

In The Matter Of:
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Docket No. 475
October 24, 2017

BCT Reporting LLC
PO Box 1774
Bristol, CT 06010
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1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT
2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

3
4 Docket No. 475

5 Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless
6 Application for a Certificate of Environmental
7 Compatibility and Public Need for the
8 construction, maintenance, and operation of a
9 telecommunications facility located adjacent to
10 the maintenance building at the Skungamaug Golf
11 Course, south of Folly Lane, at Coventry Tax
12 Assessor's Map 006, Block 0026, Lot 0101,
13 Coventry, Connecticut.

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15
16 Public Comment Session held at the Coventry
17 Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, 1712 Main Street,
18 Coventry, Connecticut, on Tuesday, October 24,
19 2017, beginning at 7 p.m.

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21
22 H e l d B e f o r e :

23 SENATOR JAMES J. MURPHY, JR., Vice
24 Chairman

25

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

2

3 Council Members:

4 ROBERT HANNON

5 MICHAEL HARDER

6 DR. MICHAEL W. KLEMENS

7 DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.

8 ROBERT SILVESTRI

9

10 Council Staff:

11 MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQ.

12 Executive Director and

13 Staff Attorney

14

15 ROBERT MERCIER

16 Siting Analyst

17

18 For the Applicant:

19 ROBINSON & COLE LLP

20 280 Trumbull Street

21 Hartford, Connecticut 06133-3597

22 BY: KENNETH C. BALDWIN, ESQ.

23

24 Also present: Douglas J. Roberts,

25 Hudson Design Group LLC

1 SENATOR MURPHY: I'd like to call this
2 meeting to order of the Connecticut Siting Council
3 this Tuesday, October the 24th, 2017, at
4 approximately 7 p.m. My name is James J. Murphy,
5 Jr. I'm vice chairman of the Connecticut Siting
6 Council.

7 Other members of the Council here this
8 evening are: Robert Hannon, designee for
9 Commissioner Robert Klee of the Department of
10 Energy and Environmental Protection; Robert
11 Silvestri; Dr. Michael W. Klemens; Michael Harder;
12 and Daniel P. Lynch.

13 Members of the staff are Melanie
14 Bachman, our executive director and staff
15 attorney; and our siting analyst on this docket is
16 Robert Mercier.

17 This is a continuation of a public
18 hearing that began at 3 this afternoon. Copies of
19 the hearing program and the Council's Citizens
20 Guide to Siting Council Procedures are available
21 for members of the public.

22 This hearing is held pursuant to the
23 provisions of Title 16 of the Connecticut General
24 Statutes and of the Uniform Administrative
25 Procedure Act upon an application from Cellco

1 Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless for a
2 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and
3 Public Need for the construction, maintenance and
4 operation of a telecommunications facility located
5 at the Skungamaug Golf Course, south of Folly
6 Lane, in Coventry, Connecticut. This application
7 was received by the Council on June 28, 2017.

8 This application is also governed by
9 the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which is
10 administered by the Federal Communications
11 Commission. This act prohibits this Council from
12 considering the health effects of radio frequency
13 emissions on human health and wildlife to the
14 extent the emissions from the towers are within
15 the federal acceptable safe limits standard, which
16 standard is also followed by the state Department
17 of Public Health. This Federal Act also prohibits
18 this Council from discriminating between and among
19 providers of functionally equivalent services.
20 This means if one carrier already provides service
21 for an area, other carriers have a right to
22 compete and provide service in the same area.

23 The applicant published notice of
24 filing the application to the Council in The
25 Chronicle on June 22nd and 23rd, 2017. The

1 Council's legal notice of the date and time of
2 this hearing was published in The Chronicle on
3 July 28, 2017. Upon this Council's request, the
4 applicant erected a sign at the proposed site so
5 as to inform the public of the name of the
6 applicant, the type of the facility, the hearing
7 date and location, and contact information for the
8 Council.

9 This afternoon members of the Council,
10 staff and public personally conducted a field
11 review of the proposed site in order to observe
12 firsthand the potential effects of this proposal.

