



Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI 640-M 21 New Lane Cell Tower Modifications MVC Staff Report – 2021-10-29

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Applicant:** Centerline Communications (Kimberly Revak)
- 1.2 **Owner:** American Tower
- 1.3 **Project Location:** 21 New Lane (Map 31, Lot 48), West Tisbury (20.2 acres)
- 1.4 **Proposal:** Extension of an existing camouflaged cell tower, and addition of equipment including antennas, a walk-in cabinet, and diesel generator.
- 1.5 **Zoning:** Rural (RU)
- 1.6 **Local Permits:** Building Permit, Electrical Permit, ZBA
- 1.7 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Residential properties in the RU district, including the subject parcel; New Lane is part of the Island Roads District; a portion of the property is within both the floodplain and the Coastal District (Tisbury Great Pond), but the tower itself is not.

- 1.8 **Project History:** DRI 640 was approved with conditions in 2013, allowing for the installation of a 66-foot-high Personal Wireless Service Facility tower, with associated ground equipment. The tower was approved as either a “stealth monopole or monopine (artificial tree) – if a monopine, an additional 5-foot de minimis taper crown without equipment may be added to the top to give a more natural appearance provided this meets the West Tisbury zoning regulations.” The structure was built as a monopine tower, following review by the West Tisbury ZBA.

Project Summary: The proposal is to co-locate new AT&T equipment at the tower site in order to provide service to the area, including for first responders. New equipment will include a walk-in cabinet (WIC), a 15kW diesel generator and concrete pad, cables and underground conduits, and a 7' GPS antenna (1' antenna mounted to a 6' support post). Changes to the tower itself will include extending the tower about 15 feet, and adding a new mount for AT&T antennas and other equipment.

According to the plans, the tower is currently 65 feet high, including the artificial tree branches; the proposed height, including branches, is about 80 feet (nine feet higher than the allowable height under the 2013 MVC approval).

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** West Tisbury Building Inspector
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 1.3D (Previous DRI – Modification)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** November 1, 2021
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** To be determined

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 Scenic values:** The property is on Town Cove (Tisbury Great Pond). The tower is designed to look like a pine tree, but is visible from nearby residential properties. The project would increase the tower height by about 15 feet, making it about nine feet higher than originally approved by the MVC. The closest property line is 142 feet to the north, and the closest buildings are within about 290 and 580 feet of the tower.
- 3.2 Energy:** The proposed Polar Power D-15-03 15kW diesel generator would come on automatically during outages, and once a week for 20 minutes as part of its maintenance cycle.
- The compound is currently used by Verizon, which has a building and generator on the site. The Applicant has stated that it would not be possible to share the Verizon generator, which is located inside the building and is configured differently.
- The Applicant has stated that the facility currently has a battery backup system that is designed to provide temporary backup during an emergency (for the period before a generator turns on), but that a diesel generator would still be necessary. The Applicant has also stated that battery backup for this purpose is not currently used by the industry, and cannot be accommodated by AT&T.
- 3.3 Spill prevention:** The generator will be self-contained and double-walled, with a catch basin, an alarm system for the fuel tank, and other spill-prevention measures.
- 3.4 Noise and lighting:** According to the manufacturer, the proposed generator will produce about 66 decibels at a distance of about 23 feet. (60-70 decibels is about equal in volume to a spoken conversation.) The closest property line is about 137 feet to the north, and the closest buildings are within about 290 and 580 feet of the tower.
- The plans show two LED motion-controlled lights mounted on the proposed walk-in cabinet. No lighting is proposed for the tower.