

April 5, 2016

MV Commission

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Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am writing to urge you to reject the application for the ATT Cell Tower proposed in the *front* yard of Robert Fynbo's property, 14 Sampson Ave, on Chappaquiddick. Mr. Fynbo already has a 90 ft+ foot tower in his *back* yard. This is a residential community, now with 3-acre minimum lot size and a 50' front setback requirement. Houses in this area, known as the Enos Lots, are on small lots on both sides of the road, and most are small 1 or 2-story houses. Thus, the proposed tower and guy wires would lie close to the middle of the >100' open area preserved by the setbacks and the road, and will stick out like a sore thumb to everyone driving or walking down the road and may also be visible to others in the Enos lots along with people driving along Chappaquiddick Road.

This proposal clearly falls within the charter of the MVC where guidance and regulations are necessary to protect our Island from demands of growth and unchecked development. Allowance of a tall tower in this residential area would establish precedent for more towers throughout the island. This tower can only reach 78% of the land area with poor or no coverage now and would service only ATT customers. Those in the remaining 22% would still not get coverage. In addition, it would not help those people who are dependent on Verizon, or Sprint, or T-Mobile or other carriers at all. Therefore we can expect additional requests from these other carriers to carry *their* signals not just on Chappaquiddick but across the island. Furthermore, it is inevitable that as the technology improves, more and different equipment will be added to existing towers, or will necessitate new towers. In fact, ATT has requested that the application be granted **without limits** so it will cover future changes to the 'temporary' one including possibly a larger tower, and/or additional equipment without the necessity of further review. While some town boards may be more protective than the Edgartown Planning Board, *only the Martha's Vineyard Commission has the power to protect the whole island so that cellular service development proceeds in a planned and logical way.*

We all want adequate cell phone coverage, both for convenience and for safety. Good coverage will also buttress our primary business—tourism. But these demands need to be studied and planned for to achieve a balance between development and growth and preserving the natural beauty, history and cultural qualities of the Vineyard along with cultivating it as a special place to both visit and live in. We should be not only studying alternative solutions and exploring future technologies but also how to manage their implementation so that it is fair to all.

Last year there was wide-spread consensus among Chappaquiddick residents that an unobtrusive means to carry signal would be far superior to towers, but that approach was ignored without explanation by

the Planning Board. Chilmark along with other towns has implemented a substantially less obtrusive DAS (Distributed Antenna System) system. ATT clearly has the technology to do exactly that and has done so in strictly-regulated architectural and historic districts. Why can't these approaches be applied to Chappaquiddick and elsewhere on the Vineyard?

Again all of this is directed at serving a limited number of ATT customers. Not the Sprint customers, nor Verizon nor T-Mobile. And when they come calling, how will their demands be met? Only the Martha's Vineyard Commission has a mandate broad enough to protect all of Martha's Vineyard.

Not only is this proposal bad for the Vineyard, it is bad for Chappaquiddick residents, most particularly those that live in the vicinity of the proposed tower. For example:

1. **Mr. Fynbo's existing tower was probably never properly permitted.** It may have avoided the Planning Board by describing it as an antenna. Perhaps it escaped notice that this was a 90 ft high antenna, that it is a 3-sided lattice structure, that it violated height limits of a structure. Some might have considered it a small residential business. Whatever, there is no record of any permit for the current installation. There was certainly no review as the antenna grew and grew, both in height and in hardware. Operating the current tower is probably illegal. To *expand* an illegal use of the back yard tower to the front with an even bigger tower is nonsensical and contrary to planning principles.
2. **Mr. Fynbo's yard is too small, 0.55 acres in a 3-acre area.** How small? Too small to put the ATT tower in the back yard. Now they want it in the front yard together with guy wires, and a 6-foot dish antenna and a fence around the base. This is hardly a residential business use, and it has no place in a residential neighborhood. Furthermore, ATT is ignoring the required 50 foot setback.
3. **The Planning Board's proposed action would approve a "temporary" tower (without defining what temporary means), and grants ATT an unfettered right to make changes in the future that are not at all defined.**
4. **No information has been provided about the amount of noise expected to be generated by the additional equipment in the front or added to the garage on the property. The current tower and equipment makes noise, so how can an additional tower not add to this?**
5. **The tower is in the wrong place.** ATT selected the site because it was offered, thereby freeing the rest of Chappaquiddick's residents from the fear that a tower might wind up in *their* back yard. The site was offered and accepted without regard for the sub-optimal coverage it would enable, and without regard for its impact on one of the most densely populated neighborhoods on Chappaquiddick. There are numerous public lands on Chappaquiddick that can provide far more optimal sites and allow placement of this tower much less obtrusively.
6. **The Tower will inevitably depress property values.** Its imposition risks fracturing the ambience of the neighborhood and will degrade the peace and aesthetics of the neighborhoods and beyond.

I don't expect the Martha's Vineyard Commission to act as a zoning board of appeal, but I think it is clear that the Planning Board may make at best an ill-informed decision about ATT's proposal, a decision that

will have immediate deleterious consequences on the surrounding neighborhood. Worse, this will not solve the problem. Twenty-two percent of the unserved area for ATT customers will *still* not have good coverage. Customers of the other carriers will see no improvement and, if it's bad enough, there will be precedent for more towers. How will this be controlled in a thoughtful and conscientious way? Worse still, if the Martha's Vineyard Commission affixes its seal of approval to this problem-ridden proposal, then this is the sort of project that will spread across the Vineyard, and we all will be the poorer for that.

Sincerely Yours,



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