



Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI # 685 – O.B. Emergency Services Radio Tower

MVC Staff Report – 2018-09-20

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Applicant:** Oak Bluffs Fire and EMS (Chief John Rose); Oak Bluffs Police (Chief Erik Blake); Duke County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Robert Ogden and Deputy Gould).
- 1.2 **Project Location:** 347 County Road, Oak Bluffs Map 29 Lot 156. O.B. Landfill Site.
- 1.3 **Proposal:** To construct a 140 foot tall radio communication tower for public safety purposes.
- 1.4 **Zoning:** R-3, Residential. Pre-existing non-conforming municipal use.
- 1.5 **Local Permits:** Special Permit from the Planning Board; Building Permit. The project would need to file with the FAA.
- 1.6 **Surrounding Land Uses:** The larger site is part of the O.B. landfill and transfer station; Farm Neck Golf Club is across the street; Residential neighborhoods are nearby.
- 1.7 **Project History:** Currently the Oak Bluffs public safety communications antenna is on the water tower at the end of Pine Street. The chiefs have said that the tower is too crowded with other equipment and transmitters which causes interference. They said that they are currently working with 1960's technology and do not have full coverage. Additionally they said they have had an access issue at the water tower, which is not under their control during storms when the power was out. This taller tower will get them above the water tower and a high point in the southern woodlands that would connect them directly to the DCR Fire Tower Antenna on Christiantown Road in West Tisbury.
- 1.8 **Project Summary:** To construct a 140 foot tall self supported lattice radio tower for public safety communications. The tower would be surrounded by a 50' by 50' compound enclosed by chain link fence with a 12'x 10' concrete shelter and a 35KW outdoor generator with a 1000 gallon Liquid Propane (LP) fuel tank on a concrete slab.
 - The proposed tower would increase the frequency of radio transmissions from 136 Megahertz to 700 MHz.
 - The tower would have two antennas for the radio frequency (RF) system and two 4-foot microwave dishes.
 - They are trying to fill in dead spots, improve reliability and update the technology from current antiquated 1950's analog VHF system. The tower would be part of a new planned multi-band digital system with point to point connectivity and upgraded hardware with failsafe redundant systems.
 - New point to point Line of Site (LOS) digital microwave system includes OB, WT DCR Fire Tower, Peaked Hill, Airport Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC); and co-location on an Edgartown Cell tower.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** O.B. Planning Board, Section 9.1a Telecomm. Tower over 35 feet (Mandatory DRI Review).
- 2.2 **LUPC:** Monday August 27, 2018;
- 2.3 **Site visits:** September 4, 2018
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** September 20, 2018.

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Some Key Issues

- **Visibility:** How visible will the tower be from public vistas?
- **Proliferation of Towers:** MVC reviewing another tower for extension that is more visible.
- **Future:** What will become of the tower if new technologies make it obsolete?