

**PARK, BEACH and RECREATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
JULY 1, 2009**

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr. and the Park, Beach and Recreation Commission held a public hearing/information session on Wednesday, July 1, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Auditorium. The purpose of the meeting is to elicit public comment on the possibility of constructing a telecommunications tower and related facility in Eisenhower Park, Milford, Connecticut.

1. Roll Call

Members Present

Daniel Worroll, Jr., Chairman
Ann Fabian, Vice Chairman
Patrick Dooling, Commissioner
Suzanne DiBiase, Commissioner
Kerri Rowland, Commissioner

Also Present

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.
William McCarthy, Recreation Director

Mayor Richetelli called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. thanking everyone for coming out and asked those present to rise for the pledge of allegiance. Mayor Richetelli went on to explain the Park, Beach and Recreation Commission has jurisdiction over Eisenhower Park and would weigh in on the decision of the location of a cell tower. He also explained other department would have input into the decision, which included but was not limited to the Planning and Zoning Board and ultimately the Board of Aldermen. He stated the first step in the process is to determine whether the City of Milford wants a cell tower at Eisenhower Park as an alternative to the YMCA location originally proposed. After reading the public notice as posted, Mayor Richetelli turned the meeting over the Chairman Worroll.

Chairman Worroll welcomed everyone to the public hearing. He stated a representative from Verizon would give a short presentation before proceeding to the public hearing portion.

Mayor Richetelli introduced Kenneth Baldwin, an attorney with the law firm of Robinson & Cole who represents Verizon.

Attorney Baldwin stated he was here tonight on behalf of Cellco. He continued with a presentation as to the location as a possible location of the alternate cell tower location. He went on to explain the background as to how they arrived at this location. He stated they were asked to consider additional locations and pointed out Eisenhower Park was originally considered as a possible location. He noted several other locations were considered and presented to the Sitting Counsel. Attorney Baldwin stated he was contacted by Brian Bier, a member of the Board of Aldermen asking Cellco consider a relocation of the cell tower. He stated the Eisenhower Park location was identified as a site that would work and that the engineers found it acceptable. Attorney Baldwin went on to explain the application process for the cell tower. He also explained what they might see is an application being refilled for a location here in Milford to be considered by the Sitting Council. He referenced Section 8-24 and any referral to Planning and Zoning and a final decision by the Board of Aldermen. He stated he was happy to be here and would answer any questions anyone may have. He encouraged the participation of the town.

Mayor Richetelli stated he wished to clarify this was presented with two locations; one was by the tennis courts which is an area dedicated to Bodies Place. He stated that was why they are now talking about this current location. He stated if the Park, Beach and Recreation Commission decides this is something that can move on it would go to Planning and Zoning. He also stated if the City is willing to lease the park that actually rests with the Sitting Council.

Chairman Worroll asked about the access road for them to work on this site.

Attorney Baldwin stated there are several areas of access they are looking at and that they are confident they could find a way.

Chairman Worroll asked if all were approved how long a project like this would take to complete.

Attorney Baldwin responded it would possibly be 4-6 weeks. He explained the structural plans would need to be developed and after a 6 month process it usually is 4-6 weeks to complete the work.

Chairman Worroll asked the next closest location to that tower.

Attorney Baldwin explained in their application they covered a series of coverage plots. He stated the closest tower appears to be on Wheelers Farm Road. He stated the coverage area they are looking for is Rt. 121, Orange Avenue and some onto Rt. 15.

Director McCarthy asked if there are any other cell towers in Milford that Verizon has similar to this.

Attorney Baldwin responded no.

Director McCarthy asked if there are other municipalities that have leases with Verizon.

Attorney Baldwin responded the Town of Orange has own, but that they own it now.

Chairman Worroll opened the public hearing at 7:23 p.m. stated it was important to hear from the citizens to help the Commission shape their decision. He stated they wanted to hear everyone and asked those speaking to keep their comments to 3 minutes.

