



**DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

E. Steven Emanuel  
*Chief Information Officer*

**MINUTES OF TFCG MEETING**

**To:** Distribution

**From:** Bob Hunnicutt, Tower Coordinator, Columbia Telecommunications Corporation

A meeting of the Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TFCG) was held on July 13, 2011. The following people were in attendance:

MEMBERS

Marjorie Williams		DTS
Dave Niblock		DPS
Joan Cole	(via phone)	DTS
Mary Pat Wilson	(via phone)	MCPS
Carlton Gilbert	(via phone)	M-NCPPC

STAFF

Bob Hunnicutt	CTC
Martin Liebman	CTC

OTHER ATTENDEES

Hillorie Morrison	NB&C, LLC for T-Mobile
Sean Hughes	Sean Hughes Law Office
Curtis Jews	T-Mobile

**Action Item – July 6th Meeting Minutes:** Mary Pat Wilson moved the minutes be approved as written. Dave Niblock seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**Discussion Item:** T-Mobile application for a new monopole on Wasche Road near Poolesville (#200907-10 and #201103-07)

Bob Hunnicutt summarized the discussion item and explained that, because the change in the location in the monopole on the property had negligible impact on the coverage from the antennas, the Tower Coordinator's recommendation would be the same as when the application was last reviewed.

Carlton Gilbert commented that, because the TFCG had reviewed the application as it was submitted, it was up to the Hearing Examiner to make a determination based on that recommendation; he noted that he did not want to set a precedent of reviewing applications a second time after the TFCG had already provided comment and a recommendation.

Mr. Hunnicutt remarked that in the past the TFCG had been asked to comment on changes for applications by both the M-NCPPC and the Board of Appeals.

Marjorie Williams added that she had similar concerns and had discussed that matter with Cliff Royalty, who advised her that because the Hearing Examiner had requested comment on the changes to the application, it was appropriate to provide a response.

**Action:** Dave Niblock moved the application be recommended as conditioned by the Tower Coordinator. Joan Cole seconded the motion and it was approved with Mary Pat Wilson and Carlton Gilbert abstaining.

**Discussion Item:** T-Mobile's application for a Special Exception to construct a new monopole on Mt. Ephraim Road is different from the application as it was reviewed by the TFCG in 2009 (#200907-11)

Bob Hunnicutt summarized the Tower Coordinator's recommendation and changes to T-Mobile's application since the TFCG first reviewed it in 2010. He explained that, based on the revised location of the monopole, the different design of the support structure for the antennas, and the new RF propagation maps provided by the applicant, it appeared that the current proposal for these antennas no longer meets the original coverage objective for the antennas as was stated when the TFCG first reviewed the application. He added that, from an engineering perspective, either the antennas on the monopole in Dickerson as T-Mobile had originally proposed (which was recommended by the TFCG), antennas on the tallest existing silo on the Savage Farm, or a unipole inside the existing silo may provide as good as or better coverage to meet the target objective than what is presently proposed. He provided an illustration (copy attached) to show the differences between the proposed site and the location of the existing silo. Consequently, the Tower Coordinator's recommendation is conditioned on T-Mobile considering use of one of those existing structures.

Sean Hughes commented that T-Mobile changed the location of the antennas and the design of the support structure to meet community and M-NCPPC staff suggestions. He noted that no specific information was obtained about the existing silo on the Savage Farm but estimated its height to be about 50' tall. He also noted that no structural analysis had been performed and that there were no RF maps prepared for that option.

Curtis Jews explained that, from T-Mobile's perspective, the new site improves coverage along Mt. Ephraim Road north and south of Barnesville Road, , and provides a link with the existing T-Mobile site to the southwest of Dickerson (which already provided coverage in the Dickerson vicinity).

Martin Liebman commented that based on the RF maps illustrating coverage from the proposed silo on the Carlisle property, the new silo location does not meet the stated coverage objective for these antennas; he noted that the coverage looks more like that illustrated for the Dickerson monopole.

Mr. Jews replied that T-Mobile is satisfied that the new site will improve their service to this area, especially to the north of the Carlisle property. Mr. Hunnicutt stated that since this is a different objective than first stated by the original application, if the new silo works to meet that objective, which it appears to do, the Tower Coordinator would agree with that conclusion. However, because the TFCG is charged with determining that existing structures (e.g., the Dickerson Monopole and the existing silo on the Savage Farm) cannot be used in lieu of a new structure to meet the coverage objective, the burden is on T-Mobile to document that those alternatives will not work to meet the coverage objective as originally stated (i.e., to improve signal levels along Barnesville Road and Mt. Ephraim Road). Mr. Hunnicutt noted that the new site does not improve signal levels along Barnesville Road. Mr. Liebman added that the silo site as proposed only boosts signal levels along a relatively small portion of Mt. Ephraim Road from in-vehicle coverage to in-building signal levels. Further it does not improve in-vehicle coverage along Mt Ephraim Road beyond where it exists now and does not eliminate existing lower signal levels along Barnesville Road. Otherwise, service is basically unchanged from what is provided today.

There was discussion about how the TFCG could meet the Hearing Examiner's request to provide a response by the 15th of July. In the end it was generally concluded that the Tower Coordinator's recommendation may be best and the burden would then be on T-Mobile to provide documentation to the Hearing Examiner as to why the existing structures cannot be used.

**Action:** Dave Niblock moved the recommendation of the Tower Coordinator be approved as conditioned. Mary Pat Wilson seconded the motion and it was approved with Carlton Gilbert abstaining.

**The next meeting of the TFCG is scheduled for Wednesday, August 3 at 2 p.m. in the second floor conference room #225 of the COB.**