
STC Meeting Minutes – November 2 , 2018

Call to order

A meeting of the Sherman Telecommunications Committee was called to order at 11:07 AM at Mallory Town Hall on November 2, 2018.

Attendees included Committee members First Selectman Don Lowe [DL], Gail Maletz [GM], Steve Maletz [SM], Al Zeisler [AZ]. Terri Hahn [TH] and Zoe Sochor [ZS]. Also in attendance were Ray Vergati of Homeland Towers [RV] and Chris Fuchs of the Sherman Volunteer Fire Department [CF].

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2018 STC meeting was made by DL and seconded by SM; approved unanimously.

Correspondence/Public Comment

TH is communicating with Rosemary O'Brien of Northwest ConneCT regarding email requesting map of roads in Sherman with little or no cell service.

Old Business

1. Status of possible cell tower sites (RV)

RV provided an overview of criteria assessed for cell tower sites and current status of negotiations:

- Need a property owner willing to lease
- Site needs to be environmentally viable for tower to be constructed e.g. road access; works with a carrier's network (they need a macro tower site – that is above trees; sees roads and homes in all directions)
- Terrain is a major issue (leaves, homes, structures degrade line of sight)
- Chapel Hill to Route 37 south is dead in the hallow. The goal is to get coverage a mile and a half north and a mile and a half south
- Obligation by carriers still is to build out in rural areas, but not all like the 90s when there was absolutely no coverage
- Technology changes so fast (3G, 4G, 5G) so carriers are focused on upgrading existing sites
- Carriers can't do small cell, not DAS, etc. in Sherman because of the terrain, so a tower is the only way to get cell service
- Carriers prioritize where they can get the most bang for their buck. It is not economical for newer tech in rural areas - not high enough traffic. But they will come when they are ready, willing and budget allows, e.g. it took Verizon 5 years to locate on an existing tower in Ridgefield

- Tower Hill would be impetus for carriers to have contiguous coverage. Currently, Tower Hill does not do the job – can't get the signal down to Route 37 (shadowing effect of a tower too high)
- RV continuing to negotiate with major land owning corporation in southern Sherman despite another new concern recently expressed by one of the partners
- RV has made a substantial offer to the corporation and will be looking for a final decision by Thanksgiving
- RV also is in talks with other property owners and letters continue to go out to owners of land for potential cell tower sites
- ATT is still active in trying to continue coverage from a public safety network perspective
- Naromi voted tower down on Cozier Hill (proposed faux silo)
o ACTION - DL said could he get involved to find out more from the group
- RV noted that municipal land is preferred
- STC gave RV a Sherman foreclosure list (Sherman willing to buy?)

2. Status of emergency equipment installation (CF)

- There is Town Meeting on November 17, 2018 at 10 am – to approve funding and the lease agreement between the town and Aquarion.
- Still need to get Timber Trails Associates to sign easement. Once approved, they will pull permits. Installation will be quick – antennas can be done in a day, though Eversource has to install a second pole.

3. Status of T-Mobile installation at Happy Acres (GM)

- Construction to begin in next few weeks and T-Mobile likely to be broadcasting from there by February 2019.

4. Cell carriers' plans for Sherman

- Per DL, Verizon has not contacted him again. RV noted Verizon's recent management relocation to Massachusetts.
- Per RV, AT&T has funding in place for Sherman.

New Business

Review Sherman foreclosure and land for sale data and requirements for tower construction (provided by RV) in consideration of the possibility of a purchase by the Town for a tower site.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Next meeting: Friday, December 7, 2018, 11:00 am, Mallory Town Hall