Speakers in Favor:

D. Ortoleva – 59 Cynthia Drive – stated he lives one mile from both of the proposed locations. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke regarding the links between cell tower findings and preconceived dangers from cell towers and exposure to cell towers.

J. Lanese – 19 Julia Court – stated she is not a proponent of cell towers in general. She stated if the Sitting Council decides there is a need for a cell tower she would prefer Eisenhower Park to the YMCA.

J. Woyciesjes – 262 Woodruff Road – stated he is not necessarily in favor, but he is not a proponent either. He stated he wished to point out there is a shed in that field and that it is close to the road and not really in the park.

He stated they are currently working to enhance the park and that if this goes through he would like to see efforts made to hide the tower with trees, nature, etc. He expressed his concern for the users of the park.

A. Feriente – 322 Forest Road – stated he supports Eisenhower Park rather than any other area. He stated it is not proper having this cell tower where there are homes. He also questioned why the City wouldn't want the income.

T. Laychak – 24 Julia Court – stated she is not opposed to cell towers in general, but that she is opposed to a cell tower in a residential area or near playgrounds. She also stated if it is determined there is a need for the tower she would rather it be in Eisenhower Park than at the YMCA and away from residents. She submitted to the Chairman a petition.

S. Studer – 80 Christine Terrace – stated this is an appropriate location and expressed his hope the Commission would support it. He stated Eisenhower Park is a better location than the initial proposal at the YMCA. He reiterated it is a good location and he would support it.

R. Telep – 314 Burnt Plains Road – stated this location is better than the YMCA because there is a playground, daycare and high school located nearby the YMCA.

M. Sulik – 20 Julia Court – stated if Milford has decided a cell tower is feasible she would encourage it be located at Eisenhower Park rather than the YMCA. She also commented the City would benefit monetarily if it is at Eisenhower Park. On a personal note, she stated her husband has a pace maker and cannot be exposed to this type of a tower.

M. Campanelli – 59 Christine Terrace – stated he is not in favor of a cell tower, but if the City has to have it he would prefer Eisenhower Park as long as it is properly placed and not obtrusive.

T. Cronin – 55 Maple Street – stated he would be curious to know some of the other land options and that it would be important to know this before deciding on an appropriate location. He stated he would not be in favor of any additional obtrusions in Eisenhower Park.

Mayor Richetelli stated he wished to point out the Sitting Council has not changed. He stated this hearing is pursuant to Board of Aldermen action to pursue other City locations and that there could be other locations. He also stated the City does not have jurisdiction over private property.

J. Laychak – 24 Julia Court – stated he is not in favor of this at all. He stated there is more of a buffer at Eisenhower Park so this would be a more appropriate location. He also stated the YMCA is a playground all year long. He stated if the Sitting Council decides this is needed, Eisenhower Park more is more appropriate.

P. Hanna – 5 Gibson Road – stated she is spoken several times against the tower at the YMCA and that it is unfair to the homeowners in that area. She stated Eisenhower Park does not abut residential homes, it is not a daycare or across from a school.

Speakers Opposed:

Robert McCarrick – 115 Kozlowski Road – stated he could not speak against because he needs to know a more specific location at Eisenhower Park.

Mayor Richetelli explained a letter with a map was sent to all nearby residents.

Mr. McCarrick suggested if they counted the number of towers residents would have a better idea as to the location. He stated the lesser of two evils would be Eisenhower Park.

J. Fitzpatrick – 7 Flax Mill Terrace – referencing the map, Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that little white spot on the map was his house. He also stated he is not a fan of the Sitting Council and that it seems like a tower will come to Milford no matter what. He also commented regarding the possible locations being mentioned and that it seemed like a threat if they couldn't go to Eisenhower Park they would go to Barretta. He stated this is a convenience utility not a necessity and that he did not believe it was needed. He stated it was also important to remember this City wanted to develop this land into a beautiful park. He stated this is just not the right location and also that this is a RA zone and this is really a commercial building in a residential land. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he did not want to get stuck with an ugly tower. He asked the Commission to please be fair with the people in the north side of the City.

