

10/5 Beacon

Planning Board should stop cell towers

To the editor:

Acton has long been touted as a good place to live and raise a family. If the Planning Board has its way, that will all change. Apparently, Acton is now the favorite town in which to erect cell phone towers. We already have six towers built. Concord has two, and one proposed. Lincoln has one. Tewksbury has nine.

Now Acton is proposing to locate towers in residential neighborhoods, where the ill effects on human health may well rival the Grace chemical fiasco. Why are certain towns chosen by the wireless industry for more and more cell towers? It may have more to do with the quality of the Planning Board than any legitimate need. In Tewksbury, the town had to call a moratorium on cell towers. It may be one of the only means to curb an irresponsible Planning Board.

At the first public meeting, the Acton Planning Board informed residents that they could not mention health concerns. They, the industry representative and the board chairman, claimed federal law prohibited such discussion. Guess what, there is no such federal law. But for the sake of the wireless industry, the civil rights in Acton have been arbitrarily suspended by the Acton Planning Board. Ironic that Acton, an historic cradle of liberty, has a town Planning Board that is overseen by a moderator who acts as nothing more than a mouth piece for industry misinformation.

Conflict of interest with the wireless industry must be addressed. The board hired a consultant who is part of the wireless industry, rather than someone who represents the town, or has understanding of the laws' limitations to the industry. Last week, residents were informed by the moderator that unless stopped, the decision will automatically go through for the cell tower Dec. 14.

If you don't want the next cell tower in your back yard,

make your voices heard at the next Planning Board meeting, Oct. 24.

Rosemary Hryniewich

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Residents deserve to be heard

To the editor:

Thank you for printing our letter, "Cell tower would set precedent," in the Sept. 21 edition of The Beacon. There has been a Planning Board meeting since then. We continue to be concerned that the process seems very deferential to the applicant and dismissive of neighborhood residents. This may not be the intent of officials in the process but this is how we see it. Accordingly, until the intent is clarified to us with words and interim decisions we can only deal with the matter as we see it.

We are prepared to meet one-on-one with any Planning Board member to explain the basis for how we see it. We suggest this as formal meetings don't always allow for full development of different views. We recognize that Planning Board members are unpaid volunteers who sometimes give thanklessly of their time while taking much flak. We do thank them for their service whatever their decision.

We further understand that the chairman of the Planning Board has more senior responsibilities. We respect his authority and we also thank him for his unpaid volunteer service. We further understand that dedicated and capable chairmen for town committees are difficult to find.

But we must ask for explanation of rules and consistency in their application. No attorneys for the applicant or attorneys for parties associated with the applicant deserve treatment that is more respectful than that accorded any resident whether they are for or opposed to the application.

If this is not done, the process will have us all diverging further. The position of leadership is with the chairman so the obligation is his to lead us all in that regard.

Lacking a one-on-one or more consistent handling of matters, we will seek 15 minutes at the beginning of the next meeting to present our observations and views on why we think we are being treated dismissively.

Thank you for reading this and please attend the Tuesday, Oct. 24 meeting in the town library at 7:45 p.m.

Jim and Cathy Monahan

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