

PRESENT: Pelczar, Vice-Chairman, Thorpe, Clark, Tivnan, Clerk

Thorpe moved, Clark seconded, THAT WE APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2010 AS PRESENTED. Voted unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Pelczar– We do not have a full Board tonight. Do you wish to continue? Jennifer McCourt – Yes.

2918: McCourt Engineering Associates, PLLC for New Hampshire Electric Coop:

An appeal for a SPECIAL EXCEPTION (ARTICLE VII, SECTION B-5) to co-locate one eight (8) foot and two six (6) foot diameter microwave dishes and four Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) or Smart Meter Antennae on the existing monopole, Tax Map S01, Lot No. 1A, located at 12 Gilman Hill Road in the Forestry/Rural District.

Jennifer McCourt – You have the fairly large packet in front of you for this request. I have individual pages for each criteria needed for a Special Exception. I will go through them:

1. Written evidence that the proposed use/facility will comply with FCC regulations regarding radio frequency exposure. We submitted the application to FCC for licensing of these facilities which must comply with their regulations in order to be approved.
2. Written evidence that the proposed use/facility will meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. All of the equipment and facilities proposed by NHEC at the Gilman Hill tower site, are part of a Smart Grid Investment Grant (SGIG) project funded, in part, by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) from funds made available under the American Recovery And Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). As evidenced by the attached Documentation, NHEC's Smart Grid project has been determined by DOE, to be Categorically Excluded from the requirements of NEPA.
3. Inventory of existing towers that are within the jurisdiction of the Town and those within one mile of Town borders, including specific information about the location, height, design as well as economic and technical feasibility for collocation.

We are looking to collocate on an existing pole on Gilman Hill.

Towers within Meredith:

- 170 foot monopole located at Gilman Hill Road (owned by Green Mountain Co.)
- 92 foot monopole located at 18 Hatch Corner Road (owned by SBA) 160 foot

lattice tower located at 15 Northview Drive (owned by MCM)

Towers located within one mile of its borders:

77 foot tower at 50 Lighthouse Cliffs Road, Laconia (owned by Unison)

100 foot monopole located at Glidden Road, Center Harbor (owned by Verizon)

The Applicant evaluated all the existing towers in the vicinity and the region for suitability to meet its Smart Grid telecommunication needs. Applicant determined the Gilman Hill Road tower provided the best telecommunications aspects with the least visual impact for collocation.

We are trying to communicate with all the district offices within the state and going back to the main cooperate office. The smart grid is trying to talk to all the individual NH Electric Coop owners for their meters to get that information back to the main office. The tree microwave dishes have to talk between each other. They have to have a direct line of sight with no interference. When there is trouble, this will save an incredible amount to time. This has been a huge project to find a tower that can service all of these needs. That is why this location is so critical for them.

4. A description of the proposed coverage range together with the technical reasons for the facility design. NHEC's use of the tower is to mount antennae for internal business enterprise purposes only. As part of the Smart Grid project, the microwave antennae will communicate exclusively with Applicant's microwave antennae on Tenney Mountain, Mount Belknap and Mount Kearsarge which are part of Applicant's telecommunications "backbone" system. The AMI antenna is only for communication with Applicant's Smart Meters in the Meredith service area. Communications from the Smart Meters will be received by the AM1 antenna, converted to microwave and transmitted via the microwave antenna to Applicant's backbone then to its enterprise headquarters. Applicant's communications to the Smart Meters follows the same path in the opposite direction. The attached map depicts the system-wide elements of Applicant's telecommunication system. This is not for the general public in anyway.

5. A description of the tree cover on the subject property and adjacent properties by dominate species and average height, as measured by or available from a verifiable source. There is limited tree coverage adjacent to the tower site on the subject property except grass, brush and shrubs. The tree cover consists of deciduous species of maple, oak, and polar. They appear to have an average height of 25' to 35 feet as measured on June 17, 2010 (see photos)

6. Representations, dimensioned to scale, of the proposed tower, antennas, equipment shelters including elevation drawings of all structures and vegetative buffer .Included herewith is the photo simulation of the proposed antennae additions to the existing tower and additional photos that indicate the existing vegetative buffer. No additional equipment shelters will be added as part of this application.

7. A visual impact assessment including before-condition photographs

and after-condition photographic simulations of the proposed facility showing what can be seen from any public viewpoint. Existing and proposed photo simulations are included herewith.

Clark – You had said before the meeting that real estate is scarce and very valuable. In this photo representation, I am wondering why they are not bunched together more? Peter Phipps (Project Manager for the Coop) - The higher up you go, the more valuable the tower space is. Occupants of towers try to locate at the lowest elevation where they can be effective for the purpose of which they are being installed. We try to keep our antennae as low as possible. They are less visible at the lower elevations and if they perform effectively at the lower elevations it's more economical. Clark – Are you saying the Mount Kearsarge antenna couldn't be lower because it wouldn't reach Mount Kearsarge? Phipps – That is correct. Jonathan Halsey (abutter) – My property abuts to the west and northwest. Could you explain what you are asking for as a special exception? McCourt - We are requesting to locate three microwave dishes and the AMI on the pole itself. Clark – Excuse me. I think whatever they want to do would require a special exception. It's not that they are doing something special. Putting the antenna up requires a special exception. Halsey – Convince me that I should not be worried about microwave radiation from these. Phipps – Two things, first, they are low power and second that are very focused with a narrow beam. Halsey – In regards to the Smart Meters, you say the individual Smart Meters on the homes will transmit to this tower. What type of transmission is that? Phipps - From the meters to the AMI antenna will be a radio frequency transmission. Halsey – What does tree coverage have to do with a special exception? McCourt – It is one of the criteria for a special exception. Halsey – As far as future needs, do you think you will be coming back asking for more? Phipps – This is all part of a plan that has been several years in the making and we have included future growth expansion. We are not anticipating on coming back. Halsey – Is the Smart Grid capable of controlling individual meters? Can it stop service? Phipps – The communications between the meter and the home office are a two-way communications. Our ability to discontinue service is controlled by the PUC. We are not able to do that any better with a Smart Meter than without one. It still requires a face to face with the homeowner. Clark – What is the beam width? Phipps – Generally it is less than the diameter of the dish. Hearing closed at 7:24 PM

DELIBERATIONS

Thorpe – It appears to me that they have met all the criteria for a special exception.

Clark moved, Thorpe seconded, IN CASE 2918, MCCOURT ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, PLLC FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE ELECTRIC COOP., I MOVE THE APPEAL FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION (ARTICLE VII, SECTION B-5) TO CO-LOCATE ONE EIGHT (8) FOOT AND TWO SIX (6) FOOT DIAMETER MICROWAVE DISHES AND FOUR ADVANCE METERING INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) OR SMART METER

ANTENNAE ON THE EXISTING MONOPOLE, TAX MAP S01, LOT NO. 1A, LOCATED AT 12 GILMAN HILL ROAD IN THE FORESTRY/RURAL DISTRICT BE GRANTED, AS IT MEETS ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION. Voted 3-0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Tivnan
Planning/Zoning Clerk

Approved by the Meredith Zoning Board on September 9, 2010

Jack Dever - Chairman