13 This hearing session tonight has been
14 reserved first for the public to make short
15 statements into the record. These public
16 statements are not subject to questions from the
17 party or the Council, and members of the public
18 making statements may not ask questions of the
19 party or the Council. These statements will
20 become part of the record for Council
21 consideration. A sign-up sheet is available for
22 those who would like to participate.

23 A reminder to all, off-the-record
24 communications with a member of the Council or a
25 member of the Council's staff, upon the merits of

1 this application is prohibited by law.

2 I wish to note for those who are here
3 and for the benefit of your friends and neighbors
4 who are unable to join us for the public comment
5 session, that you or they may send written
6 statements to the Council within 30 days of the
7 date hereof, and such written statements will be
8 given the same weight as if spoken at this hearing
9 this evening.

10 We ask each person making a public
11 statement in this proceeding to confine his or her
12 statements to the subject matter before the
13 Council and to avoid unreasonable repetition so
14 that we may hear all of the concerns you and your
15 neighbors may have. Please be advised that the
16 Council cannot answer questions from the public
17 about the proposal.

18 A verbatim transcript will be made of
19 this hearing and deposited at the Town Clerk's
20 Office in Coventry for the convenience of the
21 public.

22 Before I call on the public to make
23 whatever statements they feel is appropriate, I'd
24 like to have the representative of the applicant
25 make a statement.

1 Attorney Baldwin.

2 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
3 Doug Roberts with Hudson Design Group will be
4 making a presentation.

5 SENATOR MURPHY: Proceed, Mr. Roberts.

6 DOUGLAS ROBERTS: Thank you.

7 I'll just go over the proposed site off
8 of Folly Lane. We're going to utilize the
9 existing access driveway that just feeds their
10 garage and shop area, and we're going to utilize a
11 section behind that for a proposed tower and
12 compound. I have a blow-up of that.

13 We're proposing a 40 by 60 fenced
14 compound with a 140 foot monopole placed in this
15 location here. Access will be along this access
16 road here. Underground utilities will be from
17 Folly Lane with a transformer and meter bank with
18 telco and fiber along the same lines. We have a
19 prefabricated equipment platform with a back-up
20 generator which will be a propane generator and a
21 500 gallon fuel tank that will be powering that
22 generator.

23 This is an elevation point of view.
24 Our platform has nine antennas, standard 12 foot 6
25 platform, and, like I said, a fence compound.

1 Nothing more to add. Thank you.

2 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you,
3 Mr. Roberts.

4 I'd like to call any public official
5 who would like to speak. We had a gentleman this
6 afternoon that signed up. Would you care to
7 address us?

8 DOUGLAS RACICOT: Yes, please. Thank
9 you.

10 My name is Doug Racicot. I'm the
11 operations director of Tolland County 911. We
12 provide --

13 SENATOR MURPHY: Is that good enough
14 for you on the recording?

15 THE COURT REPORTER: I can hear him.
16 He speaks up.

17 (Off the record discussion.)

18 MR. RACICOT: Thank very much for
19 allowing us an opportunity to speak. My name is
20 Doug Racicot. I'm the operations director of
21 Tolland County 911. We are the 911 answering
22 point for the Town of Coventry. We also provide
23 fire and EMS dispatching to your local fire
24 department here.

25 One of the things that we would request

1 from the public's standpoint -- and I've been in
2 communication with Mark Palmer, the police chief
3 here in Coventry -- is some reserved space on the
4 tower rent free. We would like it entered into
5 the record, if possible. I believe Verizon is in
6 agreement with that, and working with us to
7 accomplish those things moving forward. So if
8 that could be reflected, if the application is
9 approved, we would appreciate it.

10 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you very much.

11 MR. RACICOT: Thank you.

12 SENATOR MURPHY: Candy Wilson.

13 CANDY WILSON: Good morning. My name
14 is Candy Wilson. My address is 1283 North River
15 Road, which is directly across the street from
16 where the site of this tower is going to be.

