

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date: May 23, 2016

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Members Present: David Ames, Kim Likins, Tom Lennox

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Shawn Colin

Others Present: Eleanor O'Key, *Low Country Inside Track*

Media Present: None

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. FOIA Compliance:

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Committee Business:

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Ames asked Mrs. Likins and Mr. Lennox if there were any additions or changes to the Minutes. No changes were indicated and the Minutes of February 22, 2016 were approved as presented.

4. Unfinished Business:

None

5. New Business

• **Islander's Beach Park Tower Conceptual Location**

Shawn Colin stated it was staff's recommendation the Public Facilities Committee forward a recommendation to Town Council on the request from AT&T to locate a telecommunications tower on the Town's Islander's Beach Park property.

Should the Committee recommend approval of the concept, it is recommended Town Council approve an ordinance to authorize the execution and delivery of a long term lease for a portion of the Town's property located at Islander's Beach Park for use as a communications tower site along with easements for access and utilities to serve the site with the following conditions:

- The site is limited to the area shown on Attachment "A", Islander's Tower Location, included in the Agenda Packet.
- The tower is a monopole style tower with a maximum height of 140'.
- The antenna space from 120' to 130" is reserved for the Town's use at no charge.
- No parking is removed as a result of the tower.

Mr. Ames inquired what the dimensions of the area of the easement are. Mr. Colin said it is generally 100 x 100.

Mr. Colin stated they asked the tower provider to look at other structures, other areas that could be used for co-location and none were deemed suitable.

Mrs. Likins asked if other carriers would take advantage of this. Mr. Colin advised we do not have any solid information that another carrier will use it. It has been the case with the Station 7 tower and the Jenkins Island tower. AT&T had been the carrier that had driven those installations. The hope and thought would have been there would be co-locations that follow on. They run at different frequencies and we hope down the road that they use them as co-locations. Because it may be a viable location for Verizon or Sprint we will require that they co-locate rather than site a tower in the vicinity of one of these that had been installed. We also have required that the second space on these towers be reserved for Fire Rescue for their emergency communication.

Mr. Lennox said from a competitive standpoint do we open this up to more than one bidder or Contract? Mr. Colin said the way we have approached this in the past is typically when a municipality would want to use their land for a certain use they would probably go through an RFP and say they want bids on this. With what we have done with Station 7 and Jenkins Island is that we have been approached by tower companies for other properties as you are well aware and we have decline using those properties for this use. We have only made considerations with requests that are solid and will lead to installation and delivery of service. We have an offer from this tower company to site it, to supply AT&T a site and expand their network and we wouldn't go back out in a competitive nature to open it up. It doesn't preclude Verizon, Sprint or one of the other carriers to locate on this tower but we are just facilitating that. As I mentioned before, we asked them to look at all other possibilities before utilizing Town owned property. We have always thought of Town property as a last resort in an area but if we have a solid lead we will bring it forward to Town Council for consideration, execution of the Lease and Easement to allow it to happen.

Mr. Ames said by recommending the approval, do we put the Town in a place where we have given AT&T an unfair advantage by not going out to bid? Mr. Colin advised he does not believe so. If the market would drive Verizon to locate a tower to serve their customers in this location, they had every opportunity to knock on our door to locate a tower on this site. They still have the opportunity to locate their antenna on this tower. It is at a position less advantageous. The higher on the tower you go the better.

Mr. Ames said there is someone on the Island that approached him over the last year or two who is interested in building towers on the Island. I don't know how they operate and enough detail to know exactly how their operation would compare to AT&T's, but what I am trying to get at is are we opening ourselves to a situation where another tower construction company will say hey you didn't allow us to do a bid on this piece of group because it is Town owned property and I have been talking to you over the last couple of years of trying to do that on Town owned property. Mr. Colin said there have been requests in the past from other tower providers to sort of have exclusive rights on Town

owned land and Council in the past has decided not to go in that direction because it is speculative. You would be precluding this tower company or others from being competitive. Council considers each request on an individual basis. Obviously this site has been there for some time. It didn't preclude any other tower provider from approaching Town Council on this particular site. I think if a tower company came forward and had a plan with sites picked out with the documentation in hand that would say AT&T has committed to these sites and we want to implement this strategy, then Council might want to consider that, but not on a speculative basis.

Mr. Lennox said there are two types of users here – AT&T is building the tower at their expense to provide for their customer service. Then there is the tower company like American Tower that will come and build the tower for profit and they will hang AT&T, Verizon and whoever else they can hang on the tower. The chicken and the egg comparison is the Tower Contractor will say I can't get AT&T or Verizon to commit until I have a site specific deal and we are saying we can't give you a site specific deal until you have AT&T and Verizon committed.

In the coverage map from the RF Engineers it shows the need for additional service in this area. AT&T has committed to spend money to install the antenna on the Tower. I think this a real lead and not speculative.

Mr. Ames asked if the chicken or egg solution were solved, would that put the Town in a more competitive position and perhaps be able to strike better deals with a tower provider and AT&T and anyone else. Mr. Colin said it might. We have worked with the Telecommunications Task Force for five or six years now and even before that we asked the carriers to provide these coverage maps. They are not very willing to share that because they do not want something to get in the paper here is AT&T's coverage vs. Verizon locally because it will shift potential customers. We tried to approach it in that direction. Where is there a need for additional towers and antenna and then that would help you as a community identify the strategic locations or Town holdings that might make sense to site.

Mr. Ames said it is his sense that we can come to an agreement today to push this forward, but there seems to be some either ambiguity or opportunity for us to look at this. Mr. Ames thanked Mr. Colin for taking the time to fill him in and getting him up to speed on this. Mr. Ames said there are two issues – sort of broad principals. 1) I believe strongly that we need to encourage the development of towers on the Island so that we are covered. I am very much in support of this. 2) I think in some cases in the minds of some people the esthetics of towers will have to be reconsidered. I think they are in fact an infrastructure essential and we probably have to learn to accept them to the best degree we can hide them. I think that when I look at these photographs I do not see a problem in how it is sited.

Mr. Ames stated he was a pilot and flies approaches into this area and also departures. Has this been approved or in any way reviewed by the FAA or is that something that would follow once the conceptual approval had been taken. Mr. Colin said the tower providers has look at this from a preliminary standpoint. They haven't submitted anything officially to FAA but we feel it is outside of the slope restrictions from the Airport.

Mr. Ames said something that we have to be careful with is the parking capacity of this Beach. As Coligny fills out (Circle to Circle) what happens at Chaplin, etc. I think more and more people on the Island are going to want to go to this park. Is there any way that staff can look at a future parking plan to maximize parking spaces in this area and see how the tower siting area might impact that. Mr. Colin said certainly.

Mrs. Likins said this is very much in line with what the Telecommunications Task Force has continued to recommend and encourage us to do as a Council motioned that we should move the conceptual design for the AT&T Tower at the Islander's Beach Park forward to Town Council for consideration. Mr. Lennox seconded.

Mr. Ames asked if there was any public comment. Eleanor O'Key asked if you can go up to 149 feet, why doesn't this one. Mr. Colin said they have looked at the other Towers and because of the lightening rod antenna goes above the monopole, I think they go with 140 in case the lightning rod or anything extends up. They want to have that gap between 140 and 150. They locate the actual antenna right at the 140 mark.

With no further discussion, Mrs. Likins' motion passed unanimously.

6. **Adjournment**

Mr. Lennox moved to adjourn. Mrs. Likins seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen D. Knox
Senior Administrative Assistant