

1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

3  
4 Docket No. 445

5 Application From Homeland Towers, LLC, and  
6 New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, for a  
7 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility  
8 and Public Need for the Construction,  
9 Maintenance, and Operation of a  
10 Telecommunications Facility Located Southwest  
11 of the Intersection of Old Stagecoach Road  
12 and Aspen Ledges Road, Ridgefield,  
13 Connecticut

14  
15 Public Hearing held at the Ridgefield  
16 Town Hall, Large Conference Room, 400 Main  
17 Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut, Thursday,  
18 April 24, 2014, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

19  
20 H e l d B e f o r e:

21 ROBERT STEIN, Chairperson

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1 A p p e a r a n c e s:

2 Council Members:

3 JAMES J. MURPHY, JR.

4 Vice Chairperson

5 PHILIP T. ASHTON

6 DR. BARBARA C. BELL

7 ROBERT HANNON, DEEP Designee

8 LARRY LEVESQUE, ESQ., PURA Designee

9 DR. MICHAEL W. KLEMENS

10 DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.

11

12 Council Staff:

13 MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQ.,

14 Acting Executive Director, Staff

15 Attorney

16 DAVID MARTIN

17 Siting Analyst

18

19 For Homeland Towers and New Cingular

20 Wireless, PCS, LLC:

21 CUDDY & FEDER, LLP

22 445 Hamilton Avenue, 14th floor

23 White Plains, New York 10601

24 By: CHRISTOPHER B. FISHER, ESQ.

25

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Good  
2 evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to  
3 call to order this meeting of the Connecticut  
4 Siting Council, today, Thursday April 24,  
5 2014, at approximately 7 p.m.

6 My name is Robin Stein. I'm  
7 chairman of the Siting Council. Other  
8 members of the Council here and present are  
9 Senator Murphy who's our Vice Chairman;  
10 Mr. Hannon, who's the designee from the  
11 Department of Energy and Environmental  
12 Protection; Mr. Levesque, designee from the  
13 Public Utilities Regulatory Authority,  
14 Mr. Ashton, Dr. Klemens, Mr. Lynch and  
15 Dr. Bell. Members of the staff, Melanie  
16 Bachman who's our Executive Director; and  
17 David Martin, our Siting Analyst.

18 This is a continuation of a  
19 public hearing that began at 3 p.m. this  
20 afternoon. Copies of the hearing program and  
21 the Council's Guide to Siting Council  
22 Procedures are available for members of the  
23 public and are located just outside the door.

24 This hearing is held pursuant  
25 to the provisions of Title 16 of the

1 Connecticut General Statutes and of the  
2 Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, upon an  
3 Application from Homeland Towers, LLC, and  
4 New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, for a  
5 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility  
6 and Public Need for the Construction,  
7 Maintenance and Operation of a  
8 Telecommunications Facility Located Southwest  
9 of the Intersection of Old Stagecoach Road  
10 and Aspen Ledges Road in Ridgefield,  
11 Connecticut.

12                   The application was received  
13 by the Council on February 21, 2014. The  
14 application is also governed by the  
15 Telecommunication Act of 1996, which is  
16 administered by the Federal Communications  
17 Commission. This Act prohibits the Council  
18 from considering the health effects of  
19 radiofrequency emissions on human health and  
20 wildlife to the extent the emissions from  
21 towers are within the federal acceptable safe  
22 limit standard, which standard is also  
23 followed by the State Department of Public  
24 Health.

25                   The federal act also prohibits

1 the Council from discriminating between and  
2 amongst providers of functionally equivalent  
3 services. This means that if one carrier  
4 already provides service for an area, other  
5 carriers have the right to compete and  
6 provide service in the same area.

7 The applicant published notice  
8 of the filing of the application to the  
9 Council in the Ridgefield Press on  
10 January 23, and January 30, 2014. The  
11 Council's legal notice of the date and time  
12 of this hearing was published in the Danbury  
13 News Times on March 26, 2014.

14 Upon this Council's request  
15 the Applicant erected a sign at the proposed  
16 site so as to inform the public of the name  
17 of the applicant, type of facility, hearing  
18 date and location, and contact information  
19 for the Council.

20 This afternoon members of the  
21 Council, staff and public personally  
22 conducted a field review of the proposed site  
23 in order to observe firsthand the potential  
24 effects of the proposal.

25 This hearing session tonight

1 has been reserved first for the public to  
2 make short statements into the record. These  
3 public statements are not subject to  
4 questions from the parties or the Council,  
5 and members of the public making statements  
6 may not ask questions of parties or the  
7 Council. These statements will become part  
8 of the record for Council consideration. A  
9 sign-up sheet is available for those who  
10 would like to participate. And again, that  
11 sign-up sheet is just outside the door.

