TOWN OF NORTHUMBERLAND
PLANNING BOARD - Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
6:00 p.m.
Town Office Conference Room
19 Main Street, Groveton, NH

Board members present: Al Rossetto, Mark DeGenarro, Nicole Canavan, Sean Durkin
Others present: Will Dodge, Peter Marchant, Rebecca St. Cyr - Minute Taker

Nicole opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. **Approval of minutes from February 4, 2026 meeting.**

   Motion to approve the February 4, 2026 minutes by: A. Rossetto
   2nd by: M. DeGennaro, All in Favor 3-0

2. **Review Site Plan for Map/Lot: 243-013-00-00 -** Will Dodge and Peter Marchant - Downs, Rachlin & Martin PLLC were present on behalf of Vertical Bridge (the tower developer), who is proposing to erect a 170'cell tower in Lost Nation (on the Lancaster end). They are looking for conditional use and site plan approval, we don't need a variance. There are a couple of waivers we requested, the application is complete. The purpose of the project is to provide Verizon Wireless service on Lost Nation, Page Hill Rd. area. There are no other structures that are high enough, the tower is 170', the Town's maximum height is 200', the 170' they know will work for Verizon and others.

   Nicole noted that on Tab 8, page 6 - it has the antenna height as 165'. Will explained the reason for the difference is because the panel antennas are usually about 8' - 9' tall and they go by the center line, which means the center of the antenna will be roughly 165'. The tower is that high but the metal support structure is 170', the highest antenna will be 169' and then a lightning rod.

   Al asked about the location of the tower on the property, Dodge / Marchant noted it's close to the road. The Town has an ordinance for wind towers, but we don't have one for communication towers.

   Al feels it's a great idea. Dodge said it will help the PD with radio coverage as well.

   Will commented that the application requirements have been taken care of. They want to have a bond with the Town, he further discussed the bond, which protects the Town.

   They have applied for a driveway permit with the Town, but it needs to be with NHDOT. Dodge / Marchant are aware of this. Al said the Board could approve contingent on NHDOT approval.

   The property is in current use, you can take out what you need and leave the rest in CU. The minimum to take out of CU is approx. 2 acres.

   The power will be buried and a pole will be put up. When the driveway permit has been approved by NHDOT they will get a building permit.

   Mark asked Nicole how we should proceed with the presentation/application process. Nicole suggested letting them do their presentation then answer questions.

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Will said if you have a lot of questions, he pointed out that in the project narrative, which is Tab 6, we describe all the elements of the project other than the tower itself. We point out that the antennas and tower mounted equipment is generic and subject to a final design by Verizon. Will further discussed. A good example is Tab 7, page A2. Mark explained he likes to have plans and prints to see the drainage calculations, details, etc. to see how it goes together. He requested a copy of the 24" x 30" plan.

Nicole asked what is an ice bridge, Peter explained is basically a cover to keep the ice from falling, Tab 7, page D3 is the illustration of the ice bridge.

Nicole - on page 2 it mentions the site includes wetland areas, are there any permits that are needed. Will said he doesn't think we need a NHDES permit. In the site plan you can see it on D2 and EC 1 - has the erosion control protections which are designed to protect the wetlands buffer impact. Peter further explained what was found when walking the property. Mark asked if they did a vegetation study. Will said the consultants who do the NEBA report will pick this up. We might be able to talk about this at the Public Hearing. He will check with Proterra.

Nicole asked about the balloon test - Will explained towns all across NH adopted this. Peter explained we go to the site and float a 4' balloon up to the height of the tower (170'). It's just used as a point of reference. It works for providing a simulation. Will said there will be a series of photos that shows the balloon. The abutters will be notified of the proposed date. It will be done and the simulation will be provided by the Public Hearing in April. The balloon test date is weather pending.

Nicole - if you do the add-on's for other companies does it increase the radio frequency emissions? Will said technically yes. Usually we include the Max exposure - 4.73% (Tab 10), represents all the antenna's that Verizon has operating at max. it's 4.73% of what the FCC sets as it's safety threshold. If another array is added, it might go up to 5%; cell towers don't usually go up that high, the are usually between 4 - 7. Peter further discussed and noted that at 170' it dissipates.

Nicole read some articles about the effects of cell towers. She added that we as a Board can't stop you from doing this, but is it going to be updated for the best safety measures for the town. Sean said he's seen it happen too many times, it grows with the equipment put on it. Will said the law actually says that you as a Town can require us to show that we will comply, he further discussed. The FCC standards have been around since 1996. They have been tested multiple times with multiple challenges and that hasn't been reason to change them. Discussion continued regarding the FCC.

Sean asked if there is an actual need for more power/service. He's seen some that look like a tree, He would like to see something like that. Will asked if he knows how tall they are? In his experience, sometimes it makes it worse. We can include a simulation when we do them to look like a tree. From their experience it might stick out.

