

City of Auburn, Maine

"Maine's City of Opportunity"

Office of Planning & Permitting

Planning Board Report

To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Eric J. Cousens, Deputy Director of Planning and Development

Date: February 1, 2016

RE: Special Exception and Site Plan request of Verizon Wireless, to construct a wireless telecommunications facility including a new 125' monopole tower, equipment shelter, utilities and access road at 200 Merrow Road (PID 178-005) pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XI of the Ordinances of the City of Auburn.

I. PROPOSAL

Verizon Wireless is proposing a wireless telecommunications facility including a new 125' monopole tower, equipment shelter, utilities and access road at 200 Merrow Road (PID 178-005) pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XI of the Ordinances of the City of Auburn (Wireless Communications Facilities).

The applicant explains in detail why the tower is necessary to meet their coverage objectives in section J - RF Report for the proposed facility. Appendix B, C, D, E and F of the proposal detail how they believe the proposal meets the requirements of the ordinance and requests a waiver of section 60-1301- Soil suitability because onsite wastewater disposal will not be required. Staff supports this waiver and will require stamped plans ensuring proper footings and foundations for existing soils are addressed during the building permit stage of the review.

As of February 3, 2016 we are working to resolve a difference of opinion on the requirement of FAA approvals. The *ASAC SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATION* provided earlier today indicates that the site does not trigger an FAA notification or obstruction determination. The Airport Manager disagrees and believes the determination is required. I expect to have additional information by Friday February 5, 2016 and will update the Staff report at that time. This report is being provided in the interim as updates will not be posted to the website until Monday.

II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Police Department:

A. No Concerns.

Auburn – Lewiston Airport Manager:

I have several concerns with the cell tower. I think it is going to cause missed approach problems for aircraft using runway 22 in marginal weather or at night. However, I would suggest that the plan to install this tower in this proximity to the airport should not be approved until the FAA obstruction determination letter has been issued and the FCC has issued the tower license. I believe that having those two items in-hand will give us assurance that Federal safety standards are met. I am still working to get a picture of the full effects of the tower on the airport. I should have that information Thursday, 4 February and to you by Friday morning.

Fire Department:

- A. The access road shall be able to support the weight and accessibility of fire/rescue apparatus including the winter and spring seasons.
- B. The access road must be 20' wide and have 13'- 6" clearance for vehicle access and a useable turnaround at the end.
- C. A Knox Box lock or key is recommended for fire fighter access to the site/fenced in area.

Water and Sewer District:

No impact and no concerns.

Engineering Department:

This proposal is for the siting of a cell tower on PID 178-005, 200 Merrow Rd. This parcel was approved as a 4 lot PUD subdivision in 2011. The plan Merrow Road Business Subdivision is recorded at the Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 48, Page 143. Access to these lots was to be by a private road named Balsam Drive. Since the original approval there has been some minor activity in roughing in the roadway.

The proposed tower will be located on what is Lot 1 on the plan. Access is proposed to be over a 20 foot wide access easement that follows the course of what is described as an existing "dirt" roadway, which is the roughed in proposed Balsam Drive. Utility connections, which appear to be just power & phone, will be underground within a 10 foot wide utility easement that is located within the access easement. Sale of lots and future development will require the construction of Balsam Drive and associated water and sewer lines. It is strongly recommended the installation of the cell tower utility lines follow a set location within the cross-sectional design of Balsam Drive thereby minimizing the chances of conflicts if/and when the road is constructed.

With development being proposed that will utilize the proposed Balsam Drive for access, this roadway will be added to the E9-1-1 system. As such the cell tower location will be addressed 81 Balsam Drive.

Planning Department:

A. If approved the tower owner must allow co-location of other wireless carriers.

III. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW:

The applicant provides detailed findings in Appendix B, C, D, E and F of the proposal. Staff agrees with almost all of them with the conditions noted by each Department above. Based on the current information we cannot confirm the findings for Section 60-1304(2)(b), Section 60-1304(2)(g), Section 60-1304(2)(h), Section 60-1336(a)(1), Section 60-1336(a)(2) and Section 60-1336(a)(3).

IV. RECOMMENDATION:

We are currently waiting for information from the Airport Manager and a response from the Applicant to finalize the recommendation. Based on the additional information we plan to finalize a recommendation for the meeting Tuesday night but will email the updated report when it is available.

Eric Cousens
Deputy Director of Planning and Development