12 As a reminder to all, any  
13 off-the-record communication with a member of  
14 the Council or a member of the staff on the  
15 merits of the application is prohibited by  
16 law.

17 I wish to note that parties  
18 and intervenors, including their  
19 representatives and witnesses are not  
20 permitted to participate in this public  
21 comment session. I also wish to note for  
22 those who are here and for the benefit of  
23 your friends and neighbors who are unable to  
24 join us for the public comment session, that  
25 you or they may send written statements to

1 the Council within 30 days of the date hereof  
2 and such written statements will be given the  
3 same weight as if spoken at the hearing.

4 We ask each person making a  
5 public statement in this proceeding to  
6 confine his or her statements to the subject  
7 matter before the Council and to avoid  
8 unreasonable reputation so that we may hear  
9 all of the concerns you and your neighbors  
10 may have. And be advised that the Council  
11 cannot respond at this time to questions from  
12 the public about the proposal.

13 A verbatim transcript will be  
14 made of this hearing and deposited at the  
15 Ridgefield Town Clerk's office for the  
16 convenience of the public.

17 And before we call on members  
18 of the public for their statements, we'd like  
19 to ask the Applicant to make a brief  
20 presentation to the public describing the  
21 facility, where it's located, why it's  
22 necessary and what alternatives were  
23 investigated.

24 And before we do that we will  
25 get out of the way.

1 MR. FISHER: Thank you,  
2 Chairman.

3 I'm Attorney Chris Fisher. I  
4 represent the Applicants in this particular  
5 proceeding. For purposes of the public we're  
6 going to simply take you through a quick  
7 presentation to orient you to this project.  
8 All these materials are actually in the  
9 actual record that's before the Siting  
10 Council.

11 And beyond this evening you  
12 can also go on the Council's website. All  
13 the various documents that have been provided  
14 by the Applicant and some of the other  
15 parties and intervenors are included on the  
16 website and you can look at them as well.

17 This particular project is to  
18 provide wireless services, both cellular  
19 communications -- those would be the  
20 commercial carriers like AT&T that are one of  
21 the prime anchor tenants proposed on this  
22 facility, and also the actual town emergency  
23 communication services are proposed for this  
24 structure as well. As most folks know who  
25 live in town, reliable wireless



1 communications are an issue in this  
2 particular area of the community.

3           This particular map, again is  
4 in the application. This is really intended  
5 to show where existing wireless  
6 infrastructure is located in Ridgefield and  
7 some of the adjoining communities. If you  
8 look around, not surprisingly more towards  
9 the right hand of this particular aerial  
10 photograph is Route 7 as it comes down from  
11 Danbury down into downtown Ridgefield, which  
12 is the lower part of the area -- aerial. And  
13 then extending up North Salem Road towards  
14 North Salem and Route 121.

15           Most of the existing  
16 infrastructure here that's been built out  
17 over the last several years is along the  
18 highways, or in some of the other ridges more  
19 towards Danbury, or in the North Salem, New  
20 York State side of the border.

21           In this particular map in the  
22 middle you'll see a green pin that says,  
23 Homeland. It's the location of the proposed  
24 facility. Right there.

25           This is a copy of a technical

1 map that AT&T has prepared and provided to  
2 the Council. This shows existing network  
3 coverage at various thresholds that AT&T  
4 considers to be reliable.

5           Again, if you look at the  
6 right-hand portion of the map, the green and  
7 yellow are areas where there is reliable  
8 signal strength. This is in -- shown in  
9 their existing 3G network. Those sites,  
10 again, are predominately along the Route 7  
11 corridor and then coming down into downtown  
12 Ridgefield.

13           On this map you'll see a star  
14 that's located over on the left where the map  
15 is white. It's titled, S1855, the actual  
16 location of the site. And that number is  
17 just simply an internal AT&T numerical  
18 identifier that it uses for purposes of its  
19 sites.

20           This particular map shows what  
21 happens when the AT&T facility, if  
22 constructed in this location, what kind of  
23 service it would provide, again in the 3G  
24 environment. A similar service would be  
25 anticipated in a 4G LTE environment. Green

1 and yellow indicating the areas of reliable  
2 service. White does not necessarily mean  
3 that the network doesn't work. It's just not  
4 as reliable.

