

Freedom Mobile

3612 Trulls Road Telecommunication Tower Proposal Public Information Session: Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

- Sean Galbraith
 - Stefan Prochoruk
 - Janice Jones, Ward 1 Councillor
 - Diana, Neighbour
 - Cindy Strike, Municipal Planner
 - Catherine, Neighbour
 - Matthew
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Topics Discussed:

Proposed Telecommunication Towers Facility, 3612 Trulls Road

Canadian Wireless Industry

- 33.2 million wireless subscriptions
- More Canadians have wireless than wired services
- 85% of wireless subscribers have more than 1GB of data
- 81% of Ontario households have at least one mobile phone
- 50% of 18-34 y.o. Have no landline (wireless only)
- 280 million text messages/day
- More than 73% of Canadians have a smartphone
- 60% of 911 calls made from a wireless device
 - Increase as smart phones become more popular
- Data usage is increasing at 34% per year
- Subscribers increasing
- Consumption increasing
- Experiencing unavailable service, dropped calls and incomplete data requests
- Increasing reliance on service
- Work from home changing how network is used
- Adding new antenna sites to significantly improve service availability and reliability

Signal Strength Considerations

- Distance and objects block signal

- A degraded signal can result in dropped calls and slow data speeds
- Buildings and structures degrade signal strength
- Trees and obstructions create areas with greatly decreased service (“shadowing”). Degree varies by season.
- A high number of users accessing network on the same antenna installation can also reduce the quality of the connection.

Radiation Safety

- Electromagnetic Spectrum
 - Non-ionizing radiation (cell phones, television signals, satellite dishes, etc.) and ionizing (medical x-rays, radioactive sources) radiation
 - Non-ionizing radiation is not strong enough to impact at a cellular level
 - Ionizing radiation (dangerous)

Public Health Agency Views on Cellular Networks

- Many public health agencies have commented on the safety of cellular networks

Health and Safety

- Health Canada regulates electromagnetic and microwave emissions for antenna installations (known as “Safety Code 6”). Cellular antenna tower installations commonly emit significantly lower levels than are considered safe by Health Canada. These emission level calculations include those already in the area from other existing installations.
- By the time the signal reaches the nearest residence, emissions are typically around 10% (or lower) of allowable Safety Code 6 limits.
- Health Canada limits are calculated at a height of 2m in the vicinity of the installation, where measurements would be highest.

Installation Information

- A third party took measurements at the proposed sight to tell us what kind of levels we would be looking at for this installation.
 - They found that at its highest level, the cell tower would generate 4/10ths of 1% below the limit of Safety Code 6
- We look at co-location on existing antenna sites first.
- Proposed Installation - 50m monopole antenna

Other Properties in the Area

- We have looked at other properties in the area and evaluated our proposed location as the best installation site.

Comments Received

- “The installation is in a residential area.”
 - They need to be located in the area it is intended to improve service in.
- “We should not locate them in agricultural areas.”
 - Agricultural areas are common locations for cell towers.

Comments and Feedback

- Stefan Prochoruk:
 - There is opposition from the owners of a home located right next to the proposed tower site for a number of reasons:
 - There is a fear of having this tower in their backyard.
 - Concerns over health risks and future potential health risks as technology advances.
 - Proposed alternative sites for a tower: along Highway 2, along Pebble Stone - did Freedom mobile have direct refusal from those landowners? Why can't the neighbourhood refuse as well? There was a signed petition with 41 members of the neighbourhood who were against the site for the cell tower.
 - There's a lot of land in the east that will not affect many homes.
- Diana:
 - Personal research has led her to studies from around the world on the effects of cell towers. Some of those studies found that they can lower serotonin and melatonin in the body, and can lead to headaches.
 - People have the right to say yes or no to having this cell tower right above their heads.
- Janice Jones, Ward 1 Councillor:
 - Janice has been contacted by a number of people regarding this cell tower and they want to know the following things:
 - When will a final decision be made on this if it's a go or not?
 - Answer: That is in the hands of the municipality. There's a process (Clarington's Cell Tower Protocol) that's being followed and the timing is simply how long this process takes. Once there's approval from the municipality, Freedom needs to engineer the tower, conduct a geotechnical study to check the soils, fabricate the tower, and then get the approvals from Industry Canada. With all of this, it's not expected to be constructed no earlier than next year. If concurrence is not given by municipality, then Freedom would have to choose whether or not to appeal that to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (formerly Industry Canada).
 - Issues regarding public health do not fall under the jurisdiction of the municipality. That's exclusively under the regulation of Health Canada.
 - How long can comments be made from the public? Is there a deadline for written comments to be submitted to Sean Galbraith or Municipal Planner?
 - Sean Galbraith will always respond to comments sent to him.
 - Does Freedom "decorate" or minimize the appearance of their towers?
 - Trees (monopines) or adding a cross ("shrouding") can be done. However, trees are difficult to do because they act as sails.
 - Have tower proposals ever been denied?
 - They do not get denied very often. Reasons for denial in the past: the approval's not delegated to staff as a part of the official process, or enough locals convince enough councillors to say no.
 - Impasse: the appeal process at Industry Canada can decide that the project has technical merit and could approve it if they want.
- Cindy Strike, Municipal Planner

- The protocol that then Municipality follows is issued by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. It's a federal body and they override the approvals under any application under the Planning Act.
- Our input to the approvals of a cell tower are dealing with things that are onsite: location of the cell tower, location of the driveway to the cell tower, any fencing around the tower, etc.
- Catherine, Neighbour
 - If Freedom and the property owner have come to an agreement, is there anything the neighbours can do to try and stop this from going through?
 - Answer: Attending these information meetings and submitting your questions is important to having your voice heard. The Municipality will make its decision. Communities make their choice when they use cell phones and request the service that these towers facilitate.
- Cindy Strike, Municipal Planner
 - Approval process from the Municipality perspective: at the end of the day, the Municipality does not have the ability to approve or deny the cell phone tower. It is up to the federal government.
 - The final decision goes to Industry Canada. The Municipal decision does carry weight in the decision.
- Stefan Prochoruk:
 - What is the protocol for acquiring sites (to establish alternative sites)? Why is an alternative site not possible?
 - Answer: We want better sites. If property owners returned more than one call to locate on their site, we would prefer that, but they didn't. We can't expropriate land from them. There is no protocol for acquiring sites. It's like any real estate transaction.
 - It's common for landowners to reject cell tower proposals because there is a potential for development in the future. If a site looks like a good alternative it doesn't always mean it is a good alternative.
- Diana:
 - Is Freedom prepared to sign contracts saying they will pay for health bills if the government comes out in the future and says x, y, and z (related to cell towers) presents health risks?
 - Answer: No, we would not sign a contract. All installations are regulated by Health Canada. We are 227 times below the limit set by Industry Canada for this site. You are getting more exposure from your phone, your home wifi, or even your digital alarm clock by your bed. We operate within the limits of Health Canada.
- Janice Jones, Ward 1 Councillor:
 - If the Council voted against this, would that be held up or not valid?
 - Answer: You would have to change the protocol to remove the authority from the Director of Planning to make that decision.
 - From Planning's perspective, we have a protocol that was approved in 2013 that respects the fact that the federal government is the final approval authority. At this point, the final approval authority lies with the Director of Planning and have had very few impasses with the telecommunications providers.

