

Cell Phone Tower Update

October 29, 2009

- *Please also read the previous post on this Parish Website about the background information to this process.*



- After submitting an application to the Town of Riverhead for a permit to erect a cell phone tower several months ago, Parish Leaders were invited to a Town Zoning Board Meeting on Thursday, October 22, 2009.



- Representatives from the parish as well as interested citizens from the neighborhood around the Church came to the meeting.



- The meeting began with a statement by the outside counsel for the Zoning Board.
- He stated that he had been recently retained by the Zoning Board and had several questions about the application.
- He also recommended that these questions be answered before a presentation would be made to the Zoning Board.



- Considering that the application had been filed with the Town several months before the present meeting, this was a surprise to all attending.
- After consultation, it was decided to re-present to the Zoning Board at its next meeting, November 12, 2009.



- This action was taken to avoid having to make two presentations. One at this meeting and one at the next.



- Members of the public who attended the meeting were permitted to make comments.
- One of the suggestions made was that the Parish should put some more information about this cell phone tower application.



- Another suggestion made was that the Parish host a information meeting for those citizens who attended this meeting (a number of whose houses surround the Parish Campus) and other interested people.



- Those members of the public who attended the Zoning board Meeting said that they would propose a meeting time and date.
- The Parish Leadership has welcomed this opportunity and is awaiting their call.



- The remainder of this communication will focus on *why* the Parish has made this application for a cell phone tower on its campus.
- This was a third question raised by speakers at the Zoning Board Meeting.

Why is the Church pursuing this project?



- *Some Background information:*
- Catholic Parishes are self supporting.
- They depend on:
 - Sunday Collections
 - Offerings for Sacraments and Program Tuition
 - Gifts and Bequests
- The only other possible source of income would be a rebate if a parish meets or exceeds its goal in the Catholic Ministries Appeal



- Several times this past year St. John's has been close to not being able to meet our salary obligations to those who work in the parish
- We have also had insufficient funds in our checking account to cover checks drawn to meet expenses.



- ***Parish Income funds the following:***
 - Maintenance, repair and improvement of Parish facilities (buildings, grounds etc.)
 - Insurance for these facilities
 - Light, heating and air conditioning costs
 - Compensation (salary, medical insurance and pension) for ministers and employees
 - Program Costs (Religious Education etc.)
 - Worship Costs (Vessels, Hymnals, other materials used in the Liturgy)



- *A Brief Financial Summary:*
 - 436 out of 2013 families support the Parish on a regular basis.
 - 137 out of 450 families registered for Religious Education contribute to the financial support of the parish.



- ***Budget Reductions Taken:***

- Reduction of heating, lighting and air conditioning costs by more restrictive use
- Reduction of routine maintenance of the parish buildings (cleaning and repair)
- New programs cancelled



- ***In Addition:***
- As part of its stewardship to the larger community, the parish has offered meeting space to the following groups for minimal or no charge:
 - Boy Scouts
 - Girl Scouts
 - Shoreham-Wading River PTA
 - SWR Superintendent's Meetings
 - SWR Testing Programs



- Little Flower Children’s Services Board Meeting
- Soundview Acres Condominium Annual Meeting
- Thurm’s Cooperative Community
- Wading River Cemetery Association



- Each gathering incurs the following costs:
 - Set-up
 - Heat and Light
 - Clean-up
 - Resetting of the space for the next use
- Quite often, the Parish does not recoup these costs



- Each year we face the quandary of
 - desiring to practice stewardship to the larger community and
 - recognizing that some of these groups have limited resources and
 - facing our growing indebtedness



- *Fund Raising Attempts*
- To meet both Parish Needs and Parish Stewardship (to this community as well as to the Diocese of Rockville Centre), we have engaged in several attempts to raise more funds.



- *Examples of the results of recent Fund Raising*
- Repairs of parish facilities
 - 110 of 2,013 parish families donated \$24,500.
- Repair of Parish Hall Rest Rooms
 - 80 of 450 Religious Education Families donated \$4,000.



- *Increased parish weekly support*
- 20 of 2013 parish families increased their giving after our most recent appeal.



- ***Added Revenue:***
 - *Outside the Parish*
- We have received several suggestions about generating additional revenue to support the parish from outside sources.



- An annual Carnival in the lower and upper parish parking lots



- Renting out the Parish Hall for private events like wedding receptions and anniversaries



- Renting out the Parish Hall for
 - business meetings and
 - merchandise demonstrations





- After reviewing each of these proposals, the parish decided not to pursue them for two reasons:
 - Each would distract from our mission
 - Each would place a burden on our neighbors in the community



- We decided then to proceed with an application to erect a cell phone tower.
- We felt that it would be
 - Unobtrusive in design
 - a passive presence in the community
 - and provide us with a limited and temporary income (the technology will switch to satellites in the coming years)



- *For Example:*
- This is a picture of the cell phone tower that was erected in the Village of Bellport.



- *Dedication Statement in Bellport*
- *We have come to rely on cell phones for not only instantaneous communications between friends and family but as a safety tool to reach police or others in times of emergencies.*
- *This measure allows the village to construct a cell phone tower in a dead zone.*

NYS Assembly Member
Patricia Eddington



- The placement of the tower on the St. John's campus would be in the 7 acre wooded area to the left of the upper parking lot behind the tree line.



- The proposed tower here would be 100 feet tall
It would rise 20 feet above the tree line
- There would also be a small shed at the base of the tower



- We will endeavor to keep members of the Parish and Community informed about developments in this process.
- Please make an effort to attend the Town Zoning Board Meeting to contribute to this process with your own thoughts and concerns.



- Next Town Zoning Board Meeting
- November 12, 2009
- 7:30 P.M.
- Riverhead Town Hall