

DOCKET NO. 87 - AN APPLICATION OF SNET : CONNECTICUT
CELLULAR, INC., FOR A CERTIFICATE OF : SITING
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC : COUNCIL
NEED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, :
AND MAINTENANCE OF A FACILITY TO PROVIDE :
CELLULAR TELEPHONE SERVICE IN THE TOWN OF :
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT. MARCH 22, 1988

O P I N I O N

On October 30, 1987, SNET Cellular, Inc., (SNET) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct a cellular telephone tower site in the Town of Norwich, Connecticut. No alternative sites were proposed.

The proposed Norwich site is a 100-foot by 100-foot parcel of land 450 feet east of Rogers Road. Although the proposed site is in an area zoned Residential, it is within a wooded area containing no inland wetlands. The surrounding area is lightly populated, with eight homes found within a 2,000-foot radius. Access into the proposed site would be via a new 450-foot access road. Utilities would be brought in underground.

The proposed Norwich site would provide cellular service along Routes 2, 2A, 32, 82, 87, 97, 163, and 395 within the towns of Norwich, Bozrah, and Montville, and portions of Waterford, Ledyard, Preston, Franklin, Sprague, and Lisbon. This site would enable SNET to extend its existing coverage from sites in East Lyme and Waterford in the New London (New England County) Metropolitan Area.

Visibility of the proposed tower would be primarily along local roads. The proposed tower would not be visible over a wide area, due to local topography, distances between roads, and the location of few residences in the general vicinity of the proposed site.

The proposed site is well removed from a local power transmission line and a natural gas pipeline. There are no rare or endangered species or species of special concern occurring at the proposed site. The construction of this facility would not have a significant effect on historic or archaeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Electromagnetic radio frequency power densities at this proposed site would be well below the current American National Standards Institute Safety Standards for the expected frequencies. Construction of an access road would require the removal of some trees. However, leaving as many trees uncut as possible would afford some screening of the equipment building and a portion of the tower. The exact location and construction of the access road could be specified in a development and management plan.

The Council notes that the tower's fall zone extends beyond the boundary of the lessor's property which may impose a burden on abutting landowners. In fairness to the neighbors of the lessor's property, the Council believes that no part of the fall zone of the tower and associated equipment should extend beyond the boundary of the lessor's property. Therefore, the Council will condition its approval on the relocation of the tower so that its fall zone will not extend beyond the lessor's property lines.

Under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rulings, there are two competitors providing cellular telephone service in Connecticut. This concept, designed to foster a climate of business competition, could result in a proliferation of towers in a small, heavily developed state such as Connecticut. Such tower duplication, covering the same major roadways, could be avoided by the sharing of towers, an arrangement permitted by the FCC.

Therefore, the Council will certificate this proposed facility on the conditions that (1) SNET construct the tower to accommodate the other FCC authorized cellular service provider and (2) that SNET negotiate in good faith to lease space on this tower to the other FCC authorized cellular service provider. The fee for leasing the tower structure shall be based on the cost to acquire land, construct and maintain the tower, and to install such cellular antennas and associated equipment on the tower. The Council believes such a condition to be in the public interest.

The Council considered the potential adverse environmental effects of the construction of this facility against the public need and benefit of such a service, and concluded they are not sufficient to deny the application. The Council will therefore issue a Certificate for the construction of the Norwich tower site.

1088E