

To: Mayor Casale and the Beacon City Council
Date: January 25, 2019
Re: **7 Cross Street, Small Cell Special Permit Application**

I have reviewed the November 14, 2017 Special Permit Application packet from Verizon Wireless, including a Short EAF Part 1, a December 14, 2017 packet of supporting materials, including a Full EAF Part 1, a Supplemental Zoning Analysis submitted on November 28, 2018, and a 7-sheet Site Plan set with the last revision date of October 13, 2017.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to install a small cell antenna with accessory equipment on an existing utility pole owned by New York Telephone in the public right-of-way and sidewalk. Because some equipment is located at an elevation less than 15 feet from the ground level, the application requires a Special Permit and the provisions of Section 223-24.5 apply.

Comments and Recommendations

1. The Full EAF, question C.3.a, identifies the proposed pole as located in the Central Business district, but it has been included in the Central Main Street district since June of 2018. Wireless telecommunications facilities are a permitted principal use in the CMS district.
2. The project location is also in the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone, which is included in a list of districts where new wireless telecommunications facilities are not typically encouraged (see Section 223-24.5 D(2)).
3. The current 43-foot replacement pole was installed in late 2017 and, according to the Site Plan Application, "has been designed to accommodate the proposed Verizon Wireless improvements." The September 1, 2017 Site Selection Analysis considered multiple surrounding buildings and the previous utility pole at the proposed location. Why was the utility pole on the opposite side of Cross Street not evaluated, especially since it is outside the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone and is along the front of a city-owned parking lot?
4. The owner of the corner lot at Main and Cross streets may have plans for a new multi-story, mixed-use building, consistent with existing zoning. A future building on this corner would have the small cell equipment mere feet from the upper floor bedroom windows. To avoid this problem, a better solution would be to put the small cell facility across the street near the City parking lot, or if there was now an interested owner, on the roof of a nearby building.
5. The applicant has provided photo-simulations, showing the existing pole and the proposed pole and equipment in relation to the sidewalk and immediate surroundings. The pole blocks a good portion of the narrow sidewalk and the lowest-level of the equipment would be set at 5-6 feet, further narrowing the walking area and creating a head-high hazard to passing pedestrians.

6. Section 223-24.5 G allows consideration of stealth design to minimize visual impacts. I have attached a reference article and photos of designs incorporating the small cell equipment inside a light pole for the Council's review.
7. The Council should consider enlisting an independent consultant to review the capacity analysis, exposure, and other more technical parts of the application.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to email me.

John Clarke, Beacon Planning Consultant

c: Anthony J. Ruggiero, City Administrator
 David Buckley, Building Inspector
 Nicholas M. Ward-Willis, Esq., City Attorney
 John Russo, P.E., City Engineer
 Scott P. Olson, Esq., Project Representative