



TOWN OF ACTON
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Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Board **Date:** June 2, 2010
From: Kristin Alexander, AICP, Assistant Town Planner *KKA*
Subject: **Application for Personal Wireless Facility (PWF) Special Permit
SBA Towers II, LLC**

We have reviewed the latest materials provided by the applicant for the 5-7 Craig Road personal wireless facility special permit application. Some of the issues from the Planning Department's previous memos have been addressed by the latest information. Below are the issues that still remain from the previous memos along with a couple new staff comments/questions. The comments are numbered as they were in previous memos (so you can refer back to the other memos if necessary). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

- 3., 4., & 11. The applicant is now proposing a 140' high CAM (concealed antenna monopole) that can be extended to +/-170' in height in the future if necessary. It appears that the facility could support four to five additional carriers. A CAM appears to be less obtrusive visually compared to other tower designs and the one proposed can accommodate additional carriers. The tower type and design seem appropriate for the site (ZBL 3.10.6.4, 3.10.6.5, & 3.10.6.16).
6. The plan should be modified to state or show that the climbing pegs to access the tower will be set at approx. 10'-12' high to prevent unauthorized climbing (ZBL 3.10.6.10).
8. If the proposed facility is approved, a condition of the decision should be that transmission devices owned, operated, or used by the Town of Acton or any of its agencies shall be allowed to locate on the tower at a height the Town requires. The Town equipment will consist of up to four whip antennas to be installed on the outside of the CAM (unless there is newer housing material available that will not obstruct transmissions to the whips at a height where steel supports can be mounted, which is most likely below the carriers' antennae) (ZBL 3.10.6.12).
12. The applicant has explained the rationale and process for selecting the 5 Craig Road site; provided additional maps to help show service coverage and gaps; and has investigated a list developed by Planning Department staff, the Planning Board, and hearing attendees of other potentially suitable sites for the tower in Acton and Concord (ZBL 3.10.6.17 b) through e)).

It appears that most of the sites on the list were not adequate for Clearwire because they were located too far from the area Clearwire wanted to cover, were not available, or had environmental constraints/issues. The Town landfill site (8 Forest Road) appeared to be the best location for Clearwire based on the information Clearwire and Dave Maxson provided, however, that site is not available (see Acton Town Manager 5/24/10 letter).

In Mr. Maxson's report received by the Planning Department on 5/25/10, he discussed that Clearwire could add a "4th sector" pointing toward Rt. 2 on the Great Hill tower and reduce the height of the proposed tower to 100'. According to Mr. Maxson, the addition of a 4th sector on the Great Hill tower and a shorter Craig Road tower could provide better coverage for Clearwire than a 170' or 140' high facility solely at Craig Road. The applicant is currently looking into the 4th sector option. The Planning Board should compare the pros and cons of this 4th sector/shorter tower alternative with the pros and cons of the current proposal.

15. In a 4/6/10 letter from Mr. Eriksen, the applicant requests a reduction in the sidewalk contribution amount since they believe they will not be creating a greater need for sidewalk space in Acton and since Craig Road has no sidewalks. Staff recommended that the applicant contribute \$22,250 to the Town of Acton sidewalk fund (the full sidewalk contribution - see past Planning Department memos and ZBL Section 10.3). However, another alternative may be the possibility of diverting some or all of the recommended sidewalk contribution to the installation of the Town's fiber optic cables from this location to the nearest Town connection site on River Street. This idea arose from a meeting on 4/29/10 between Mr. Eriksen, a SBA tower representative, Roland Bartl, and Mark Hald, the Town's I.T. Director. The Planning Board should discuss this issue.

Additional Comments

- According to the Health Department, the business at 7 Craig Road handles heating and motor oil. 5-7 Craig Road is located in the Groundwater Protection District Zone II which limits the generation and/or storage of hazardous waste and materials. Any activities at 7 Craig Road that are prohibited under ZBL Table 4.3.7.2 ("Use Regulations within the Groundwater Protection District") need to cease or somehow become legitimized before a personal wireless facility special permit at 5-7 Craig Road can be issued.
- The site information sign, balloon reference note 22 on plan sheet C-4 should state the sign will include the telephone number where the operator in charge can be reached at all times (Zoning Bylaw Section 3.10.4.5).
- Staff continues to defer to Dave Maxson for further information and guidance on this application.

cc: Planning Department
David Maxson
Applicant