

TOWN OF LEWISBORO  
Antenna Advisory Board  
PO Box 500  
South Salem, NY 10590



Email: [AAB@lewisborogov.com](mailto:AAB@lewisborogov.com)  
Website: [www.lewisborogov.com](http://www.lewisborogov.com)

## Minutes of the AAB Meeting

August 26, 2020

Meeting was held via Zoom videoconference and called to order by Joseph Neu at 7:01

Present: Joseph Neu (Chair), Tony Gonçalves (Councilman/Town Board Liaison),  
Rob Cummings, Jim Moreo, Chris Nelson (KLSD Liaison)  
Absent: Neil Berman

### Introductions

- Each member/liaison stated their background and the part of town they live in.

### Housekeeping

- **Purpose/Mandate.** Chair moved to review the AAB purpose and mandate as it appears in the Town Code § 3-1 to review ongoing advancements in antenna technology, zoning ordinance compliance with Federal Communications Commission rulings, and offer recommendations on applications to construct antennas and subsequent amendments to and enforcement of this chapter; and as amended to now include fiber optic and other similar technology used for voice communication, data services and streaming. Beyond this established purpose the AAB agreed it would also work in support of resident needs related to remote learning, work, and telehealth as well as town plans to improve connectivity (both wired and wireless) to increase the general appeal and value of residing in Lewisboro.
- **Meeting cadence.** Chair moved to establish a standing meeting date with a weekly or bi-weekly cadence as needed during the current period with the proposed cell tower review. This was approved.
- **Meeting notices and minutes.** Chair ("Joseph") asked Councilman Gonçalves ("Tony") to review the open meeting law requirements and process for posting meeting notices and minutes.
- **Need for additional member, volunteers and liaisons.** Chair informed the board that Carl Grossman had stepped down from the AAB as he is no longer a town resident after this was confirmed as a requirement. A motion was made and seconded to consider a suitable fifth member as well as additional volunteers and liaisons

### KLSD Connectivity Update

- **Overview of the KLSD network.** Chris Nelson provided a brief overview of the network (fiber, cable, wi-fi) connecting KLSD schools. Investment by the school district in network upgrades using NYS Smart Schools Bond Act funding and other means has resulted in our school buildings being well connected with

adequate bandwidth, while the community surrounding them is not. The AAB agreed that it is critical to foster better cooperation between the town and KLSD to improve the connectivity infrastructure upon which we both depend.

- **Update on home to school connectivity.** The problem facing KLSD schools is connecting students learning from home to teachers at school buildings in remote and hybrid learning scenarios. This is an issue the school district has been working on since the spring when the Covid-19 pandemic forced them to close. Surveys and other research by the district reveal that between 2-3 percent of households have no internet connection and 10-15 percent of households have some gap to close for adequate internet connectivity; for example, they may have two school age children and two parents working from home and needing to share their internet access. Chris shared work being done by the school district on ways to address this issue.

The District is finalizing its plans to purchase and otherwise arrange hotspots with T-Mobile, hotspots and cable models/Wi-Fi routers with Optimum and, through a third specialty provider, purchase data plan minutes for educational use on other carriers to serve homes that cannot connect via T-Mobile or Optimum. The AAB pledged its support to help Chris and the schools with this effort, including spreading the word on these available connectivity aids to residents lacking adequate internet connections for remote learning. Carriers and internet service providers wishing to donate equipment to this cause may do so under a special gifts rule waiver to the E-Rate program passed by the FCC in March.

- **T-Mobile introduction to AAB.** Chris has introduced Joseph to his contacts at T-Mobile who as connected us with their municipal liaison. The AAB has initiated communication to include them in our outreach to carriers.

### **Storm Impact**

- **Generators and power backup.** Tony updated the AAB on the performance of each of the six town towers from the perspective of Verizon during the storm. This pertains primarily to their provisions of back-up power. He also briefed us on the call he, Joseph and Supervisor Parsons had with AT&T on the same issue from earlier in the week. As Tony clarified, each carrier has its own backup power responsibility on every tower, rather than a common back up power source for the pole installation. In response, Tony is creating a table of each carrier on every tower noting their current backup power capability and with the AAB will encourage each carrier experiencing an outage to improve their backup (e.g., onsite generators vs. battery backup and portable generator plug-ins). The AAB also moved to investigate whether tower construction companies such as Homeland Towers can provide backup power for all carriers on the tower as part of their proposals.