5 This is an aerial from close  
6 up of the actual property itself. For those  
7 that are familiar, when you access this  
8 actual location it's at the end of Old  
9 Stagecoach Road and Aspen Ledges where the  
10 two meet, which is at the top right -- thank  
11 you, Mr. Ashton -- top right corner. On this  
12 particular map to the south is down gradient  
13 and at the very bottom, which is off the map,  
14 is actually Ledges Road at the base of the  
15 valley.

16 This map is really just to  
17 orient everyone for purposes of the project.  
18 The dashed yellow line is the actual access  
19 route that's proposed. Much of it is already  
20 improved. There will be some additional  
21 improvements including some asphalt along  
22 some stretches of the proposed access. That  
23 dashed line comes in around. And then the  
24 tower location is that circle with the  
25 triangular dot. We've also shown on the map

1 some delineated wetlands that are located on  
2 site.

3           The parcel itself is about  
4 three acres and it's, in this particular  
5 location, there are some adjacent residences  
6 on Old Stagecoach that you can just see at  
7 the top of the aerial. And then some of the  
8 additional property that's around the actual  
9 parcel, that's -- for those who have followed  
10 some of the prior history in this particular  
11 project -- that is the location of the  
12 town-owned parcel that is now open space and  
13 controlled by the Conservation Commission.

14           This is a visibility analysis  
15 and earlier today AT&T's consultants talked  
16 about the visibility of the project. The  
17 tower that's proposed is 150 feet tall. The  
18 municipal antennas will be extended to 161  
19 and a half feet.

20           This map is a broader two-mile  
21 area within which the consultants studied  
22 overall visibility in the view shed areas on  
23 this map. That central to the circle,  
24 there's a crosshatch which is indicating the  
25 tower location.

1           In the area, what they look at  
2 is they look at some of the scenic roads,  
3 open space. These areas of yellow that you  
4 see on the map are areas where you would  
5 anticipate year-round views, which means some  
6 portion of the tower above the treeline. The  
7 other areas that are shown in orange are  
8 seasonal visibilty, and that's a view through  
9 a treeline.

10           We have some photographs, not  
11 the entire report, but certainly the entire  
12 report is available online to show you some  
13 of the qualitative views. This, for example,  
14 is Barlow Mountain Elementary School. You  
15 can see the tower simulated in the center  
16 portion of the picture.

17           That's 150-feet tall and what  
18 you see there are four different platforms  
19 for carrier antennas. AT&T would be  
20 installed at the top on this particular  
21 picture and then there would be space for  
22 additional carriers which we would anticipate  
23 to locate on the structure. They would be  
24 the other competing wireless carriers in the  
25 marketplace.

1           This is a view from Seth Low  
2 Pierrepont State Park. And we put in --  
3 there's an actual aerial right at the  
4 trailhead where you can put in kayaks and  
5 other nonmotorized boating.

6           This is just east of Barlow  
7 Mountain and looking back towards the ridge  
8 line at the tower structure.

9           This is along -- it says,  
10 Hugby drive. It's actually Hobby drive.

11           A VOICE: Hobby Drive.

12           MR. FISHER: Thank you.

13           Hobby Drive, thank you. Hobby  
14 Drive, which is a residential street. This  
15 is one of the views characteristic of that  
16 particular location.

17           This is at Tiger Hollow, which  
18 is the sports field right behind Ridgefield  
19 High School. This view you're looking back  
20 at the ridge to the East and that's the tower  
21 structure.

22           This is some of the areas just  
23 across from Mamanasco Lake. Again, looking  
24 in the distance the tower shows above the  
25 treeline.

1           This is Blue Ridge Road. This  
2 is getting a little bit more up into West  
3 Mountain, so that you're looking ridge to  
4 ridge in this particular area.

5           This is Teahouse Lane. Again,  
6 it's central to the photo.

7           This is up at Hudser's Camp  
8 and that's the McKeon Farm, open space and  
9 the large equestrian facility that's been  
10 developed there. This is looking essentially  
11 south, southeast and you can see the -- just  
12 the top 20 or 30 feet of the tower in this  
13 particular photo.

14           This is the last photo. The  
15 Town at one point, not this project, but a  
16 prior iteration had proposed a monopine, or  
17 an evergreen tree-type of structure for  
18 purposes of the tower.

19           This is a simulation of one of  
20 the photos, in this case of what that would  
21 look like. We had had conversations with the  
22 Town. Some have informally suggested it  
23 should be a monopine. The Conservation  
24 Commission prefers it to be a monopole. It's  
25 ultimately a decision for the Siting Council.

1                   Thank you, Chairman. That's  
2 our presentation.

3                   THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'm  
4 going to start calling the people who have  
5 signed up. I first want to apologize if I  
6 mispronounce your name or have trouble  
7 reading your writing in advance.