P. Lewis – 857 North Street – stated he has listened to the people who don't want this in a residential area. He pointed out the Eisenhower Park area is also a residential area; North Street, Flax Mill Road and other nearby streets. He stated he also had concerns with a comment the Mayor made in the newspaper. He stated as taxpayers they just don't want it anymore than anyone else. He stated they have the same concerns as those people in the YMCA neighborhood. He asked the Commission to please take that into consideration.

Mayor Richetelli stated he wished to clarify when Eisenhower Park came to the City of Milford he stated to them Milford was not interested. He stated this hearing is based on a referral from the Board of Aldermen.

M. Galullo – 21 Deerfield Avenue – stated he is not opposed or in favor. He questioned whether the citing of this tower had been reconciled with the Eisenhower Park Study Committee.

S. Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue – spoke against the tower. He stated he agreed with the previous speaker noting the City went to great lengths to do a study for the development of the park and they still have not hear anything yet. He asked what phase they were in with the tower; and if this is an emergency phase or what. He reiterated a lot of money was expended on a study. He stated people need more information and perhaps other locations should be looked at. He also stated this process is backwards and that there is no application on field. He pleaded with the Commission that they follow the correct process. He also reiterated he is still waiting for the study to be released and that this just appears to be an emergency dumping ground.

W. Milson – 1034 West River Street – questioned if Verizon has service why they would need another tower and another location. She stated she is a member of Friends of Eisenhower, just developed and that they are trying to re-do the park to make it a better place. She wondered who would be next after Verizon and where it would stop.

R. Milson – 1034 West River Street – stated they are talking about towers and questioned why they were not talking about alternatives to towers. He stated it is because they are cheaper which benefits the company financially. He stated the park is already scarred by many towers. He stated he too is a member of Friends of Eisenhower and that they look forward to developing that park.

M. Fitzpatrick – 7 Flax Mill Road – stated she is opposed to the cell towers and that she believed the people tonight had given a good argument. She stated she currently looks at two towers from her home and that she doesn't want another.

T. Casey – 22 Flax Mill Terrace – stated he is strongly opposed to the cell tower at Eisenhower Park or the YMCA. He stated he is concerned with another tower in the park and stated the park should be protected. He also commented the proposed tower would be five times the height of the current tower. He also spoke regarding the glow from the two towers when the sun hits it as well as environmental concerns. He also expressed concern should one of these cell towers fall over. He asked the Mayor and the Commission to reject this proposal and protect the park.

L. Pujda – 497 Orange Avenue – asked if there were any other cell phone towers in Milford. She also asked several questions such as where these towers are located, etc.

B. Hoben – 1142 West River Street – asked if anyone had ever seen the placards on these poles, stating its pretty scary and expressed concern if you get near one. He stated he was also concerned with this pole being in a park and with the lack of supervision someone might get too close. He also stated he was concerned with wireless interference give the topography of that area. He stated the third choice for this pole should be the YMCA, the second choice should be Eisenhower Park and the first choice should be Orange.

D. Nicolson Denis – 16 Gibson Road – stated she is opposed to a cell tower at the YMCA and that she was not sure Eisenhower Park was the solution. She stated she wrote to the Sitting Council and asked them to consider another area. She also expressed her concerns with any health risks to kids.

Chairman Worroll closed the public hearing at 8:05 p.m.

Chairman Worroll thanked everyone for coming and reiterated the reason for this public hearing was that it was brought up at a Board of Aldermen meeting. He stated the Park, Beach and Recreation controls 95% of Eisenhower Park and that is why this Commission is here. He stated he wanted to make it clear they did not actively pursue this.

Mayor Richetelli also thanked everyone for coming out. He stated he did not believe the Park, Beach and Recreation would be voting on this tonight, but that they would take all of the comments made this evening under advisement adding this could be the beginning or the end of a process. He thanked the public for voicing their opinion.

Commissioners' Rowland and Fabian made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary