

Municipal Services Commission  
Special Meeting  
November 16, 2015, 4 p.m.  
216 Chestnut Street  
New Castle, Delaware

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m. with Dr. Roy Sippel, Commissioner, presiding.

Present: Dr. Roy J. Sippel, Commissioner, President  
Daniel F. Knox, Commissioner  
Hickman Rowland, Commissioner  
Pamela A. Patone, Secretary

Staff in Attendance: Jay Guyer, Water Supervisor

The purpose of this meeting is to review the meeting with the City and by phone with representatives from Verizon. A lot of information was clarified during the discussion. President Sippel, Secretary Patone, City Administrator William Barthel, City Council President Linda Ratchford, Jay Guyer, Water Supervisor, and Scott Blomquist, Electric Supervisor attended the meeting.

In summary, Verizon's technical staff decided they needed another tower in the area to handle complaints and dropped calls. Verizon did not analyze the complaints or dropped calls. City Administrator Barthel informed that one call was dropped.

This issue began when Verizon spoke with Jeff Bergstrom, City Inspector, about their need for a pole. There is a revenue component associated with the pole. Over time the City has moved away from the concept of money and Council President Ratchford started focusing on taking care of people. It is estimated there are about 40 homes in the subject area. The poles are good to between 2 and 10 miles. For Verizon the Gray Street Water Tank is the most economical and fastest way to go. They would also have good, reliable services via MSC to make sure their location is working properly. The bulk of taking care of this is on MSC. The biggest problem for MSC is liability and maintenance.

Supervisors Guyer and Blomquist and Secretary Patone met in advance of the meeting to formulate questions to address MSC's concerns. The Commissioner's previously made the decision not to accept antennas on the tank because of answers from other parties. We are concerned about safety, access to critical infrastructure (water facility), and concerns Artesian expressed when an individual fell off one of their tanks during work. Verizon assured us their contractors would not have accessibility to contaminate our water and would not be in our building and tank. They claim to have a good relationship with their contractor. We specifically asked Verizon about an irritation incident. We recognize we will not be shielded if an accident happens on our property. We would have third parties accessing our property to mount antennas and after storms they would need access.

Reliability – We have had conversations with other Delaware municipalities about Verizon's reliability. Most indicated their responsiveness was poor. This is a problem when maintenance is needed and their antenna is in the way and needs to be removed. We have experienced firsthand Verizon's lack of responsiveness in the City. We asked them to follow up with information we requested during the meeting and to date we do not have that information. Secretary Patone has sent them two emails reminding them we need the information.

Mr. Guyer talked about delays the City of Newark have experienced resulting from Verizon's lack of attention.

Secretary Patone informed their research included Verizon's Administrative and Operations groups, and in some cases they spoke to people with little experience in the subject. She was cautioned to make sure the lease is properly written to protect our interests. Some municipalities will not deal with Verizon.

Mr. Guyer said the project involves hardware for installation, cable covers, and a large generator that will run on propane. The large generator will be located at the site and runs on propane. It encroaches on Susi Park. The alternative was to encroach on St. Anthony's parking lot, but they don't want to take away parking spaces.

Ms. Patone reported that Verizon has had one public meeting with the City and is willing to have another public meeting, but only after both parties have committed to moving forward. We also discussed the City reaching out to customers doing inquiries. If we allow this antenna, 2-3 more could follow. Artesian has had numerous issues with residential areas and their management is pushing towards not having antennas in residential areas because of residents' concerns and administrative issues associated with those concerns.

Verizon indicated their interaction with Mr. Bergstrom was positive and they did not think there was a concern.

Verizon indicated it was data from their towers that led them to identify there was cell phone coverage issues causing customer phone drops. However, Verizon could not provide documentation of those issues.

Verizon clearly verified no other options were explored in the City because of the positive response from Mr. Bergstrom. We asked questions about other locations, but Verizon hasn't researched other locations. They were to follow up on where antennas are currently located and band width and frequencies. It was unfortunate they could not provide information.

Mr. Guyer confirmed it is obvious Verizon has not considered another more user-friendly location. He could not speak to revenue for the City in other locations. There are different types of cell sites, nano and micro sites. The typical range for micro sites for communication is up to 10 miles. The range is less than one mile for nano sites. This depends on the types of antennas and microwaves put on the towers. Antennas can be adjusted and microwaves and beams can be adjusted to point specific or broadband to communicate from the towers and how they get aimed and how they are allowed to communicate around them. Verizon could not tell us if our Gray Street tank would be a micro site or a nano site.

Mr. Guyer thinks that once we have one on the tank it will go to two and three until Susi Park is consumed with a compound of support structures for attachments. It called it a 'maintenance nightmare' for MSC. The tank will need to be painted at some point and reliability is a concern. He does not see the benefit. Our peers are acknowledging problems. It adds to the overall costs.

Commissioners noted it is a good opportunity to raise revenue. Council President Ratchford and Administrator Barthel indicated they are receptive to Secretary Patone's idea to share revenue. MSC assumes all the problems, but no revenue.

President Sippel asked Council President Ratchford what the City might do if MSC does not move forward. She did not know. Our charter changes handle our interests, but the City has not approved

those changes yet. If Council disagrees with MSC, they have to take action and our counsel does not know what that action might be.

If Verizon has a transmission problem there are other areas to put up a pole. It will be more costly for Verizon.

**A motion was made that MSC prohibit any antenna attachments to all water tanks within the City limits and MSC. Motion seconded. Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

Secretary Patone said the specifications for tank attachments that was developed in 2009 can now be discarded.

President Sippel will communicate the Commission's position with Mayor Don Reese. In our opinion Verizon is looking for an inexpensive way to take care of a problem they have which appears to MSC not to affect any transmission for residents in the City. There are other places they can put the tower. They have not done adequate research.

Secretary Patone will follow up with Administrator Barthel and Council President Ratchford.

ADJOURNMENT

**By motion made and seconded, the Commissioners voted to adjourn.**



Deborah P. Turner, Stenographer

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Minutes transcribed from recording.)*