### **AT&T Towers and Data**

- **Coverage and storm usage.** Tony and Joseph also briefed the AAB on the portion of the call with representatives from AT&T on the performance of their antenna during the storm and power outage and how they can help boost wireless coverage in Lewisboro.
- **Cooperation on connectivity.** AT&T stated that they were inclined to divert

investment toward towns that are receptive to improve their wireless infrastructure. They promised to investigate moving or adding antenna to the tower in Goldens Bridge with antenna currently facing west toward 684 (highway), siting antennae/equipment on the Cross-River tower behind LVAC, again look into adding capacity to the privately-owned tower on route 138 toward 121. They will also provide input on where they would place additional equipment/towers, based on data from AT&T subscriber phones connecting to their network from Lewisboro. This will include co-locating on towers proposed with the backing of other carriers such as the one at the Salt Dome.

- **Data-driven coverage/propagation mapping.** Based on the AT&T data-driven signal mapping, a member moved to investigate software or an independent service to map ideal tower locations based on current signal, topography and population density.

## **Homeland Towers Proposed Cell Tower at the Salt Dome**

- **Alternate locations on the Salt Dome property.** Tony updated the AAB on 3 alternate locations for a cell tower on the Salt Dome property based on a recent walk around with Homeland Towers. Two alternative locations would not disturb the Echo Farm pastureland and provide some tree concealment. One would require accommodations for the highway department and both would require DEC wetlands approval.
- **Property walk of Echo Farm.** Joseph shared the sentiment Callie Bauer expressed on a walk of the Echo Farm pasture next to the Salt Dome with Councilwoman Crimmins. Ms. Bauer expressed her view that a cell tower would depress the value of Echo Farm and her business, both from a sightline perspective and a reluctance by customers to board their horses near a cell tower. She is not open to alternate locations on the Salt Dome nor tower concealment strategies as a result. Ms. Bauer cited the verbal agreement deeding to the town a portion of Echo Farm pasture for setback reasons to allow the Salt Dome to be built. The spirit of this agreement is being defied if a cell tower is to be built on it now, in her view. She also says the town has right of first refusal to purchase Echo Farm under a separate agreement and claims a conflict of interest in depressing the property value with a neighboring cell tower.
- **Alternate locations.** Given the sightline and other issues, the AAB agreed to ask Homeland Towers and others what alternate locations besides the Salt Dome and the Recycling Center location might serve to fill coverage gaps along Route 35 and what the extent of these gaps are. Based on public comments that Farvue Farm had not been approached about siting antenna in the water tower on that property, the AAB agreed to approach the owners of the property on that possibility.
- **Review of Verizon coverage/propagation maps.** The AAB reviewed the coverage/propagation maps provided by Homeland Towers to the Town Board as part of their proposal, indicating current cell signal and improvements with the proposed Salt Dome tower.

- **Meeting, review and questioning of Homeland Towers.** The AAB voted to invite a Homeland Towers representative(s) to attend the next meeting to brief the AAB on the proposal directly, discuss what alternate sites—including on the north part of town to fill coverage gaps around Waccabuc, Twin Lakes and Lake Truesdale to balance against Route 35 coverage improvements—have been explored and respond to questions. This will put the AAB in a better position to consider the results from the upcoming crane test to replicate signal from the proposed tower and the balloon test for sightlines. An invitation is to be extended.

### **Resident interest in better wireless coverage/internet connectivity**

- **Engaging residents receptive to better coverage/connectivity.** Given that opponents to a cell tower are always the most vocal, the AAB voted to begin outreach to residents based on the need for better connectivity, including wireless coverage, laid bare by the situation with KLSD's remote learning plans and the difficulty connecting to the internet in many parts of town during the recent storm-induced power outage. If only the voices opposing cell towers are heard, then it leaves the impression that nothing should be done. On the other hand, if residents acknowledge the need of better connectivity and thus infrastructure, including cell towers, then we can engage them with data to show what can be done and where towers can go to address the need.

**Next meeting:** To be scheduled on September 2, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm.