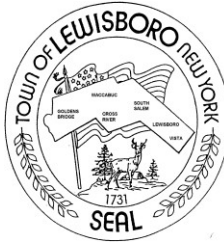


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## **Minutes of the AAB Meeting**

**December 15, 2022**

Meeting was held live at the Town House and via Zoom videoconference and called to order by Joseph Neu at 7:05pm

Present: Joseph Neu (Chair), Rob Cummings, Sam Dodge, Lynne Geaney, Brian Porco, Tony Gonçalves (Supervisor/Town Board Liaison)  
Absent: Chris Nelson (KLSD Liaison)

### **Housekeeping and Approval of Minutes**

- The August 31, 2022 meeting minutes were approved without objection.

Chair opened with overview of the agenda:

### **New and Existing Business**

#### **Update on South Salem Cell Tower Considerations:**

- Supervisor Gonçalves confirmed that there had been no further updates from Homeland Towers on the Salt Dome Site.
- Chair updated the Board on Tony's outreach to both AT&T and Verizon to consider the the South Salem Presbyterian Church steeple as an alternative.
- Verizon and AT&T deferred to Homeland Towers as their representative and Homeland Towers had agreed to have another look at the site. At the time of the meeting a visit had not yet been scheduled. AT&T via email to Tony indicated that they had reviewed the site previously, even at a hypothetical 120ft and found the coverage to be inadequate in comparison to the Salt Dome, yet they would defer to Homeland Towers if they determined differently.
- CityScape was kind enough to provide a propagation map comparing coverage for the proposed Salt Dome site with an alternative involving a hypothetical tower of a similar size in the South Salem Presbyterian Church steeple—120ft.
  - Propagation map is included to follow as displayed in the meeting.
  - There may be 6-7 homes along Main Street and Lower Salem Road north of Bouton Road that would get less coverage quality under the church steeple option vs. the Salt Dome,
  - However, there are other coverage improvements with the Steeple option, including for homes on the western side of Lake Truesdale, so the coverage differences may essentially be a wash.

- AAB discussed the potential for filling that area along Main Street in other ways—a North Salem tower may not help, yet smaller installations in the vicinity of the former LES site and/or to serve Twin Lakes area would likely prove effective.
- The hypothetical 120ft tower prompted the question of could the steeple be rebuilt to house a 120ft height, or taller? The Homeland Towers Salt Dome proposal had indicated a 146ft tower option, for example.
- Board discussed how a taller tower at the Salt Dome would impact the comparison. This comparison should also consider the elevation alternatives at the Salt Dome location.
- Board also reviewed the pictures of the hypothetical Salt Dome tower that were part of the Homeland Towers presentations (both the visual rendering and the propagation maps).
- Consideration of the Steeple alternative should also factor in the ability to collocate the three major carriers but also emergency services and other town communication communications equipment (e.g., a VHF antenna, or at least two directional antenna, for the highway department).
- In all likelihood, to be comparable to the Salt Dome, from a coverage standpoint, the Church Steeple would need to house a 140 or 146ft tower.
- Chair suggested the Board ask Homeland Towers to do an updated site review of the Steeple alternative, based on the propagation maps provide by CityScape, to move this forward as quickly as possible.
- The AAB agreed that Town residents would likely prefer a concealed tower in the steeple to the Salt Dome site provided coverage were comparable, so long as the rebuilt steeple did not overwhelm the church from a visual or architectural standpoint.
- Board discussed the pros and cons of running a propagation map of the other proposed site at the Recycling Center for additional comparison. The fact that Homeland Towers has said it no longer plans to pursue that site may make that a moot point.

**Update on CityScape Wireless Infrastructure Study Project.** CityScape has indicated variously that their Study would be completed in September, then November, and it is unknown when it will be delivered as final.

- Regardless, it would be good to know from the Town Board, what sort of timeline they are considering to lift the moratorium on Wireless Infrastructure applications imposed by the previous Town Board for the CityScape study to inform the town.
- Chair asked Tony to ask the Town Board to consider: Will there be an ask for an advisory opinion by the AAB as part of that? Will the AAB present to the Town Board? And when?

**Update on Emergency Services Communications.** Brian Porco updated the AAB on matters related to EMS communications.

- The sale of the Visa Fire Cell Tower by Insight Wireless to American Tower has delayed the planned collocation of upgraded EMSC equipment (for the Town and Fire District) on that tower.

