookfield-Newtown town line which became the alternative Newtown site. This site abuts the Brookfield Industrial Park, and is adjacent to I-84. SNET would construct a 150-foot monopole at this site. A 21-foot by 21-foot equipment building would be built near the base of the tower. This site would provide coverage which is equivalent to the proposed Brookfield site. A driveway, but not a road, would be necessary for the site access. The roads from which this tower would be visible, such as I-84, have fewer homes along them than in Brookfield.

Many residents opposed the Brookfield site. No residents opposed the construction of the proposed Danbury or alternative Newtown sites. The Department of Environmental Protection expressed no objections to the proposed or alternative sites.

None of the proposed or alternative sites would have significant impacts on rare or endangered species, or on inland wetlands. None of these towers would be obstruction marked or lighted. Electromagnetic radiation levels from these towers would be minimal and would not be expected to pose any threat to the health of the general public.

The Council will grant Certificates for the proposed Danbury site and the alternative Newtown site. Because the visual impact of the Danbury tower will be limited and the tower is compatible with existing land use, its impact is not sufficient to deny the application. In light of the availability of the alternative Newtown

site, the Council concludes that the visual and other adverse impacts of the proposed Brookfield site cannot be justified. Because the visual and other impacts of the Newtown site are minor, they are not sufficient to deny approval.