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Local residents expressing their opposition to the proposed Omnipoint antenna location.

BOT Explains Omnipoint Rejection

Alternate Sites Were Available, Report Claims

By Joe Scotchie

At a special Feb. 9 meeting, the Village of Roslyn Board of Trustees issued a lengthy, more in-depth rejection of an application by Omnipoint to construct a telecommunications facility at 55 Warner Ave.

In a 10-page written report, the BOT claimed that Omnipoint's proposed facility failed to comply with local village law. Such laws stipulate that a telecommunications facility must be at least 50 ft. tall. The Omnipoint proposal called for a tower that was 33-ft. high.

The report also stated that Omnipoint failed to examine alternate sites to the Warner Avenue location; that it failed to establish an entitlement to a variance of the regulations contained in village law; and that it failed to demonstrate why it should not be required to "collocate at a neighboring firehouse which already contains telecommunications facilities," a location that also "expressed a willingness to accommodate the equipment of the Applicant."

The report noted that the alternate sites suggested by the BOT could serve the applicant's needs. "The coverage maps taken from the Applicant's website shows that adequate coverage is provided in the area," the report concluded.

The Feb. 9 meeting was attend-

ed by numerous local residents expressing their opposition to the proposed facility. Last year, residents picketed the site, also in a show of opposition.

The report made reference to that opposition and even explained the reasons behind it.

"The gist of the community's opposition was that there were other more appropriate sites for the telecommunications facilities which would not diminish their property values or be visually offensive," the report stated. "Those locations were shown to be the nearby firehouse, LIPA poles along the Long Island Rail Road, and the Chalet, an apartment complex. In fact, the evidence showed that telecommunications facilities were already located on the Firehouse and on the LIPA poles and that additional telecommunications facilities could be placed on those structures."

The "firehouse" in question is the Roslyn Heights fire station, which is located across the street from the proposed 55 Warner Ave. site.

In their dialogue with BOT members, representatives from Omnipoint gave their own reasons for rejected alternate sites.

"If we were to locate the antennas on that building [the firehouse], the service that would be

provided from that area would be greatly diminished, which would then require more sites in the Village of Roslyn going north, because that sight would not enable Omnipoint to provide a propagation northward," the Omnipoint representative said in testimony recorded by the village.

Omnipoint representatives also said that the firehouse site was inadequate to the point where the company would "need another site." Such representatives added that the company hoped to build a site that would "have the least effect on the community."

Finally, the BOT rejected Omnipoint's claim that placing antennas on the firehouse would result in inadequate coverage.

"[This] argument is weak considering the fact that another provider currently uses the firehouse to provide service to the community," the report stated.

Opposing Sides Respond

Marc H. Schneider, an attorney for residents who opposed the antenna plan, issued his own statement.

"The Co-op and I are pleased that the board of trustees... rendered the proper decision by denying Omnipoint's application. The board of trustees made an important step in sending a message to

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Omnipoint Rejection

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applicants which come before the board of trustees that they will not rubber stamp applications and they will ensure that the Village's codes and all applicable laws are upheld; which are all put into place for the benefit and protection of the interest of all parties involved, including but not limited to the residents, who would have been negatively impacted had the village granted Omnipoint's application when [the company] had not satisfied its burdens and had not complied with all of the requirements of the code and the applicable laws."

Omnipoint is a wholly owned subsidiary of T-Mobile USA. Jane Builder, northeast senior manager of external affairs for T-Mobile USA, also commented on the decision.

"T-Mobile is committed to keeping families in the Village of Roslyn connected," she said. "We believe that area residents deserve the peace of mind that comes with expanded wireless coverage—the ease of staying connected to the important people in their lives, and to improved access to emergency services.

That's why we're working hard to keep pace with the increasing demand for wireless service in this community.

"Meeting customer needs is a significant driver of our wireless facility siting decisions," she added. "Families throughout the Village of Roslyn want their phones to work wherever they live, work and play, so more wireless installations are necessary to provide the great coverage our customers need and rely on.

"We have thoughtfully considered potential locations throughout the area where residents would benefit from enhanced wireless coverage, and we believe our application for the Sun Harbor Nursing Home represents the optimal balance between the needs of wireless users and the concerns of residents—many of whom are wireless customers today," Ms. Builder continued.

"We are currently evaluating how to move forward so we can ensure high-quality, reliable wireless coverage throughout the village to keep friends and families connected," Ms. Builder concluded.