17 First, I would like to address some
18 comments I heard prior to the start of the meeting
19 today at 3 p.m. Mr. Douglas Roberts stated,
20 Couldn't fly the balloon today. Mr. Mike
21 Libertine replied, Good, North Farms Road people
22 won't see it. I feel it's totally inappropriate
23 to want our citizens excluded from this hearing
24 and of poor judgment and professionalism, and I'm
25 very disappointed that I heard these comments here

1 today -- or this afternoon.

2 Second, I would like to address the
3 view from our 14 windows year-round. We did see
4 the balloon flown prior this year, as we are
5 located directly across from the proposed site, as
6 we are the highest elevated residence, except for
7 1247 North River Road, our abutter, but that
8 location faces Broadway and is behind us. Our
9 home is approximately 200 feet from the road, and
10 over 50 feet above the river level to our
11 foundation, and we stand 40 feet above that. We
12 will be directly impacted by the sight and sounds
13 because we are the last house in the hollow
14 surrounded by upsloping land to North Farms Road.
15 Our location and elevation and surrounding grade
16 of land put us in an echo chamber where we can
17 hear people speaking on the golf course.

18 Our location experiences lots of power
19 outages. In August 2011, Hurricane Irene hit, and
20 we were without power for over 15 days. On
21 October 31, 2011, winter storm Alfred hit, causing
22 us to be without power for another two weeks. We
23 feel that the long extended outages, the impact of
24 the sound of the proposed industrial generator
25 bouncing back off the mountainside back to our

1 echo chamber would be inhumane to us to endure
2 24/7 for us and the wildlife. We tolerate the 5
3 to 6 a.m. mowing, chemical odors forcing us to
4 close our windows, and over 3 million gallons of
5 water that the golf course removes from the river
6 annually and the toxic runoff back into the river,
7 as well as the depleted rivers and ponds.

8 What impact would be experienced by the
9 wildlife and nesting birds? Bald Eagles, Red-tail
10 and Cooper's Hawks, Pileated Woodpeckers, Great
11 Blue Heron, all nest in and around the properties.
12 Also, I would like to correct Mr. Dean Gustafson
13 that the aquatic life does cross from the river
14 through our property to the ponds located behind
15 our home.

16 What time of day will the generators
17 run, not to interrupt golfers or disrupt their
18 games, as noise would be disruptive? I also
19 believe that Mr. Tony Befera was asked by Mr. Mike
20 Klemens what if actual lines were down, and
21 Mr. Befera replied the generator would run 24/7,
22 but no calls would be placed from the tower. If
23 like in 2011 storms the lines were down, could
24 they stop the industrial generator from running
25 unnecessarily 24/7? I've reviewed the photos of

1 the proposal and find they are not totally
2 accurate with the existing situations regarding
3 elevations, locations, site lines and wetlands
4 impact.

5 I think another location would be
6 better suited for the tower than the one proposed
7 at Skungamaug Golf Course. I believe Mr. John
8 Motycka already benefits enough from his
9 neighbors' losses, and we should not suffer
10 further from his gains as this proposal devalues
11 mine and other properties.

12 I also think the Committee members
13 should consider hearing from the public on another
14 date, as the low turnout from the failure of the
15 balloon fly today. Thank you very much.

16 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you.

17 Paul Wilson.

18 PAUL WILSON: Paul Wilson, 1283 North
19 River Road. I understand I can't ask questions.
20 Mr. Klemens said earlier he smelled fumes from
21 behind the maintenance garage. I just want to
22 know who's going to oversee the removal or
23 manipulation of the soil so that there is no toxic
24 waste in it.

25 My other question is, the size of the

1 balloon, does that actually depict a 12 and a half
2 by 12 and a half array of antennas?

3 The original proposal that I read in
4 May also said that they could add to this antenna
5 two more times. Is that still in the proposal?
6 And if their antenna is at 143 feet, and they're
7 going to put a 10 foot separation between that and
8 emergency services, emergency services has a 10
9 foot antenna, that puts it at 163 feet. At what
10 height does this antenna need to be lit for
11 aircraft?

12 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you.