8                   And please, when you come up  
9 to the podium, would you spell your last  
10 name. And if you wish, you could give us  
11 your address.

12                   The first speaker is Paul  
13 Camoia.

14                   PAUL CAMOIA: Thank you. Yes,  
15 you have the spelling of the name,  
16 C-a-m-o-i-a. It's 56 Spireview Road,  
17 Ridgefield.

18                   Okay. All right. Three very  
19 salient points to make here that have been  
20 largely, up until today, thank you, been  
21 omitted from all the presentations. The  
22 first one is I'll go to this gentleman's  
23 perspective of a point of view.

24                   All of those photographic  
25 shots with the simulated tree above -- the



1 simulated pole above the treeline are within  
2 at least a half-mile distance from the actual  
3 site. There are no pictures taken which  
4 would simulate the view for the residents of  
5 Spireview Road which is my block. Okay?

6 Mr. Dowel lives right at the  
7 end of Stagecoach Road and Aspen Ledges. And  
8 none from Aspen Ledges looking southwest  
9 towards the monopine. All these homes would  
10 be greatly affected by a diminution in  
11 property value once you see 50 feet above the  
12 tree line.

13 The second point is the land  
14 title issue, which I'm glad Mr. Lynch brought  
15 up today. I also looked into the leasehold,  
16 or the apparently leasehold in this case.  
17 None of the principals have ever shown up to  
18 a meeting. Insight Towers, Alexandria  
19 Virginia. There has been evidence since 2011  
20 that they were tax -- paying property taxes,  
21 that the Town had actually owned the land and  
22 that Policone, Stevens & Curry who were the  
23 -- who defaulted on liens on that land were  
24 granting easement rights to the Town. Okay?

25 A lot of conflicting

1 information here on who the actual landholder  
2 is. And as I think Mr. Klemens asked about  
3 who actually funded the purchase price of  
4 these parcels. Now there's two parcels here  
5 at play. They're in map 8830, okay, of the  
6 Town. It's the town map 8830. It's parcel  
7 D1 and then parcel D2.

8 Parcel D1 is the parcel that  
9 begins at the end of Old Stagecoach Road.

10 Okay? That you, I guess, some of you walked  
11 through today. All right? When you make the  
12 right turn down that path you're heading for  
13 parcel D2. Okay? The site of that tower has  
14 been the same since 2011. As I brought up to  
15 the Siting Council before in e-mails, that we  
16 had a run through this already. There was a  
17 balloon siting in same spot. Okay? There  
18 was a sign posted there that there's a  
19 proposed tower to come from Homeland,  
20 et cetera. And this was just prior to a town  
21 vote. Okay? And the town vote, which was a  
22 couple months later, we voted down, not only  
23 buying the parcel, but ever erecting a tower  
24 there.

25 And that brings you to my

1 third point, the environmental issue also  
2 either omitted or not given quite the  
3 attention that it should. Number one, if you  
4 take the coordinates of that site you will be  
5 right on top of the Titicus Aquifer.

6 Now I've heard a lot of talk  
7 from these gentlemen and these attorneys  
8 that, oh, don't worry. We can control, you  
9 know, the wash of -- once we pave and we put  
10 up construction. The wash will not come back  
11 to Aspen Ledges Road, as some of these  
12 gentlemen said. It will go to Ledges Road,  
13 which is south towards the school. Okay? So  
14 that's another misconception. All right?  
15 That the wash is going to come back towards  
16 Stagecoach. It's not. It's going to go  
17 right down Ledges Road.

18 And I would suggest that any  
19 of you here, and some people who have not  
20 been in that area would get in the car one  
21 day in daylight, and just drive around and  
22 make notes of the streets and where you would  
23 be in relationship to that tower. And I  
24 think you'll get a different -- I think  
25 you'll get a truer perspective on what's

1 going on.

2 I don't think these gentlemen  
3 are giving you the proper perspective here.  
4 Okay? As far as location. And then again,  
5 an aquifer does not conceive or start by  
6 water running down a hill and then going into  
7 the Titicus River. Okay? It filters through  
8 that very fine sand and stone and works its  
9 way down about, well, 40 or 50 feet depending  
10 on the location, and forms a hole, a cavity  
11 in the side of that mountain. And that water  
12 comes out directly onto Ledges Road. All  
13 right? This is another thing that's not  
14 being brought up here.

