

**TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH, MA**  
**Public Safety Communication Committee (PSCC)**  
MINUTES – Friday, July 24, 2015 at 8 AM

This meeting of the PSCC convened at 8:02 AM at Boxborough Museum, for a site view and tour of Hill Road at Middle Road and north along Hill Road. Present: Chairman Malcolm Reid, members Maria Neyland, John Rosamond, George Elenbaas, Frank Hublely, Jeanne Steele Kangas and Eric Wong. Also: Police Chief Warren Ryder, Fire Chief Randy White, and Selectman Jim Gorman; and residents John Yauckos, Mark Presti, Andrew Benard, and Frank Coolidge.

Chairman Reid presented the June 22<sup>nd</sup> letter from the Boxborough Historic Commission, opposing a pole at the Museum. Questions about the boundaries of the Boxborough Old Town Center Historic District were raised; Jeanne Kangas agreed to send via email in PDF a copy of the District to members. Mark Presti noted that the public perception is that a “tower” is proposed, and not a monopole or antenna on a telephone pole, and that needs to be corrected.

The gathering moved outside to view the mock-up of the antenna proposed: a 3” diameter tube affixed to and running up the length of the present brown utility pole, which is 35’ tall, and 1’ from it. Chief Ryder stated that the tube can be any color, and would have to extend up the present pole and 10’ higher. George Elenbaas noted that the poles on Middle Road near the Museum are 40’ tall.

Chief Ryder stated the present brown utility pole there is aged and needs to be replaced anyhow; and that the antenna doesn’t need any light and the present light could be removed. Concern about Museum security arose; and motion-sensors on spotlights on the building and perhaps exterior security cameras could be installed. He stated that the antenna can’t be more than 200’ from the base/transmitter, which is located in the southwest corner of the Museum basement now. 200’ would be maximum, as communication capability decreases the longer the distance between the base/transmitter and the antenna. Fiber optic cable would come into the building, underground from Middle Road, and that would bring Wi-Fi to the Museum. The antenna could be the same height as the brown utility pole, if it were 45’ tall.

It was noted that at the edge of the present parking lot, on the northwest corner, there is a small rise, and that a 45’ brown utility pole could be located there. It’s about 130’ from the base/transmitter. The 3” diameter antenna could be mounted where it would be least visible to abutters. The abutting deciduous trees would shield it in the summer, but evergreens would shield it year-round.

We walked down the Museum driveway to the Middle Road/Hill Road

intersection. Brown utility pole #2 at the end of the Museum driveway and pole #1 and its old pole and supporting pole were duly noted, as was the present 45' brown utility pole with its many connecting wires at the southwest corner of the intersection, and the 45' pole running from it southerly down Hill Road. Jeanne Kangas noted that at some point the latter 3 poles should be removed and the wires installed underground, as they greatly impair the viewshed at the edge of the Old Town Common.

John Rosamond determined that the base of the flagpole at the site of the original Town Hall/old library is 8' higher than the base of the 45' tall pole at the southwest corner of the intersection, but would be no place for any antenna. We walked to the edge of the Old North Cemetery. Across the road and northerly is a brown utility pole with a grey box mounted on it, a Littleton Electric Light Department (LELD) box. Frank Hubley stated that the Fire Department and Police Department transmitters could be in their own boxes, a bit larger than that one, on an existing pole on Hill Road. Chief Ryder stated that any pole near the road makes the transmitters vulnerable to auto accident or intentional destruction and should not be considered, as public safety is too important to risk it.

We walked northerly up Hill Road to opposite the Coolidge driveway. A 45' brown utility pole on the small rise at the northwest corner of the Museum parking lot would be much less visible from Hill Road than the present pole, and if the present pole and its bright light were removed, it would be an improvement, Frank Coolidge agreed.

Back at the Museum, the Minutes of our initial July 15, 2015 meeting were approved.

Mark Presti stated it appears that locating the public safety communications antenna at the Museum property is best; but two nearby abutters were not present to see and voice their opinion, and he didn't want anyone to be pushed into a 'fait accomplie'.

John Rosamond noted that viewshed mitigation would be needed, that a few evergreen trees could be planted if the antenna and brown utility pole were placed on that small rise. Maria Neyland stated that the PSCC might publish a letter to the Beacon editor, stressing that it would be a wooden utility pole, not a tower. Eric Wong said that he'd found on the Internet a comparable project in Virginia, and there was a FAQ on their website. It was decided that putting a FAQ on our Town website would be helpful to residents wanting to get the facts about the proposal before PSCC. Eric agreed to draft a FAQ and asked PSCC members to comment back to him and George Elenbaas.

Chief White said everyone wondered when we should expect to receive the final report from PSCC, and it was agreed that it should be by Labor Day or for the September 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting at the latest.

John Rosamond and George Elenbaas agreed to invite all the abutters to gather at the Museum property on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss what we've learned thus far and gather the abutters' opinions. George asked for cost numbers from the Chiefs for bringing the fiber optic cable into the building and to a pole on the small rise. The Chiefs agreed to provide them as soon as possible. It was noted that the base/transmitter might be moved from the southwest corner of the Museum basement to the northwest corner, to shorten the distance between the base and the antenna.

At 45' there would be no microwave dish, but a fiber optic network instead. The fiber optic cable would be Town owned. Connecting the fiber optic cable to the existing towers might cost \$320,000. Chief White stated that negotiations with LELD got fiber optic for Sargent Memorial Library; we may have to pay for splicing the cable; and we have in process a T-1 line from the station to the Swanson tower to keep the current system going. With fiber optic in the basement of the Museum, the Museum would have access to Wi-Fi, the Internet, and telephone service.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 AM.

*Jeanne Steele Kangas* , Clerk Pro tem.