13 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

14 SENATOR MURPHY: Anders Wisnewski.

15 ANDERS WISNEWSKI: I'm Anders
16 Wisnewski, and I also represent Conrad Cunes at
17 445 Goose Lane.

18 Good evening, Connecticut Siting
19 Council members, neighbors and citizens of
20 Coventry. Thank you, Council members, for coming
21 out to rural and beautiful Coventry today. It
22 would have been a nicer day if it hadn't rained.

23 We are the abutting property owners to
24 the proposed Verizon project along Folly Lane,
25 North Coventry. Our farm is adjacent to the

1 proposed cell tower parcel with approximately
2 1,156 feet of frontage along the 13th hole, and
3 569 feet along Folly Lane. Our historic farm and
4 North Coventry's countryside landscape would
5 change forever with the installation of this 143
6 foot monopole tower, including the 12 and a half
7 foot antenna platform and possible future
8 navigational lights, if increased, to answer your
9 question, to 200 feet. The addition of new
10 platforms and antennas would further affect the
11 visual quality of this place.

12 Our garden design and our sustainably
13 run farm, Red Goose Farm and Gardens, would be
14 affected by this proposal severely. We hope that
15 the Council will consider the ill siting of this
16 project due to some of the following points:

17 The cell tower is a commercial use
18 encroachment -- and I mentioned this at the
19 informational meeting back in April -- on a
20 residential use. Obviously, that's a very obvious
21 fact. The appraised value of abutters' property
22 will be affected and lowered significantly,
23 possibly by maybe 20 percent, especially our
24 property.

25 There will be limits and conditions

1 imposed on us and kind of forced upon us because
2 if we would like to add onto our house, say, put a
3 second story on, it would be very difficult to --
4 we wouldn't want to look at a cell tower at the
5 back of our property. And our farm depends on a
6 scenic and rural quality of place, it really does.

7 One of the major factors I brought up
8 at the informational meeting was the soil geology.
9 A soil investigation or report should be done, and
10 really must be done, by a geotechnical engineering
11 firm to design the foundation properly and
12 determine the stability of the glacial esker
13 formation where the facility is proposed. And I
14 hope you understand that was a glacial esker. And
15 the sediment on this ridge is stratified, sorted,
16 with multiple sizes of particles, including
17 boulders. It needs to be studied for stability,
18 and, if you don't do it, who knows. In addition,
19 one to one slopes on the south and west side are
20 very steep for a structure of this size, 14
21 stories.

22 For visual impact, we didn't see it
23 today because, yes, the balloon was flying at a
24 45-degree angle. It just wasn't standing up. It
25 wasn't in the right spot. I watched it from my

1 backyard all day. It was at a 45-degree angle.
2 So it really does need to be flown again. I agree
3 with the gentleman, and with Candy.

4 There would be a direct line of view
5 from our residence living room, master bedroom,
6 deck and terrace to the cell tower most of the
7 year, and a hundred percent along our entire
8 frontage.

9 The plans show no adequate landscaping
10 at the base of the compound to screen views and no
11 additional evergreens to mitigate the visual
12 impact of the pole and platform. I'm a landscape
13 architect. I, you know, kind of do this kind of
14 thing. The pastoral and pristine rural character,
15 island of the view, would be severely affected and
16 disrupted.

17 The placement of the facility at a
18 relatively low elevation in a valley increases its
19 need for it to be taller so that they can have
20 coverage. The reflection of the tower in our
21 pond, which I will be following up with letters
22 and diagrams, some plans, to show the relationship
23 of our pond and how it's going to be reflecting
24 the tower in our pond and glass sliding windows,
25 and it's also placed right at the pond's visual

1 focal point. It's also going to be a disruption
2 of our view of Grant Hill, the summit, which is
3 right in front of us to the west at 934 feet.

4 Grant Hill residences, I don't see
5 anybody here from Grant Hill, but it would be
6 visually impacted due to the large Skungamaug
7 River Valley viewshed. If increased to 200 feet,
8 which the Council would have to approve, aircraft
9 lights at night would reflect in our pond. It
10 would be seen across the entire valley viewshed.
11 Heckler Field, which is by Twin Hills Country
12 Club, is only 2.3 nautical miles away. I called
13 the US Department of Transportation, and they
14 verified all this with me.