15 So that water, part of the  
16 Croton Harmon system from New York City and  
17 New York State, about 10 million residents  
18 from Westchester down to the five boroughs of  
19 New York City are fed that water through the  
20 Croton Harmon system. The water goes right  
21 out Ledges Road. It crosses over into New  
22 York State within a hundred yards, if it's  
23 that much, and then the river meanders  
24 through and it pops up not far off of  
25 Route 116. You can see it, the river flow

1 right into the reservoir. And that reservoir  
2 feeds the Croton Harmon system.

3 And it also feeds about 300  
4 residences in the immediate area. That water  
5 is pumped up to a well which is on Aspen  
6 Ledges Road, not far from this monopole  
7 siting, the proposed monopole siting. And it  
8 would also affect the drinking water of the  
9 community. All right? Of which myself and,  
10 you know, several -- I said about hundred --  
11 well, about 300 families. You could check  
12 with the water company.

13 That is a very, very, very big  
14 issue here and it has always been put to the  
15 side as if that, well, it doesn't, you know,  
16 it's -- there is no aquifer there. It  
17 doesn't start there.

18 And my other point, the last  
19 point about this in engineering, if you're  
20 going to put up a 160-foot pole that weighs  
21 several tons. Okay? You're going to have to  
22 excavate into that, that ledge and on top of  
23 that aquifer at least 30 to 40 feet. Okay?  
24 And to secure it.

25 And if you look a lot of the

1 telephone poles in the area along the ledge,  
2 they all list, because even after they come  
3 and they dig out and you see the rock and  
4 then sand, and the rock and the sand. They  
5 put it in. It's vertical the first day and  
6 then it starts leaning. Okay? I still don't  
7 see how this massive construction project and  
8 this pole. Okay? Would even -- you would  
9 even want to attempt it in an area such as  
10 that.

11 It's ludicrous and it's caused  
12 the residents of our neighborhood over the  
13 last four years a lot of aggravation and  
14 stress. And there are residents who will  
15 testify and have testified that they were  
16 coerced into becoming proponents of this.  
17 Okay? And that they would either get money  
18 upfront or on the backend when the pole went  
19 up. All right?

20 And if anybody has anything to  
21 say about that, they know where I can be  
22 reached. They have my contacts. I think  
23 this is just a travesty, and it's a continued  
24 waste of the taxpayers' money of the Village  
25 of Ridgefield.

1 Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 Next is Tom Figgatt, if that's  
4 the proper.

5 TOM FIGGATT: Thank you.

6 My name is Tom Figgatt,  
7 F-i-g-g-a-t-t. I live on Mimosa Circle in  
8 Ridgefield. I'm not an abutter to the  
9 proposed tower site.

10 A VOICE: We can't hear you.

11 TOM FIGGATT: I am not an  
12 abutter to the proposed tower site. My  
13 points here today are about the need for cell  
14 service in northern Ridgefield.

15 Some years ago driving along  
16 North Street I was waived down by a lady of a  
17 certain age whose car had broken down. She  
18 had driven her Toyota Prius up from 684 where  
19 there are no gas stations, had run out of gas  
20 and gone on electric. And finally had run  
21 out of juice about two miles short of  
22 downtown Ridgefield. She had to waive me  
23 down, was dependent on the kindness of what  
24 she hoped was a gentleman stranger to give  
25 her a ride to a gas station. Why? Because

1 there's no cell service. She couldn't call  
2 somebody to come and pick her up. She  
3 couldn't get AAA to come.

4 Now I don't think that we  
5 should have such a huge part of our town  
6 where it's simply not safe to have a car  
7 break down. When my daughter was in middle  
8 school and high school I was always concerned  
9 if she might end up at a party at somebody's  
10 house where things weren't going right and  
11 she might want a ride home, but couldn't call  
12 us, or these days, couldn't text us. Now  
13 that was a few years back. She's in grad  
14 school now, but I have friends who have kids  
15 in middle school. The same issue is still  
16 there. We need cell service.

17 I run a business from my home.  
18 I have what's called a femtocell. It  
19 connects me up to the Internet for cell  
20 service. The business I run is as a tax  
21 advisor. I help people file their taxes.  
22 People come to my home to meet with me from  
23 time to time, but no one can ever call me  
24 because I can't receive an incoming cell  
25 phonecall.



1 I can make outgoing calls  
2 because it connects up over to the Internet,  
3 but boy, it's expensive. And it means I  
4 still have to have a regular phone, because  
5 when we have the frequent storms that we have  
6 here you have to have a regular landline  
7 because the cellphones don't work when the  
8 snows come and you're stuck in two feet of  
9 snow.

10 We need cell service in this  
11 part of Ridgefield. I don't know if this is  
12 the right tower. I don't know if it's in the  
13 right place. I don't know if it looks the  
14 right way, but we need cell service.