- An unfortunate development involving the removal of legacy Sprint equipment from the Tower (due to the Sprint acquisition by T-Mobile) in September resulted in EMSC equipment being accidentally removed from the top of the tower altogether.
- The Fire District has been working to resolve this and reinstall the equipment, yet this not progressed. However, American Tower has made some form of verbal agreement to replace the equipment removed.
- The Fire Department would also like to see the equipment upgrades for the Fire District and the Town made in the process and not just have the removed antennas reinstalled.
- The opportunity to replace and change the town equipment on the Vista Fire tower has opened up a broader discussion of what kind of equipment to install. This is the Town Highway System, but it has broader Emergency Services implications, because the Police Department, EMS and Fire use the town highway system.
- Brian explained that the Town Highway System was originally an analog system and that they moved to a three-site digital system (the tower by 684 in Goldens Bridge, the Vista Firehouse tower and the Town Park Tower), which did not fit the needs of the users. Now the town is back to a single-site analog system sited on the tower at Lewisboro Town Park. The single-site is just not enough to cover the town—especially on portable radios outside vehicles. An estimated 75% of the town is covered on portable radios).
- The prior digital system could be characterized as a “poor man’s trunking system” and did not provide good two-way communication either—and did not live up to the mesh network objective when installed (roaming pass along across the different sites never worked adequately).
- Emergency services (including Highway and PD) are looking to improve coverage by returning equipment to the Vista Fire Tower and finding a way to improve coverage from Goldens Bridge (the 684 tower never provided great coverage).
- Tony indicated that he had received a proposal from Metrocom received by the Highway Department (Joe Posadas). Brian explained that this was to upgrade the 684 tower and Vista Fire Tower to improve talk-back coverage, or receive coverage, but not talk out. This would help with communications but not help with coverage in the 25% of town not covered.
- Brian asked if the AAB can help the Town and Fire District look into a three-site simulcast system or another system that would better serve emergency services communications needs. Such a plan could also include moving equipment from the 684 tower to the Brownell Preserve Tower (which is higher in elevation and a taller tower) to improve coverage. Brian’s thinking is a middle of the road approach between a \$2mn cost like that of the Project 25 system which is what the County runs and the \$10-20k highway department proposal to get the two receive sites in at Town Park and Vista fire
- Chair proposed to reach back out to Bedford to see what information they could share from their study.

- Brian suggested we also work to get a ballpark budget of cost to proposed solution so that it could be incorporated into the ask to replace the Vista Fire equipment.
- Tony also highlighted his desire to meet the objective of gaining better portable radio coverage across all of Lewisboro.
- A three-site analog system would do that with existing radio equipment, plus open up for expansion with additional channels (e.g. for Police, Fire and Highway) with repeaters being added to towers down the road.
- Next step: Brian will reach out to Motorola who does the propagation studies for Metrocom, and ask them to map out the inbound and outbound coverage for the proposed solution. They do that for free, so that will be a good baseline to work with and compare to other alternatives.
- Sam also asked Brian to look into grants, including a Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Technology Program (CREST) Grant through Assemblyman Burdick, and will provide some contacts as will Tony. Pound Ridge has been applied and received a grant for \$125k to replace equipment, for example. These funds might be used to bring in an engineering firm if needed as well as to purchase equipment. Sam suggested the Board or the town get a project cost built out to also determine the grant need.
- Brian will take the lead on the emergency communications effort in conjunction with the fire district negotiations with American Tower to replace the equipment accidentally removed from the Vista Firehouse Tower.
- Brian asked for a contact on the owner of the Brownell Tower to ask about co-location of emergency services communications equipment.

#### **Update on Optimum Fiber-to-the-Home and Internet Service Issues.**

- A recent note from Sam to Optimum indicated that they were doing better with service, at least in the vicinity of the South Salem Presbyterian Church.
  - It does show that the squeaky wheel gets greased, so Chair asked anyone in town with coverage issues to let Sam know.
  - Tony reported that Frank Alleva, the Optimum/Altice representative for Lewisboro, stopped by for a visit about a month ago and he said wiring for Fiber to the Home was going to start in Q1.

**Summary of Discussion with Bedford Counterpart on Code/Regulation Updates.** Chair summarized the key bullet points from his discussion with Tom Kennedy, Chair of the Bedford Wireless Facilities Working Group.

- Bedford is wrapping up its Emergency Services and Commercial Communications Study with CityScape and Federal Engineering.
- The wireless code changes that Bedford announced in late August/September, which prompted the conversation, were updates that were planned as part of the original code changes that Cohen Law Group, a firm based in Pittsburgh, had written for Bedford.

- There code recommendations follow the framework of a pecking order to start wireless installations with a look at viable collation opportunities on existing towers or other sites, then looking at town land, then private commercial land and finally private residential land.
- Concerning the litigation issues, he recommended that we careful in any code changes or regulations that we don't set up a situation that effectively prohibits the carriers from coming in to fill gaps in coverage. Chair's understanding is that If the carrier has a gap they need to fill, they have the right to fill that gap. If they present a viable location to do this, the municipality can say we don't like that location, we would prefer you look at another location that it feels like will work to fill the gap. The carrier is then obligated to look at that location, but if they show that it is not viable to fill the gap they can press forward with the site they had identified.
- He also said to avoid litigation with the carriers. It takes away the ability of the community's ability to be proactive in guiding the carriers.
- Regarding the shot clock and when it starts, he described his understanding to be once the carrier makes a formal application that is completed and submitted appropriately, that starts the clock ticking. The town then has something like 150 days for a new macro site, 90 days for a smaller site, to approve the site or recommend another one.
- The Chair was also reminded of the public comments made by Adam Stolorow, the Attorney representing tower opponents, that if the installation is on town-owned property, it does not have to go through the planning board process, so there is a theoretical different process if the application is for an installation on town-owned land.
- Chair also asked Tom about the Gunnerson proposal that was raised in public comment last meeting and he seemed to hold the view we heard from CityScape: the smaller towers and installations are great for filling in smaller coverage gaps and adding capacity rather than replacing the need for the larger towers,

