



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 24, 2008/ Calendar No. 21

C 080477 PSR

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for site selection of property located at 40 Storer Avenue (Block 7315, p/o Lot 82) for use as a public safety wireless facility, Community District 3, Borough of Staten Island.

The application (C 080477 PSR) was filed on May 29, 2008 by the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) for site selection of property located at 40 Storer Avenue (Block 7315, p/o Lot 82), Borough of Staten Island, Community District 3, for use as a public safety wireless facility that is part of the New York City Channel 16 radio network project.

RELATED ACTION

In addition to the site selection which is the subject of this report, implementation of the proposed development also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application which is being considered concurrently with this application:

C 080476 ZSR Special permit pursuant to Section 107-73 of the Zoning Resolution to allow construction of a public safety wireless facility of more than 50 feet in height.

BACKGROUND

This application from the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) requests site selection approval for a part of a city-owned property located at 40 Storer Avenue (Block 7315, p/o Lot 82) in Staten Island for the site of a public safety wireless

facility (the facility) that will function as part of the citywide public safety wireless emergency response infrastructure known as the Channel 16 Project. The site for the proposed facility is located mid-block along the north side of Storer Avenue, between Arthur Kill Road and Muriel Street, in the Charleston neighborhood in Staten Island in an M1-1 zoning district. The vacant city-owned property contains 16,775 square feet. The application proposes selection of 7,443 square feet in the eastern most portion of Lot 82 for the proposed facility. This portion of Lot 82 is assigned to DOITT. The remainder of Lot 82 is under DCAS jurisdiction.

The other uses on the block are Public School 25 Annex "D" and schoolyard area to the immediate north of the subject property, residential and commercial uses to the west and east of the subject property and the western end of the Clay Pit Pond State Park Preserve to the north and east. The area surrounding the subject property includes manufacturing, commercial, residential and open space uses.

The Channel 16 Project is an integral part of the city's emergency response infrastructure for the 21st century. Existing citywide radio systems cannot accommodate the new technology required for this improved radio communications system. This new network will provide enhanced dispatch and emergency response two-way radio capabilities for emergency preparedness and will facilitate radio communication between the Fire Department (FDNY) and other emergency first responders such as the Police Department (NYPD), Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and other law enforcement agencies to be determined. The network has 32 sites across the city including seven sites on Staten Island. The subject site is the only one of the 32 sites requiring a new stand-alone telecommunications tower.

Project Description

The proposed facility includes a 112-foot high telecommunications tower with related base station equipment cabinets and a back-up generator on two mobile trailers at the base of the tower. The proposed tower is designed to have a 40 inch base and two dish antennas at its apex. In addition,

five whip antennas would be attached below the dish antennas. The two mobile trailers would each be located on a concrete pad: one pad would be 37 feet long and 18 feet wide and the other pad would be 57 feet long and 18 feet wide. The base station equipment on the smaller “portable” trailer would connect the proposed tower facility to the Channel 16 network. In addition to the base station equipment, the larger trailer will also have antennas on a retractable tower. This trailer would be deployed as necessary across the city for emergency preparedness purposes. When located on the subject site, this larger trailer will be connected to the proposed tower for redundancy purposes. The larger trailer is more likely to be deployed for emergency preparedness purposes across the city than the smaller trailer. On occasions when the smaller trailer is needed for emergency preparedness purposes in other parts of the city, the subject tower would not be in use. A twelve foot high metal fence with 2 inch grid openings is proposed for the perimeter of the 16,775 square foot property and to enclose the 7,443 square feet of the facility site as well. In addition, 60 red cedar trees, spaced 42 inches apart, will be planted for screening along the northern and eastern sides of the 7,443 square foot facility site.