15 Major site lines, something that may
16 be -- I was trying to go down there today when the
17 balloon was flying. It was only flying for 15 to
18 20 minutes. I tried to go down there and take a
19 picture along Folly -- no, Broadway and North
20 River Road along the 14th fairway. I tried. It
21 was already taken down. I thought this balloon
22 was going to be flying from 8:00 a.m. to 6 p.m.
23 That's what I was told. I was unable to take a
24 picture to show the effect up the 14th fairway
25 from a public road and the Skungamaug River Bridge

1 down there, and I thought that was a very
2 important view, and I was very disappointed with
3 that.

4 And, you know, you mentioned the health
5 effects. Well, you know, they said DDT wasn't
6 very dangerous back in the 1960s. I was
7 crop-dusted, along with my sister. It turned out,
8 well, it was a little dangerous, wasn't it? So at
9 this time we don't know that, but residents -- are
10 residents continuously exposed to radio
11 frequencies in the 2,100 megahertz range within
12 only 770 feet of our location and our elevation of
13 600 feet and the antennas are positioned at 682
14 feet above ground level. This exposure would be
15 greater with the installation of more platforms,
16 antennas and carriers. I was told at the
17 information meeting they could do two to three
18 more, up to three or four platforms on this thing.

19 We have bees. I cultivate the
20 pollinators in my area, and our orchard would be
21 affected by these high levels, especially with
22 future add-ons.

23 But abutters would be subjected to
24 significant construction noise. The adjacent
25 inland watercourse could be impacted adversely, as

1 it is only 50 feet, as proposed, from this
2 facility. 150 feet setback is the normal
3 standard. I couldn't put up anything closer than
4 150 feet in my property.

5 This stream is not just an intermittent
6 stream. It originates, in part, from the wetlands
7 behind my barn and flows onto the Skungamaug, Hop
8 River, Willimantic and Shetucket Rivers, and so
9 on.

10 The 500 gallon propane tank is placed
11 within the fall zone. This contains the
12 equivalent of 10 tons of TNT in explosive power.
13 That is 62.5, 8-gallon gas grill containers. Has
14 Homeland Security been notified about this? There
15 is a danger to players, workers and structures
16 within the fall zone.

17 Future platforms and antennas height
18 increases are of great concern, as the Connecticut
19 Siting Council has exclusive jurisdiction over
20 modifications. You can just look outside next to
21 where we're standing to the Town Hall here cell
22 tower, and it has five platforms. Route 32 and
23 195, that has five platforms. It's not going to
24 stay the way it is.

25 North Coventry is unique. It is an

1 area with historic colonial agricultural farms and
2 possesses a natural -- a rural nature with stone
3 walls, forestland, fields and rolling topography.
4 Our family farm is historic. My great grandfather
5 purchased our farm in 1929. He came from Sweden.
6 It's been in our family now for four generations,
7 and he previously owned the parcel that is
8 proposed for the cell tower. We owned all the
9 land down to the river, and we sold it to the golf
10 course so that they could improve it to an 18 hole
11 course.

12 The National Park Service has
13 designated this area as a cultural heritage
14 corridor called The Last Green Valley. We urge
15 conservation of this natural resource and want it
16 to stay dark at night.

17 I also kind of -- I'm not asking you a
18 question, but I'm just asking a general question.
19 What is the recreational impact and
20 appropriateness to erect this on a golf course?
21 Is it aesthetic to place a tower like this in a
22 park-like setting?

23 And my last piece of -- conclusion is
24 the Skungamaug River Golf Club is about 120 acres.
25 Why is the site behind our pond view preferred

1 over possibly less intrusive sites to all the
2 neighbors? We would like to see the alternatives
3 that could minimize the impact of this kind of
4 facility. At the very least, we would ask the
5 Council to consider recommending to Verizon that a
6 slim line pole, or a unipole be substituted for a
7 monopole. This would eliminate the need for
8 platforms, and antennas would be within the pole
9 itself. This has been done before. It's done all
10 over the country, in Europe as well, all over the
11 world. I have the information. I can give it to
12 you.

