

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

IN RE:

APPLICATION OF OPTASITE TOWERS LLC
AND OMNIPOINT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND
OPERATION OF A TELECOMMUNICATIONS
FACILITY AT 651 PADDOCK AVENUE IN
CITY OF MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT

DOCKET NO. 329

Date: APRIL 26, 2007

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL LIBERTINE

Q1. Mr. Libertine, please state your name and position.

A. Michael Libertine and I am Senior Project Manager and Director of Environmental Services for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. ("VHB"). VHB is located at 54 Tuttle Place in Middletown, Connecticut.

Q2. Please state your qualifications.

A. I have a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut with a concentration in Natural Resources Management. My background includes over 19 years of professional experience, including ten years of environmental engineering consulting. I have been Project Manager for more than 1200 environmental site assessments and field investigations for property transfers in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Florida and Canada. In addition, I have assisted

in the permitting of more than 100 wireless telecommunication facilities in New England during the past four years. My responsibilities include: coordination and oversight of site screenings and environmental assessments to fulfill NEPA requirements, vegetative/biological surveys, noise analyses, visual impacts analyses and regulatory permitting support.

Q3. Please describe your involvement in this matter.

A. VHB was responsible for preparing a Visual Resources Evaluation report for the proposed site at 651 Paddock Avenue in Meriden (the "Site"), which is located on property owned by the First Assembly of God Church and is currently being used as a church. The purpose of this Visual Resources Evaluation Report was to evaluate the potential visibility of the proposed telecommunications facility ("Facility") from the surrounding areas.

VHB also conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. In addition, VHB was responsible for reviewing environmental resource information under the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA").

Q4. Please describe the process for conducting the Visual Resource Evaluation.

A. At the request of Optasite, VHB conducted the Visual Resource Evaluation (found at Exhibit J of the Application), which included the preparation of a computer-generated viewshed map and performing a balloon float test at the Site on August 9, 2006. The balloon float test consisted of floating a balloon, four

feet in diameter, to the height of 120 feet at the Site. Once the balloon was aloft, VHB staff photographed the crane from numerous vantage points within a two-mile radius (the "Study Area") to determine the actual locations where the proposed tower will be visible. The location of each photograph was recorded using a hand-held GPS receiver and subsequently plotted on a USGS 7.5 Minute topographic quad map, utilizing ESRI's ArcView® Spatial Analyst software, to indicate their approximate distance and relative location to the proposed Facility.

Q5. How were the representative locations chosen?

A. Several photo locations were selected prior to the in-field evaluation, utilizing a preliminary version of the viewshed map to identify areas adjacent to public roads from where the proposed Facility might be visible. Other locations were identified based on in-field observations made during the time that the photographic documentation was being conducted, including areas along public roadways where the tower may be partially visible.

Q6. Please describe how you prepared the viewshed analysis for the Visual Resources Evaluation.

A. Using ESRI's ArcView® Spatial Analyst, a computer modeling tool, the areas from which the top of the tower is expected to be visible are calculated. This is based on information entered into the computer model, such as tower height, its ground elevation, existing vegetation and surrounding topography. Data incorporated in the model includes 7.5 minute digital elevation models ("DEMs") and a digital forest layer for the project area. The forested areas within

the study area are overlaid on the DEMs and then a series of constraints are applied to the computer model to achieve a realistic estimate of where the tower will be visible from within the surrounding landscape.

Also included in the viewshed model is a data layer, obtained from the Connecticut State Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP"), which depicts various land and water resources such as state parks and forests, recreational facilities, dedicated open space and DEP boat launches. Additionally, information is gathered from the Connecticut State Department of Transportation ("DOT") and local officials to determine if there are any state or locally designated scenic or historic roadways.

Q7. Please describe the visibility of the proposed Facility.

