

**Vergennes Township
Regular Meeting Township Board
December 19, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Tim Wittenbach at 7:00 pm

Oath of Office for New Clerk - Heather Hoffman

Roll Call - Rasch, Wittenbach, J. Hoffman, H. Hoffman, and Gillett were all present.

The minutes were accepted as presented with a motion by Gillett, supported by J. Hoffman. The Treasurer's report was read. J. Hoffman motioned to approve the invoices listed. Gillett supported and the **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC HEARING - Verizon Cell Tower Application

Ralph Weingarden, representative of Verizon, gave a summary regarding the proposed tower and location. Planned height of 197 ft. He stated that this height is below the requirements for a tower to be lit, according to FAA regulations. He stated he believes this is the best location for Verizon to build a tower because of the need for better coverage in this area, the geography for the tower- being close to the river valley, and there would be a clean 'hand-off' of signal from one tower to the next. He also mentioned that this sight wouldn't require removal of additional trees.

Sandy Miles - 13675 Beckwith, directly to the East of proposed site

Miles presented each Board member with a document (on file at the Clerk's office) explaining her views on the tower proposal. She and her husband will be able to see the tower from almost every window in their house. She believes Verizon wants this location because it is convenient for Verizon, not for the residents of the area. Her concerns include size of the proposed location, tower lighting, radiation, and proximity to a potential tower collapse. She requested that if Verizon is allowed to put a tower up, that they disguise it as much as possible, utilize a contract with the FCC or FAA about any future lighting requirements, and be required to immediately remove it when abandoned.

Bob Seif - Beckwith across the street from the proposed site

Seif is concerned about a proliferation of towers. He would see the tower from his home and feels it would be an eyesore. He is also worried about radiation, generator use and noise at the sight.

Megan Vanderwast - resident of Fallasburg area

Vanderwast's father fell on their property last year and was severely injured. Megan explained that her cell signal was dropped five times trying to call 911. She expressed her concern of being in an emergency situation and feeling helpless when the call would go through, but then drop. She believes the pros for the people that are currently affected by poor or no cell service outweigh the cons. She explained that she has to rely on her cell phone for any type of phone service as AT&T won't provide service to her home. She has tried everything to get phone service including putting a cell booster on her home but nothing helps. She asked the board to consider how important it is to get the residents of this area coverage in a technology driven world.

Allen Rumbaugh - 13889 and 13970 Covered Bridge Road
Wondered if the tower on 5 mile could be upgraded or co-located to serve the area of Fallasburg.

Jason Swint - 13457 Beckwith

Swint expressed that he and his wife get great service on his property and says he doesn't know why they would put a tower there. He read online that any tower over 150 feet is required to have lights, which would lead to light pollution. He is also concerned for the wildlife in the area and how the tower may affect them.

Sharon Vanderwarf - 13676 Beckwith, right across from the tower

Wanted to know about other locations for the tower. She knows that the residents of this area need cell service, but she does not want a tower that close to her home.

Roger Sabine - Director of Kent County Parks

Does not believe Verizon can hide a 197 ft pole. He fears the pole will destroy the natural beauty of the park. He said that tens-of-thousands of people visit Fallasburg Park every year and his job is to protect the beauty of the park. Another park in Ada was designated to get a cell tower and it was denied. The tower was then located somewhere else, and the park has fine service now. He believes Verizon is only looking out for their best interests.

Sam Probst - 16391 Beckwith

Explained that he moved to Vergennes for the rural character, and believes a tower would detract from that. He also believes the lights will ruin the dark sky and is also concerned for the nocturnal animals that could be affected by them.

Pat Gilbert - 13155 Beckwith

Gilbert wondered if Verizon has looked into co-locating on other towers in the area rather than constructing a new tower.

Kris Meyers - 13788 Beckwith

Has poor to no cell service where she lives. She mentioned that she has had visitors from Fallasburg Park who can't get cell reception and need to use a phone, knock at her door to use her line. She doesn't want the tower to cause light pollution, but she would like something to be done so that there can be some sort of cell service in her area.

