

**Town of Needham  
Board of Selectmen  
Minutes for August 28, 2018  
Center at the Heights**

7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chair Daniel P. Matthews. Those present were John A. Bulian, Maurice P. Handel, Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

Mr. Matthews welcomed residents to the public hearing concerning the Public Safety Complex and Fire Station #2 project. He said many steps have brought the Town to this point, with many more steps to follow with permission from voters.

He summarized the large scale capital project is for replacement of both fire stations and the police station. He stated the project requires zoning changes to allow for certain elements the Town sees as necessary, and further considerations for the communications piece of the project. He commented the current public safety communication system does not cover the entire Town, and that the size of fire trucks, safety and health standards, as well as legal requirements have all changed or increased over the years. Mr. Matthews noted the project is expensive, but one which will offer the Town value for years to come. He said it makes sense to replace the existing communication system with something that works, but which comes at a high cost. He explained four broadcast locations around Needham are necessary for the new system to work (Station #1, RTS, Cabot Street, and at the Norfolk County Sheriffs Office within the median of Route 128 in Dedham). He noted the original configuration, which included use of monopoles in the Birds Hill and Tower Hill areas, was opposed by residents. He commented landlines could work, but are costly and that Verizon is no longer supporting their use. Mr. Matthews indicated many people were noticed about tonight's meeting, specifically in the areas of Station #1, RTS, and both water towers.

Mr. Matthews introduced George Kent, Chair, PPBC who discussed specifics of the project, noting communication in some places around Needham is difficult for safety personnel. He said a new system, to be owned by the Town, will cover all areas, including developing areas in Needham Crossing.

A Powerpoint presentation was viewed, including a map of the four antenna locations, and renderings on Chestnut Street, Lincoln Street, and at the RTS.

7:35 p.m.

Mr. Matthews opened the public hearing and invited public comment.

Rich Lawless, 159 Hillcrest Road thanked the Board of Selectmen for finding alternative sites to Tower Hill. He asked for the likelihood of both a contract being signed by American Tower for the Cabot Street location and approval for use of the Dedham site at the NCSO (within the median of Route 128)?

Mr. Matthews said the issue of working with American Tower is the cost of the contract. He said the state has jurisdiction of the NCSO property, and that a home rule petition is likely required. In addition, the state and the Town of Dedham have more people involved in the conversation, which he said makes it complicated. Mr. Matthews said he believes the timeline can be achieved as all parties support reaching an agreement. He commented if an agreement is not reached fiber cable lines could be run, which is costly and not a satisfactory solution.

Sandy Smith, 193 Hillcrest Road thanked the Board and presenters for their creativity in finding solutions. She commented the initial 10 year lease on the American Tower at the Cabot Street location should have a renewal option.

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager said state law and town by-laws govern the length of the lease, noting after 10 years Needham could reevaluate the situation and perhaps have its own tower. She said she believes as long as Needham has no other alternative in the area, American Tower would lease space to the Town.

Ron Ruth, 248 Warren Street, said he is concerned about the tower being considered at police headquarters on Chestnut Street, and that it will not add to the beautification of the building or downtown area. He asked what the alternatives and cost would be for not having a tower on the Public Safety Complex on Chestnut Street?

Mr. Kent said it is not easy to get rid of the monopole at headquarters due to elevation requirements, and the cost for underground fiber cables is approximately \$1,000,000 per mile.

Ms. Cooley clarified her understanding is fiber is needed for the microwave link, but a tower is still necessary for whip antenna. Mr. Kent concurred.

Chick Langone, Communications Consultant, Langone & Associates concurred Ms. Cooley is correct in that there are basically two systems with the whip antenna providing the link between hand held radios, vehicle radios, and the dispatch center, hence the strategic location of the tower at headquarters.

Discussion ensued on cell towers at the NCSO and at headquarters.

Ron Ruth, 248 Warren Street, commented as a Town Meeting Member he is surprised and interested to hear that if a 110 ft. tower at headquarters were not possible, it would be fatal to the communications system. He said that information was not disclosed at Town Meeting when money was authorized for planning. He said he believes an alternative could be found.

Mr. Matthews said everyone has their own recollection, but at every phase of discussion regarding the communication system, a new antenna being built at

headquarters has been included. He commented discussion has been clear about the need for a monopole downtown, but that the height of the pole has been under discussion. Mr. Matthews said he hears Mr. Ruth's comments and will take them under advisement.

Christine Balmer, 76 Kimball Street said the neighborhood of Lincoln Street to Warren Street "have been dumped on a lot" from hospital construction and houses being torn down for parking lots. She asked the Planning Board to consider the effect.

Mary Ann Oldfield, 260 Warren Street asked the diameter of the monopole and whether cables will be used to secure it? She also asked the diameter of the current pipes on top of the police station?

Chick Langone stated cables on the monopole are located inside and not exposed. He said the whips are 2 to 3 inches in diameter. The monopole diameter is approximately 2 to 3 ft. at the top, and tapers to 5 to 6 ft. at the bottom. He said the current tower is open and "a couple of feet" in diameter with visible cables.

Rich Lawless, 159 Hillcrest Road asked if height on each tower affects communication, asking if the tower at headquarters could be lower?

Mr. Kent said the microwave antenna could probably be lowered, but he is not completely sure. He said 90 ft. or higher is preferred.

Sandy Smith, 193 Hillcrest Road said she is hearing concern about the mass of the pole and the desire for it to be as short as necessary.

David Minard, 260 Warren Street is hoping accurate specification information for the tower at headquarters could be provided by the communication consultant as soon as possible. He said a lot of money has been spent beautifying the center of Needham, and the potential affect of a new tower should be known.

Marty Jacobs, 36 Mayo Avenue, Planning Board member asked if sight lines to the pole could be screened with trees, mirrors, etc.?

Mr. Matthews said landscaping and screening are part of the project, particularly along Lincoln Street. However, he commented, antenna are a standard part of the building environment. He said people need to be realistic and that the Town is trying to have the appropriate technology fit in with the environment as much as possible. He commented everyone would favor screening, but people should not believe something that is not so.

Ms. Cooley clarified a monopole of 110 ft. for whip antenna and 90ft. for microwaves cannot be blocked because it is "line of sight" in order to work. She commented it would be more obvious if screening were installed.

Mr. Kent said a monopole would have less impact than a lattice tower.

Mary Ann Oldfield, 260 Warren Street said since many people don't notice the current open tower on police headquarters, she prefers an open tower.

Eileen Reale, 20 Dartmouth Avenue thanked the Board for listening to neighborhood concerns, asking for reassurance that her neighborhood is "off the table?" She said she is hopeful the alternatives sites will be used.

Mr. Matthews said the plan heard tonight will be brought to Town Meeting.

Mr. Kent said the process has been transparent and information regarding the size of the monopole at police headquarters will be available shortly.

Christine Balmer, 76 Kimball Street asked if space would be rented on the tower in the center of Town?

Mr. Matthews said no, the tower will not be commercialized.

Mr. Matthews asked for Board comment. No comments were heard.

Mr. Matthews summarized the project can only move forward with approval from voters, noting everyone cannot be pleased all the time. He said the process has been careful and inclusive, with the PPBC and consultants listening to all comments. He said he is hopeful the project will meet the approval of the public and serve the Town for many years to come.

Mr. Matthews thanked everyone for their input and closed the public hearing. He said the record will be held open for at least 2 weeks and that residents who wish to send additional input may do so to [selectmen@needhamma.gov](mailto:selectmen@needhamma.gov).

8:15 p.m.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of August 28, 2018.**

**Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

A list of all documents used at this Board of Selectmen meeting are available at:  
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>