13 We have gone through considerable
14 expense and effort to relocate recently from
15 Minneapolis to North Coventry after the recent
16 death of my mother. Now that our farm is in my
17 family again, we want to keep it in the family.
18 We want to conserve and protect it for the future.

19 At the informational meeting in April,
20 I urged the planning and zoning commission and the
21 town council to offer a municipal alternative site
22 to the Connecticut Siting Council, such as the
23 fire station, nearby Laidlaw Park, down Goose Lane
24 where the schoolhouse is, where existing access
25 and electrical service could accommodate or be

1 upgraded for a facility of this nature. They
2 could still put the wonderful police and fire
3 antenna for free on there.

4 For this site revenue is generated --
5 for this one currently revenue is generated for a
6 privately-owned entity but nothing for the
7 citizens of North Coventry and abutters that share
8 the impact. On town land, revenue could benefit
9 the Town of Coventry and its citizens which is
10 urgently needed. This is one -- as I said at the
11 informational meeting, this is one folly we don't
12 need along Folly Lane.

13 I hope common sense will prevail. I
14 will follow up with the Council, like you said,
15 with a letter and some diagrams I've prepared
16 within the comment period of 30 days.

17 Thank you very much for your attention.

18 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you.

19 That is the extent of people that have
20 signed up. Is there anyone else who would care to
21 speak this evening?

22 (No response.)

23 SENATOR MURPHY: Going once, twice. Is
24 there anyone else who would care to speak to us
25 this evening before we close?

1 MR. BALDWIN: Mr. Chairman, we did have
2 one homework assignment that we wanted to respond
3 to with respect to the propane tank. I think the
4 question related to how much fuel the tank
5 actually holds, and we'd like to respond to that
6 and ask Mr. Roberts to do so.

7 SENATOR MURPHY: Go ahead.

8 MR. ROBERTS: Sure. Again, a 500
9 gallon fuel tank will actually be filled to 80
10 percent of that, 400 gallons propane. Like
11 gasoline, it burns vapors, it doesn't burn raw
12 liquid. So you need that top for off-gasing.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
14 We have nothing further.

15 SENATOR MURPHY: I'll give the public
16 one more shot. Is there anybody else who would
17 care to address the Council before I close this
18 meeting?

19 (No response.)

20 SENATOR MURPHY: If not, before closing
21 this hearing, the Connecticut Siting Council
22 announces that briefs and proposed findings of
23 fact may be filed with the Council no later than
24 November 24, 2017. The submission of briefs or
25 proposed findings of fact are not required by the

1 Council, rather we leave it to the choice of the
2 parties and intervenors.

3 Anyone who has not become a party or an
4 intervenor, but who wishes to make his or her
5 views known to the Council, may file written
6 statements with the Council within 30 days of this
7 date.

8 The Council will issue draft findings
9 of fact, and thereafter parties and intervenors
10 may identify errors or inconsistencies between the
11 Council's draft findings of fact and the record.
12 However, no new information, no new evidence, no
13 argument, and no reply briefs without our
14 permission, will be considered by the Council.

15 Copies of the transcript of this
16 hearing will be filed at the Coventry Town Clerk's
17 Office.

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

21 (Whereupon, the above proceedings
22 adjourned at 7:32 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 24 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original stenotype notes taken of the Public Comment Session in Re: Docket No. 475, Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless Application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a telecommunications facility located adjacent to the maintenance building at the Skungamaug Golf Course, south of Folly Lane, at Coventry Tax Assessor's Map 006, Block 0026, Lot 0101, Coventry, Connecticut, which was held before SENATOR JAMES J. MURPHY, JR., VICE CHAIRMAN, at the Coventry Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, 1712 Main Street, Coventry, Connecticut, on October 24, 2017.



Lisa L. Warner, L.S.R., 061

Court Reporter