## Public Comment

- Chair moved to open the floor to public comment at 8:07pm.
- Adam Stolorow (attorney representing residents opposing the proposed tower at the Salt Dome): *I can clarify that there is a different process between a proposed tower on town-owned land vs. private-owned land. The main difference is that the town owns all the cards in that there isn't a shot clock. But he would advocate that the town put the application through the planning board process (anyway). The Town has a good wireless code in place and it is meant to be protective, allow for public participation and allow the planning board to do what it does, which is to review these sorts of applications. I would not reinvent the wheel if it does turn out that this tower is going to be on town-owned land. He also wanted to say that he was pleased to hear that CityScape provided you with the coverage maps at 120ft for the Salt Dome and the Church Steeple, but my heart sank for my clients when you stating talking about, well if you just boost the tower at the Salt Dome to 146ft maybe there is a clear advantage. The visual impact is night and day. You have a significant impact with the Salt Dome and virtually none, or very little if you increase the height of the Steeple. That seems to me to address the main issue to the opposition of a cell tower anywhere in town. To me it is is a no brainer that you would be the antenna in a concealed location, provided you can find a provider who wants to go into that location.*

- Dean Travalino (105 Spring Street): *It is a great idea to have Sam receive complaints on wireless coverage since we already do that with the Cable Committee. Dean wanted to clarify based on someone mentioning the Salt Dome being moved to satisfy some of the Northern neighbors, I am not party to any of those discussions. I had heard during the August meeting that it was moved slightly to stay away from the State wetland and the town could wave its restrictions on the 150ft setback. Dean asked if the site line pictures shown earlier were based on the elevated site?*
  - Tony clarified the original Homeland Towers proposal had the tower sited on an elevated area that was very visible to the horse pasture, so he asked Homeland if they could move it behind the Salt Dome (where it is somewhat less visible and shielded by pine trees) and they came back with a revised drawing with the tower in that location. At the August Town Board meeting, Homeland presented the drawing with the first location and they discussed the alternative location in response to Tony's question as being subject to DEC approval. Later in the meeting, the AAB displayed the site drawing with the alternate proposed tower locations at the Salt Dome site.
  - AAB believed the site line pictures were from the elevated Salt Dome location.
- Carol Cernak (7 Spring Street South): *I would like to disagree with what you are talking about with where the state wetlands are ... behind the Salt Dome as you go west on R35 there is state wetlands there. The lower part is town wetlands. I hope that the town would honor in good faith the conservation easement that they entered into with Echo Farm several years ago... and also the deed restrictions on the land that was given the town adjoins the Salt Dome from Mrs. Wallace.*

## Polling of the Board and 2023 Objectives

- Sam: Recommended the AAB should hammer out the details of where we are going. "Finish up with all the studies and come up with recommendation that we can all agree on."
- Brian: He would like to see a comprehensive comparison at both the Salt Dome and Church steeple sites (at 120ft and 140ft at both sites and at both frequencies) with an overlay to compare one to other. He would also like to see the Emergency Services Communications fill out happen. And finally, he would like to the fiber roll out happen, as that brings up the value of the town, helps with work from home and adds a lot of value to residents to have the strong, reliable, redundant internet. If that takes another provider, or the same one, to create a little bit of competition, that would be a good direction for us to go.
- Lynne: Agreed with what Sam said about moving past the studies and agreeing on a recommendation plan. As part of that, she would like Tony to think about how he would like the AAB to advise the Town Board and what questions he would like us to be able to advise that board on—whether it is doing an overlay or comparison or what the Town Board needs to think about in terms of process, technical questions, and what the AAB can provide more detail on, etc.
- Rob: He would like to know the height of the current steeple and get a rendering of what a 120ft and 146ft steeple would look like from ground level. [And do the same at the Salt Dome to compare the visual impact of both, per Sam's suggestion]

- Tony: "Emergency Services is key for me," he said working with David Alfano at the Police Department, Dan Murtha at LVAC, Joe Posadas at Highway "to get something done this quarter." He also would like to see if the church steeple can support a multi-carrier installation.
- Chair: Restated that "we have to make some progress, because I don't want to be at our meeting at the end of next year talking about these same things" He expressed the consensus that "we need a cell tower to fill this gap in South Salem, and then we need other cell towers, so if we can get this one in, we can focus on the longer-term." With the longer term in mind, and in light of a recent conversation with the consultant hired by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, he said it would be good for the AAB to provide a document outlining the Town's wireless and wired communication infrastructure needs in conjunction with their study that is due to be completed in November 2023.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:28pm.