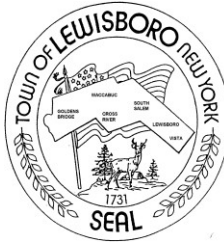


TOWN OF LEWISBORO
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Minutes of the AAB Meeting

January 27, 2022

Meeting was held live at the Town Hall and via Zoom videoconference and called to order by Joseph Neu at 7:03pm

Present: Joseph Neu (Chair), Rob Cummings (via Zoom), Lynne Geaney, Tony Gonçalves (Councilman/Town Board Liaison)
Absent: Brian Porco, Jim Moreo, Chris Nelson (KLSD Liaison)

Approval of Minutes and Housekeeping

- Board approved minutes from the October 27, 2021 meeting without objection.

Existing Business

- Update on CityScape Wireless Infrastructure Study Project. Tony confirmed that CityScape is scheduled to present to the Town Board on February 28 with updates on its study project.
- Outreach to wireless carriers on CityScape coverage gap locations. No new updates to report.

New Business

- **Update from Homeland Towers (HT) on proposed and new potential wireless tower sites.** The AAB hosted Manny Vicente, President of Homeland Towers, and Ray Vergati, Regional Manager for HT in charge of Lewisboro projects. They updated the AAB on wireless infrastructure developments and responded to the CityScape preliminary coverage maps from their wireless infrastructure study.
- The Chair noted in his opening remarks that the town appears to be more positively inclined to improve our wireless coverage, regardless of the cell tower aesthetics, than we originally thought-- per the CityScape Wireless Infrastructure poll conducted last fall (see highlights from the attached October 27 meeting minutes).
- HT commented that the results are entirely unsurprising as they validate what the wireless infrastructure industry has known for some time; namely, that the majority of most communities want better wireless coverage and it is usually just a vocal minority that opposes the build-out of the infrastructure needed to achieve that.
- Manny recapped some of the history of Lewisboro's wireless infrastructure, starting with the oldest tower in the Leon Levy Preserve. That tower's original purpose was not as a cell tower, but to serve as a "hop" for international long-distance calling across

the Atlantic. This explains the lack of coverage it provides, as seen in the coverage maps (it is really in a poor location for a cell tower with significant shadowing in relation to the roadways). The second tower was the one on 684, which was intended to cover the highway and not provide any real coverage to residents. The third tower at the Vista Fire House was the first intended to cover the town. The fourth in Goldens Bridge was less than ideal from a terrain standpoint, but there were no other options available at the time, Manny explained. Perhaps the most effective site to date, Manny said, is the tower in Cross River as it filled coverage gaps along Route 35 and serving the John Jay School campuses. And then there is the town park site, that also provides good coverage. All these developments happened from 2002—prior to that Lewisboro had almost no cellular coverage.

- In looking for the location of the next tower, Manny indicated that there are very few locations suitable for tower development in Lewisboro—and for South Salem almost none. There is the town property near the DPW, visible from Lake Truesdale, and the Salt Dome. HT and the carriers still believe the Salt Dome is the best location. However, because of local opposition, a third site was proposed.
- HT has investigated this new site further east on Route 35 on town-owned property just west of the South Salem Animal Hospital. AT&T has indicated that the site is acceptable, according to HT, and they are speaking with Verizon to gain their acceptance as well (that was to take place in the week following our meeting). Manny reminded us that the carriers have the final say on where they site towers as they are the ones making the investment in building the wireless infrastructure. For Verizon, this new site seems to be a tougher decision than for AT&T, due to the less-than-ideal location for their signal handoffs.
- Manny expects to have an answer from Verizon in the next few weeks.
- This would give the town three town-owned properties to consider for South Salem: the DFW site, the Salt Dome and the property west of the South Salem Animal Hospital. There would also be the possibility of privately-owned sites at Echo Farm or Farvue Farm, which have also been identified as acceptable.
- The chair asked then what would need to be done to provide coverage to residents further north around Lake Truesdale, the Twin Lakes and Lake Waccabuc? That was addressed later in a comment by Manny about a proposal is being considered in North Salem for a tower near the Hammond Museum. This might provide some coverage to the north of Lewisboro, including gaps along Route 121 to Route 138 (though not the lake districts blocked by the 900ft elevation in between). He recommended that the AAB and Town Board advocate for that tower and then see what gaps remain after it is built (estimated to take about a year) to determine what subsequent infrastructure might be needed. In addition, he suggested we encourage our neighbors in Bedford to work to address coverage gaps along Route 35, west of Four Winds. There is a site leased to HT for this coverage area and they will be filing an application to build a tower with the Town of Bedford sometime between now and the spring. Tony later asked for clarification on the status of permit applications in Bedford to which Manny noted that there is litigation by Verizon regarding one site (Hickory Lane), given the time being taken by the zoning board to consider their permit application.
- Manny also agreed that the gap in Goldens Bridge along Route 138 could be addressed with something less than a large macro site (60 to 80ft that peaks over the trees) near the Goldens Bridge Firehouse. There is also town property in the vicinity that may be an option. Anything between the Firehouse and Increase Miller would work.
- Another potential site discussed was on the Connecticut side of Onatru Farm Park,