A. Areas from which the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible year-round comprise approximately 137 acres or roughly 1.7% of the entire study area. Distant views of the proposed site may be achieved from select portions of the Mattabesett Trail that traverse the Beseck Mountain ridgeline located near the eastern limits of the Study Area. We estimate approximately 42 residences will have partial views of the proposed Facility above the existing tree line. Existing street trees and the landscape vegetation found among the residential areas located within the general vicinity of the host property serve to minimize the visual effects of the proposed monopole while taller commercial and industrial buildings act as visual buffers in areas further from the proposed Facility.

In addition, the proposed Facility will be at least partially visible seasonally (during "leaf off" conditions) from an additional 96 acres and approximately 48 residences will achieve seasonal views of the proposed Facility.

Q8. Since the Visual Resource Evaluation was conducted, the Facility was shifted approximately 155 feet to the east. Does this shift have any effect on the conclusions of the Evaluation?

A. No, the shift of the Facility and compound of 155 feet is considered minor and does not have an effect on the conclusions regarding the visibility of the Facility. In fact, the 155 foot shift to the east places the compound will help reduce the visual impact of the compound itself to the abutting properties. Specifically, the compound has been moved from an area of the Property with little natural screening to the new location which is tucked into the vegetative screening and trees that currently exists in the easterly corner of the Property. This natural screening will help reduce any potential visual impact of the compound on the abutting properties.

Q9. Please describe any mitigation measures that have been taken by the Applicants that will reduce any potential visual impact of the proposed Facility.

A. The design of the proposed tower, a flush-mounted monopole painted brown, will allow the proposed Facility to blend into the surrounding vegetation and act to minimize the potential visual impact of the proposed Facility. In particular, this design will largely mitigate potential seasonal views of the proposed Facility.

Q10. Will the proposed Facility have any impact on any sensitive visual receptors such as scenic, historic or recreational sites or parks?

A. No, the proposed Facility will not impact any sensitive visual receptors. As discussed, distant views may be achieved from the Mattabesett Trail that traverse the Beseck Mountain ridgeline to the east of the proposed Facility. However, those views, if any, will be largely mitigated by the design of the Facility itself (a brown stick) and the existence of taller commercial and industrial buildings near the proposed Facility will act as visual buffers. Of note, in this area of Meriden, Route 15, the Wilbur Cross Parkway, is not a designated scenic/historic roadway.

Q11. Please describe the results of the PHASE I Environmental Assessment conducted by VHB.

A. At the request of Optasite, VHB conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment ("PESA") of the property located at 651 Paddock Avenue in Meriden, the results of which can be found at Exhibit I of the Certificate Application. The PESA was conducted to identify any potential areas of environmental concern at and within the vicinity of the Site. The results of the PESA indicated that no significant environmental concerns exist at the Site. VHB then concluded that no further investigations were required as a result of the PESA.

Q12. Please describe the results of the NEPA screen conducted by VHB.

A. At the request of Optasite, VHB conducted a NEPA screen to determine if the proposed Facility falls under any listed categories of Section 1.1307 under

NEPA, the results of which are found at Exhibit N of the Certificate Application. Based upon VHB's review, the proposed Facility does not fall under any listed categories of Section 1.1307. In addition, VHB corresponded with numerous agencies including the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP"), the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, Historic Preservation & Museum Division, among others.

VHB received back comments from DEP as well as the United States Department of the Interior stating that there are no known extant populations of Federal or State Endangered, Threatened or Species of Concern at the Site. VHB received back comments from the State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") concluding that the proposed facility will have no effect on historic, architectural or archeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Based upon the NEPA screen and agency correspondence, the Site is categorically excluded from any requirement for further environmental review by the FCC in accordance with NEPA and no permit is required by that agency prior to construction of the proposed Facility.

The statements above are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

4-27-07
Date

Michael Libertine
Michael Libertine

Subscribed and sworn before me this 27th day of April, 2007.

By: Patricia A. Longini
Notary

My commission expires: August 31, 2010