15 Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

17 The next person, Carol  
18 Mahlstedt, if -- I know I got the Carol part  
19 right.

20 No?

21 TOM FIGGATT: She might be in  
22 a meeting next door.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if  
24 someone can find her, fine. But in the  
25 meantime, Fred Martsen.

1                   FRED MARTSEN: Yes, my name is  
2 Fred Martsen, M-a-r-t-s-e-n. And I live at  
3 84 Sugarloaf Mountain Road in Ridgefield.  
4 It's an area which is blacked out regarding  
5 cell service.

6                   I made a similar comment. You  
7 know, my wife and I were traveling in far  
8 Western China, Hunan Province. And I could  
9 observe the peasants out there in their rice  
10 fields communicating on their cell phones.  
11 And here we are 50 miles north of Manhattan  
12 and we don't have cell service. It's  
13 ridiculous.

14                   It's the old, I guess they  
15 call it the Nimby attitude, not in my  
16 backyard. So to think that a few people's  
17 view is more important than basically the  
18 health and safety of the public, to me is,  
19 well, quite -- it's not appropriate.

20                   That's basically what I have  
21 to say, and that's it.

22                   THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

23                   Carl Bruce.

24                   CARL BRUCE: Good evening.

25 Welcome to Ridge-field. Did you know we're

1 the number one town in Connecticut? It's not  
2 because we're putting communication towers on  
3 ledges. And certainly not in residential  
4 neighborhoods with one-acre properties.

5 A VOICE: Can't hear you.

6 CARL BRUCE: I'm asking you  
7 not to approve this proposed tower on our  
8 beautiful ridge. The proposed cell tower on  
9 the ridge overlooking Ledges Road should be  
10 rejected because of its impact on scenery and  
11 recreational use of nearby lands as well as  
12 the potential environmental impact to nearby  
13 properties.

14 The area of town know as  
15 Ridgebury is surrounded by many beautiful  
16 ridgelines, including the ridgeline on which  
17 the tower is proposed. This is also known as  
18 Ridgbury Mountain.

19 I'm not sure if you had a  
20 chance to go down into the valley today, but  
21 if you do visit the high school and  
22 essentially stand on the northern side of  
23 that property you have a view of all of the  
24 surrounding ridges.

25 Construction of a tower on the

1 site will include the removal of trees that  
2 will scar this ridgeline forever. And the  
3 construction raises concerns about runoff and  
4 erosion which could impact nearby wetlands  
5 and homeowners below the ridge on Ledges  
6 Road. The tower will negatively impact  
7 scenic views from nearby Pierrepont State  
8 Park and be visible from other popular  
9 walking, horse riding and trail locations in  
10 the area.

11 The tower site is directly  
12 adjacent to open space recently purchased by  
13 the Town's conservation commission.  
14 Ironically the commission offered Wilton Bank  
15 \$350,000 for this property in 2011 and Wilton  
16 Bank ended up selling the property to Insight  
17 Towers for 265,000 in 2013.

18 The town voters in 2011  
19 rejected the placement of a tower  
20 approximately 50 feet from the proposed  
21 location by a vote of 254 to 108. This was  
22 at a town meeting. I don't know what your  
23 towns are like, but have you ever seen 400  
24 people show up at a town meeting?

25 The stated purpose of the

1 conservation commission buying the large  
2 piece of land -- is 28 acres adjacent to this  
3 property -- was to preserve the ridge and  
4 beauty of the ridge and lands. That was  
5 their stated plan. A 150-foot cell tower  
6 should not be constructed in long-established  
7 residential neighborhoods anywhere in the  
8 state of Connecticut, and certainly not in  
9 the one-acre areas.

10 Cell towers are not  
11 ubiquitous, as Mr. Aarons suggested this  
12 afternoon. This is a scenic residential  
13 neighborhood, not Interstate 84. I think the  
14 idea of cellphone service in this part of  
15 town is popular and certainly everyone wants  
16 it, but should we be happy if this is  
17 destroying a neighborhood?

18 I don't know the residents of  
19 304 or 310 Old Stagecoach Lane, or 2 Aspen  
20 Ledges, or the folks on Spireview Lane, but  
21 to suggest that they're not going to have a  
22 view of this tower from their property is  
23 just ridiculous.

24 I should also note that the  
25 presentation just before the meeting started

1 did not show the closest images that were  
2 available in their presentation. The view  
3 few from 96 Hobby Drive is just -- is  
4 ridiculous.