Mark - we noticed on the list sent the number of abutters sent a notice are different than actual. Will said it will include all in the area. There is a 20 mile abutter regulation also. Peter commented if you pick a date, we can send out the notices. Check with Romy for the timeline that's mandated by statute. We can move forward as soon as we can.

Mark noted on the property card (the application has agriculture), the lot is zone timber management, because the lot is in 2 different zones. The Town says whichever zone is larger is what applies. Will noted the narrative says it situated within the agriculture and timber management. Mark said the lot itself is timber management.

Mark went through the checklist and noticed some waiver requests. 1) Locations and descriptions of existing or proposed easements, deed restrictions, or covenants. Part of the property has an easement for a spring that feeds a neighbor for livestock. Mark noted the Town doesn't have fire hydrants or fire ponds in that area. He wants to be sure that we are all aware of the risks. Nicole asked if there is a suppression system on the tower? Peter said there is an alarm. Will said we make sure there is a turn around area for the FD. There is a fence around it also.

Mark - B5 - the facility being unintrusive, we all want it to look nice. Will said there is landscaping and camouflaging. We don't feel that a mono pine would be the way to go. Landscaping isn't required if you are maintaining a substantial portion of the forest. You requested a waiver, but Mark wanted to be sure we talked about it.

Mark - will there be other carriers, or could Verizon latch on someone else's tower? If we had access to those records, it would be easier to defend some of the decisions right off. Peter said all the carriers have co-locate agreements. All the towers around here, there isn't anything viable.

Mark - Where there other sites (parcels) considered? Will said we can talk about that orally at the hearing. Peter said they looked at one location that just didn't work.

Sean asked what is the average height of the trees in that area; Peter thought approx. 75'. What is the minimum required height of the tower? Can it be less than 170'? Will said our radio frequency engineers would say is if we wanted this to work well and cover this big area, the higher the better. That's why co-location is a big deal and why a tower developer will build a taller tower.

Sean - is this tower going to be used for repeaters, for stuff, for bouncing off from other towers back and forth, to carry signals? It's just going to be paid by Verizon. It be self-sufficient wiring - underground.

Mark asked about the structure, base, etc. It will self-support. As far as blasting, Peter said they would do a Geotech and determine what is needed. Until it's approved they can't do the Geotech.

Sean asked if there is a timeline for the project. Peter didn't think it would be built this year due to permitting, etc. possibly next spring (2027). The project takes approx. 6 weeks. Sean didn't think the neighbor's would be happy. Al didn't see a lot of impact from a tower on a neighboring property.

Peter said he can come up with dates or if the Town can provide dates for the balloon test that would be helpful. Talk to Romy to set up dates. Typically, the test is done 9:00 am - 1:00, if there is an area in town that you want to take pictures from let us know and we will take pictures. They will go all around for pictures.

Mark asked if they could send a copy of the plat so he can look at it closer. Will said yes, he will have one sent. He asked what the Town gets from this. They get the taxes.

> Motion to approve the application as complete and move forward to the April 1, 2026 Public Hearing by: A. Rossetto, 2nd by: S. Durkin, All in Favor 4-0

They would like to get the balloon test done by March 25th.

3. **Continue Reviewing Master Plan -** Nicole had emailed the Board members a copy of the Master Plan, Sean hasn't reviewed. She will send him another copy. Discussed the timeline for getting information out to the Board for meetings, etc. Nicole will send to Romy and cc everyone

else. Notice of the meetings should go out 24 hours prior to the date of, and be posted on the web-site. We need better communication.

Sean reminded the Master Plan is a copy of the one that was updated 10 years ago. which we were working on.

Al commented that Robin Irving was asking if there is anything in the Master Plan about a new firetruck. There is a section for the Fire Department that Andre can review and update.

Nicole suggested checking the new Town Report for information that could be included in the update and each Department should update their information as well. The PD should be redone by the new Chief with his plan. Al will check with the SAU office and principal at the high school.

Nicole didn't think it would be done by April 1st. If we can work together to have a plan for April 1st and hopefully finish at the May meeting. Al will get copies from Michelle to the Dept heads to have them review for corrections/updates.

4. To Transact any Other Business.

Motion to adjourn by: A. Rossetto, 2nd by: S. Durkin, All in Favor 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca St. Cyr, Minute Taker/Transcriber

Minutes approved by Northumberland Planning Board Members on _____

X_____ **X**_____

Nicole Canavan
Northumberland Planning Board Chair

Sean Durkin
Northumberland Planning Board Member

X_____ **X**_____

Sheila Smith
Northumberland Planning Board Member

Mark DeGenarro
Northumberland Planning Board Member