

The Town of Hinesburg recently received notification about upcoming applications to the VT Public Service Board (PSB) for two wireless telecom facilities in Hinesburg - one application by VTel (notice dated February 13) and one application by AT&T (notice dated February 28).

The VTel facility is proposed at 1570 Baldwin Road on land owned by Andrea Baldwin Haulenbeek. The proposed facility consists of a new 75' pole with nine panel antennas and two microwave dish antennas; an equipment cabinet on a 7' x 7' concrete pad; a 12' wide gravel access road extending approximately 350' from Baldwin Road to the equipment pad; underground power and telecom lines extending along the access road from the equipment pad to a new utility pole.

The AT&T facility is proposed on an undeveloped, landlocked parcel in the very northeastern corner of town on land owned by Audrey Linn Trust and Joseph and Lori Linn. Access to this site will be from Williams Road in Richmond. This facility is one of three proposed by AT&T to improve coverage in Richmond – the other two proposed facilities are in Richmond. The proposed facility consists of a new 100' tower using a “monopine” camouflage design with 12 panel antennas; an 11.5' x 16' equipment shelter on a concrete pad; a diesel emergency backup generator located on the pad adjacent to the shelter; a fenced 50' x 50' graveled site for the aforementioned equipment; a 12' wide gravel access road extending approximately 2,700' from Williams Road (to follow portions of an existing woods road); utilities (power & telephone lines) running overhead along three new utility poles on Williams Road, and routed underground along the access road to the facility. This facility is being designed to allow for co-location by at least three additional wireless carriers.

Under current Vermont law, wireless telecom facilities that go through the PSB review process are entirely exempt from municipal zoning/subdivision review until July 1st of this year. This means that although Hinesburg's zoning regulations include a whole chapter dedicated to wireless telecom permitting, there will be no Town-level review or permits. Given that, interested parties that want to give feedback or express support or concern have to do it via: 1) directly to the applicant (via their representative at Downs Rachlin Martin law firm in Burlington); 2) via comments to the PSB as part of their review process.

Among the criteria considered by the PSB is whether the project is consistent with the recommendations of the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Regional Planning Commission. These recommendations can be based on the Town Plan as well as the Zoning Regulations. Both applications discuss the project's conformance (from the applicant's standpoint) with the Hinesburg Town Plan and Zoning Regulations. The Hinesburg Planning Commission plans to briefly discuss (15 minutes) the VTel project (Baldwin Road) at their March 12 meeting. This should include a brief presentation by VTel. The Planning Commission has yet to schedule a discussion of the AT&T project, but will likely add this to their April 9 meeting agenda.

Copies of both applications are available for review at the Planning & Zoning Office (Town Hall). These applications do NOT appear to be posted on the PSB website – apparently they only do that for major projects. For more information about the applications and the Public Service Board review process, please see the PSB website at <http://psb.vermont.gov> or contact the PSB clerk at psb.clerk@state.vt.us or 802-828-2358.