5           So I know we all want  
6 cellphone service, but do we want to do it by  
7 sticking this in the back of our neighbor's  
8 yard? And there's more towers coming. They  
9 could certainly end up on Mimosa or in  
10 somebody else's neighborhood. We heard this  
11 afternoon that there's a second tower planned  
12 by AT&T somewhere between downtown and this  
13 site.

14           The fact that our First  
15 Selectmen continues to support the placement  
16 of this tower in backyards really ought to  
17 cost him the election. And we also heard  
18 this afternoon that super storms are really  
19 the reason that we need communication towers  
20 in this area. It's too easy to blame the  
21 super storms.

22           The super storms really caused  
23 havoc because of the regulatory agencies in  
24 Hartford not holding CL&P accountable. It's  
25 only in the last year that we've seen CL&P

1 make any investment in this area, which  
2 should eliminate our power outages  
3 significantly.

4 The suggestion was also this  
5 afternoon that there's no cellphone service  
6 at the high school. You know, the Town has  
7 said that for years, but they've never really  
8 made any efforts to provide other  
9 communication methods at the fields. It  
10 would be quite easy to run a landline phone  
11 out there that can be made available to all  
12 of the sports coaches.

13 I ask you to let AT&T and  
14 Homeland Towers find a location that won't be  
15 so detrimental to our scenic town.

16 Thank you.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Cynthia Conti.

18 CYNTHIA CONTI: Conti,  
19 C-o-n-t-i, and I'm at 560 North Salem Road.

20 I would like to speak in favor  
21 of the cell tower in the Ridgebury section of  
22 Ridgefield, Connecticut. I understand the  
23 issues that have been brought up against the  
24 tower and I hope that the engineering  
25 question is going to be resolved, but my

1 focus is strictly on safety.

2 A cell tower will enhance  
3 safety in three important areas. First, the  
4 town emergency response teams. Second, the  
5 safety of our middle school and senior high  
6 school students using school facilities after  
7 hours, or just missing their ride home.  
8 Walking on North Salem Road is not a safe  
9 alternative. And while a phone down on the  
10 fields might be an alternative, that probably  
11 would not be available all the time and it's  
12 not just sporting events where it would be  
13 required.

14 But third and the most  
15 important to me is my personal safety.  
16 During our two October storms we lost our  
17 telephone landline on the second day. We do  
18 have a generator, but that does not help with  
19 the telephone. My husband and I are seniors  
20 and while we're in good health now, it is an  
21 issue without cell service that there's no  
22 way to call an ambulance, should one be  
23 needed. In fact, that is true for anyone in  
24 our area at any age.

25 Thank you.



1 THE CHAIRMAN: We don't have  
2 any other people who have signed in to speak.  
3 So I'll just ask, is there anyone who hasn't  
4 spoken and is not an intervenor who wishes to  
5 speak before we close the hearing?

6 So I guess the answer is --  
7 okay.

8 Is that somebody coming up to  
9 speak? Yes.

10 ELLEN BAFUNDO: I did not  
11 sign. I'm sorry. My name is Ellen Bafundo,  
12 B-a-f-u-n-d-o, Norrans Ridge Drive.

13 We have rented in Ridgefield.  
14 It was started -- supposed to be one or two  
15 years, but here we are five years later. And  
16 we are looking to purchase a property and  
17 we're particularly interested in a property  
18 in the Ridgebury section, but you know, we  
19 refuse to buy if this tower does go ahead.

20 And I -- it may not just feel  
21 like this tower would materially hurt, you  
22 know, homeowners in that area, I'm concerned  
23 we have children. I don't want to be within  
24 a quarter-mile and even, you know, even  
25 further than that within a cellphone tower.

1 I mean, you can say that these studies are  
2 inconclusive, but you know, these  
3 electromagnetic fields are not -- are cancer  
4 causing and I refuse to subject my family to  
5 that.

6 So -- and I know cellphone  
7 service is a problem. They didn't exist up  
8 until how many years ago, though? And there  
9 are other ways of addressing this without  
10 putting an ugly, unsightly tower that would  
11 be in neighborhoods that would materially  
12 affect homeowners and also affect their  
13 health.

14 Thank you.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

16 Is there anybody else? Yes?  
17 Please come and spell your -- tell us your  
18 name and spell your last name, please.

19 CAROL MAHLSTEDT: Yeah, I'm  
20 Dr. Carol Mahlstedt. I'm a psychologist. I  
21 have a practice here in Ridgefield. I'm also  
22 chairperson of the Ridgefield Crisis Team.