Jeff Miles, Sandy's husband

Noted that there is no screening of the tower and they will have full view of the tower from their house. Miles wants better cell service but not in this location. He believes that Verizon is only using this space because it is convenient for them. He doesn't want his neighbors to forfeit the natural beauty of their homes.

Rick Rexford - 13457 Beckwith, directly west of the tower

Rexford is concerned about the tower lighting. He is worried about it falling on his or his neighbor's property. He was disappointed to see someone clear cut their entire property, and he would be even more disappointed to see them use their property in this way.

Cara Debautd - 13735 Beckwith

Cara gets good reception from her house with 5G. She thinks the proposed site is an incredibly inappropriate place for the pole. She'd be happy to help find a different site for the pole.

Lois Drake - 13644 Beckwith

Lois has been struggling with no service for years, however she has service when she walks to the park with Verizon. She does not believe that the proposed site is an appropriate place for the pole.

Casey Brown - 13642 Crestwood

Casey is the Lowell Airport manager. He stated that the proposed site is not currently on any traffic pattern for pilots in Lowell, however some sea planes do fly over that area and it could be dangerous if the pilots could not see the tower if there were no lights. The airport would like to see the paperwork from the FCC or FAA that says they do not need lights on the tower.

Sue Ford - 13835 Covered Bridge Rd

Sue has never had good cell coverage in her home, however she understands that this is not the right place for this pole. These are people's homes and they should not be invaded.

There were no further comments and the public hearing was closed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Verizon Cell Tower Application

Verizon made it known that they will wait as long as they need to get all important information to the public. There was a concern that the deadline for the application would expire in February, but it was explained that they could renew it. H. Hoffman requested better maps be provided by Verizon of the area the tower will service. Gillett makes a motion that we table this discussion to next meeting, January 16, 2017. Rasch seconds this motion and the **Motion Carries**.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Timmer Request for Authorization to Maintain Goodsell Family Cemetery

Roger Timmer (not present) had relatives that were buried in this piece of property. The Seif's live near this property and would like to have some kind of fence erected around the cemetery and to honor the pioneers who are buried there.

2. Authorization to Collect Summer Taxes for LAS, GRCC, and KISDJ

J. Hoffman makes motion to authorize the request, Gillett seconds this motion. The **Motion Carries**.

3. Appointments as follows:

- Planning Commission- Scott Jernburg and Bob Rogers nominated, Wittenbach motioned, Gillett supported
- Zoning Board of Appeals- Scott Jernburg and Pete Gustafson, J Hoffman motioned, Rasch supported
- Board of Review- Jim Herb, Ryan Peel alternate, both renominated, Wittenbach motioned, H Hoffman supported
- Cable TV Advisory Fund- Wittenbach renominated, Gillett motioned, H Hoffman supported

- Community Fund- Dave Emmett renominated, Wittenbach motioned, Gillett supported
 - Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA)- Betsy Davidson renominated as Vergennes Citizen Representative, Heather Hoffman nominated as Board Representative by Gillett, J. Hoffman supported
 - Airport Board- Wittenbach made a motion to nominate Casey Brown the representative, H Hoffman supported
 - Sewer Board- Terri Conley renominated, J. Hoffman motioned, Gillett supported
 - Fire Advisory Board- J. Hoffman motioned to reappoint Jim Herb and Tim Wittenbach, Gillett supported
4. Calendar of Meeting Dates and Holiday Hours for 2016
Meetings postponed until budget meeting.
5. Request to designate January 22-28, 2017 School Choice Week
Recognizes this week as School Choice Week. Wittenbach makes a motion to approve this week, H. Hoffman seconds this motion. The **Motion Carries**.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Sandy Miles thanks the board for listening to everyone during the public forum.

Wittenbach makes a motion that the board sticks with their offer regarding the Blair Boat Launch and if the owner rejects it, take it to circuit court. Gillett supports. The **Motion Carries**.

Stone would like to state for the record that she is so honored to have worked with such a wonderful board. The board means so much to her and she is sad to go, but she is very honored to have Heather Hoffman sitting in her seat.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

The next meeting is set for January 16th, 2017 at 7 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather L. Hoffman, Clerk