Town of Machiasport

Board of Appeals July 6, 2015

Present: Betsy Fitzgerald, Chairman, Susan West, Vice-Chair, Mike Murphy, Hugh Taylor

The chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. Betsy recused herself from the proceedings citing her involvement with Wireless Partners in several other towns. Susan West took over the meeting.

The Machiasport Planning Board had met and considered the application for the 190’ tower on May 14, 2015. They determined the application was complete and reviewed the criteria. The Gater Road lot is 300’ meaning that the 190’ tower would be unable to meet the 105% as the tower would be 162’ to one side of the lot and 138’ on the other. The Planning Board denied the permit.

Wireless Partners presented their application for relief from the dimensional requirement of a setback of 105% from property lines. Nancy Bozenhard described the search that began late last summer for locations suitable for cell towers. The town-owned parcel on the Gater Road met the criteria. Wireless Partners negotiated a least with the Town. Through the efforts of former Selectman, Sam Sprague, Army Corps of Engineers and DEP requirements were met; it was considered to be a win-win for all.

Nancy reported that she sent letters to the three abutters: Chris Rudd, Michael Martin and Jane Thompson; and received only some questions. The Town Office was not contacted either with any concerns. Nancy summed up her presentation by reporting there would be monthly revenue to the town, there would be tax revenue and no impact on services – a net gain for the town. Wireless Partners has a contract with Verizon in hand and has been contacted by other carriers regarding co-locating on the tower.

Hugh Taylor asked about the lease elicited a response that it was a five-year lease, with ten renewals and a 15% increase in rent at every renewal. Planning Board Vice-Chair Shirley Erickson represented the Board and confirmed the application was denied because of the dimensional standard that could not be met. Abutter Chris Rudd had several concerns. He mentioned his original investment in the power line; the presence of ospreys; and deferred road maintenance.

The hearing was closed and the Board began its deliberations. Members agreed that the presence of a tower would bring better reception to the area including fishermen on the water, eliminate the need for cell phone boosters, and what would probably be the highest and best use for that particular piece of property.

Mike Murphy moved to grant the relief from the dimensional requirement of 105%; Susan West seconded; the vote was 3-0-1.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.