23 We're the team of mental  
24 health workers that goes into the  
25 schools whenever Ridgefield has a suicide or

1 a sudden death. And as we all know, we've  
2 had way too many of those. I also have done  
3 a lot of work in the aftermath of Newtown and  
4 I am the trainer for Region 6, behavioral  
5 health training for the crisis and disaster  
6 response teams for the whole area.

7           So I just want to talk about  
8 my experience working in crises here in town  
9 without a cell tower and I'm becoming more  
10 and more alarmed. This is -- I'm really  
11 speaking about the greater good. I know  
12 people are concerned about it being in their  
13 neighborhood. I know my view isn't going to  
14 be popular, but I'm really worried about the  
15 impact of not having cellphones available,  
16 particularly in the high school. So in the  
17 last several crises that I intervened in the  
18 high school, in the building you could be on  
19 one floor and be a ten-minute walk away from  
20 another part of the building and there is no  
21 cell service. And you cannot communicate  
22 with people during a major crisis.

23           This goes all the way back to  
24 9/11. I was in the high school during 9/11  
25 and there were kids, dozens of them who knew

1 their dads or moms worked in the towers or  
2 worked near the towers and we couldn't reach  
3 them, and this has just gone on.

4           And then when I was working  
5 with people in Newtown one of the things I  
6 heard, which probably a lot of people don't  
7 know, is that not at Sandy Hook, but in all  
8 the other schools in Newtown kids were in  
9 lockdown the entire day. And some kids were  
10 in closets, in band rooms for four hours.  
11 They had phones. They could text their  
12 parents and let them know they were safe.

13           And all I could think about  
14 is, what would it be like for Ridgefield  
15 parents if their child were locked in closets  
16 in the high school band room and they  
17 couldn't communicate with their parents for  
18 five hours? It just feels unacceptable to  
19 me. It feels like a real safety issue.

20           That's all I'm going to say.  
21 Thank you.

22           THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very  
23 much.

24           Is there anybody else who  
25 would like to speak? Yes.

1 MARY O'NEILL: My name is Mary  
2 O'Neill, O apostrophe N-e-i-l-l. I'm at 20  
3 Rolling Ridge Road in Ridgefield.

4 Two points. One, I've had  
5 Verizon for ten years and I have never lost  
6 service even during Sandy. I might have  
7 dropped a call now and then, but I have never  
8 lost service.

9 The second point I want to  
10 make is that there is modern technology that  
11 we could be using that is the size of the  
12 palm of your hand. There is no reason for us  
13 to be using a cell tower in the State of  
14 Connecticut. We should be going into the  
15 21st century and start using modern  
16 technology that would provide cell service  
17 that everyone needs and not putting up a cell  
18 tower a half a mile from my home.

19 Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Anyone else?

21 (No response.)

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We now  
23 close the public comment session of the  
24 hearing.

25 The evidentiary hearing, which

1 started this afternoon, will continue at the  
2 Siting Council offices in New Britain on  
3 Tuesday, June 3rd of this year at 1 p.m., in  
4 Hearing Room 1.

5 And additional prefiled  
6 testimony, exhibits, witness lists and items  
7 to be noticed administratively with the  
8 Council and all other parties and intervenors  
9 must be filed on or before Tuesday, May 27,  
10 2014.

11 And also, which I believe I  
12 stated previously, a verbatim transcript of  
13 this hearing will be made and deposited at  
14 the Ridgefield Town Clerk's Office for the  
15 convenience of the public. And you can also,  
16 as stated before, go online to the Siting  
17 Council website.

18 I hereby declare this hearing  
19 adjourned and thank you all for your  
20 participation. And drive home safely.

21 (Whereupon, the above  
22 proceedings were adjourned at 7:45 p.m.)  
23  
24  
25

## CERTIFICATE

1  
2 I hereby certify that the foregoing 39  
3 pages are a complete and accurate  
4 computer-aided transcription of my original  
5 verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in  
6 Re: DOCKET NO. 445, APPLICATION FROM  
7 HOMELAND TOWERS, LLC, AND NEW CINGULAR  
8 WIRELESS PCS, LLC, FOR A CERTIFICATE OF  
9 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED  
10 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND  
11 OPERATION OF A TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY  
12 LOCATED SOUTHWEST OF THE INTERSECTION OF OLD  
13 STAGECOACH ROAD AND ASPEN LEDGES ROAD,  
14 RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT, which was held  
15 before ROBERT STEIN, Chairperson, at the  
16 Ridgefield Town Hall, Large Conference Room,  
17 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut, on  
18 April, 24, 2014.  
19  
20  
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23  
24  
25

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Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857  
Court Reporter  
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