though that is not an area HT has vetted in detail. That would likely be better than the old school district office site, per Manny, though HT has not focused on that area as much as others.

- Manny stressed that AT&T and Verizon are consistent in their position that the coverage gap along Route 35 in South Salem is their top priority and must be addressed first. "They have limited funding, and this is what they have funded," he said. "Nothing else rises to the level of concern or need."
- The Chair asked Manny if there was anything about new site that would pose issues for building a tower there. Manny indicated that there was no apparent issue based on their preliminary assessment (though there has not been a full investigation of the site) and it may be easier to build on than the Salt Dome given the wetlands considerations and the existing site use to work around.
- Lynne clarified the tradeoffs of cost, location and visibility. Cost is generally the least of the concerns, according to Manny, in comparison to the others.
- Rob asked for clarification that the site is indeed town owned as it is listed on the Westchester GIS map as owned by an LLC. It is HT's understanding that it is now controlled by the town.
- In his concluding remarks, Manny noted how residents should consider the facts and understand the information provided, plus don't follow narratives that don't exist and don't get upset with the mention of the word tower. When the Cross River tower went up, some in the community were very upset, and Manny asked them: "where else can we go?" No one had an answer. HT and the town went ahead, and it was successful. "We are at that point in South Salem," he said. "Do we want to improve coverage or do we want to pretend to?"

Public Comment

- **Carol Cernak:** Stated her understanding of the need for cell coverage and clarified as manager for Farvue Farm that it is not available for siting a tower. Her view is that Echo Farm is also not available and that the town has enough going on at the Salt Dome site without putting in a cell tower.
- **Dean Travalino:** Stated his view that we engage directly with the carriers and address the needs of the residents and not just Route 35. He also recalled the Cross River tower and petitioners seeking to address the aesthetics of the tower who felt like they were cut out of that process. He also noted claims that micro installations were not adequately explored. [Manny addressed the first point by saying that Route 35 is a carrier goal but also to increase geographic coverage north and south. He addressed the aesthetics petition by saying that the decision on the look of the tower was not made by the Town of Lewisboro, the carriers, nor HT. The decision was made by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the FCC, and the national historic preservation office. They did not want a monopine tree. Rather certain residents seeking to block the tower petitioned the state with the claim of it being part of an historic district. There was a move in the 1970s to make it an historic district, which was never active upon. As a result of the petition to block the tower, however, SHPO decided to go ahead and make it an historic district. That then triggered, per Manny, SHPO gaining say on the look of the tower and that resulted in the tower on the site today. Because the residents filed the petition after the approval decisions were already made, moreover, they helped put the decision into outside parties' hands. Third, as to alternative technologies being used, that was considered and rejected as providing inadequate coverage of only 700-800ft.]

Polling of the Board and Other Action Items

- The Chair noted that the AAB appreciates this update (echoed by Rob and Lynne) and will compare the comments HT made to what CityScape recommends with their study conclusion and with our direct outreach to the wireless carriers.
- The Chair also noted that while the AAB understands that the carriers may want to fill the gap along Route 35 as their top priority, we would also like them to consider the needs of the residents lacking adequate coverage in the northern parts of town and other areas distant from the major traffic corridors.
- Tony reminded the public of the CityScape presentation to be made at the February 28 Town Board Meeting.

Meeting was adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a timetable for subsequent meetings at 8:08pm.