A structure of more than 50 feet in height is not permitted in the Special South Richmond Development District except by special permit pursuant to Section 107-73 of the Zoning Resolution. Consequently DOITT and DCAS have filed the related application (C 080476 ZSR) for a special permit to modify the 50-foot Special South Richmond Development District height limit to allow construction of the 112-foot high telecommunications facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 080477 PSR), in conjunction with the application for the related action (C 080476 ZSR), was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq. and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of

Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 08DIT002Y. The lead agency is the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a revised Negative Declaration was issued on April 11, 2008.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 080477 PSR), along with the application for the related action (C 080476 ZSR), was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 16, 2008, and was duly referred to Community Board 3 and the Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 3 held a public hearing on this application (C 080477 PSR) on June 18, 2008, in conjunction with the public hearing on the application for the related action (C 080476 ZSR), and on June 24, 2008, by a vote of 16 to 11 with zero abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of these applications.

Borough President Recommendation

This application (C 080477 PSR), along with the related application (C 080477 ZSR), was considered by the Borough President of Staten Island, who issued a recommendation to approve the

applications on July 31, 2008.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 11, 2008 (Calendar No. 13), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 27, 2008, for a public hearing on this application (C 080477 PSR). The hearing was duly held on August 27, 2008 (Calendar No. 32), in conjunction with the hearing for the related action (C 080476 ZSR).

Two applicant representatives spoke in favor of the application. They described the proposal as an essential component of the city's Channel 16 network providing enhanced dispatch and response capabilities for emergency preparedness voice communications between FDNY and other agencies including NYPD. They noted that they have had discussions with staff from the adjacent school and that the proposed facility will not generate noise or unsafe emissions. They also noted that the currently vacant facility site is in a manufacturing district, that the proposal includes extensive plantings on the site and further, that the mobile trailers can be useful to the entire city. There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Waterfront Revitalization Program Consistency Review

This application was reviewed by the Department of City Planning for consistency with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), as amended, approved by the New York City Council on October 13, 1999 and by the New York State Department of State on May 28, 2002, pursuant to the New York State Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of 1981 (New York State Executive Law, Section 910 et seq.). The designated WRP number is 08-042.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that the application (C 080477 PSR) of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) for the site-selection of city-owned property located at 40 Storer Avenue (Block 7315, p/o Lot 82), and the related application for grant of a special permit to allow construction of a public safety wireless facility with a 112-foot high telecommunications tower, in the Borough of Staten Island, Community District 3, is appropriate.

The proposed site selection and special permit would allow the construction of the facility providing enhanced dispatch and emergency response two-way radio communications between emergency first responders as recommended in the 9/11 Commission Report. The existing radio networks of the FDNY and NYPD do not provide sufficient radio communication between these agencies. The proposed new tower and the 31 other base stations located throughout all five boroughs will provide required two-way communications between the agencies. The network includes built-in radio communications redundancies as well. This Channel 16 Project will be less subject to power outages because it does not rely on commercial phone lines or power. The Channel 16 Project includes its own back-up generators for power. The proposed site is located in an M1-1 zoning district, which permits the use.

The project was not included in the Citywide Statement of Needs, however, a letter pursuant to Section 204g of the New York City Charter was sent to the Borough President of Staten Island.

In addition to the site selection application, the project requires a special permit to allow the public safety wireless facility to exceed 50 feet in height.

C 080476 ZSR – Special Permit

The special permit allows for a modification of the Special South Richmond Development District's height limit of 50 feet pursuant to Section 107-73 of the Zoning Resolution. The proposed public safety wireless facility would be 112 feet high and would be centrally located toward the rear of the subject zoning lot in an M1-1 zoning district. Further, the public safety wireless facility will be designed with dish antennas at the apex and whip antennas below the dish antennas. The telecommunications tower width at the base will be 40 inches. The proposed facility is an as-of-right use in this zoning district.

The Commission notes that the nearby area is developed primarily with manufacturing, commercial, residential, and open space uses. The closest residential building is more than 220 feet from the proposed tower.

The Commission notes that the proposed facility is the minimum height necessary to achieve the required radio signal coverage for effective wireless dispatch and that painting the tower sky blue helps it to blend into the surrounding environment and improves the aesthetic appearance of the public safety wireless facility. The proposed facility for this site is designed to take full advantage of the special characteristics of the site such as topography, elevation and proximity to other sites in the network.

The facility site is screened from adjacent uses by dense plantings of 60 red cedar trees on the north and east sides of the facility site. Further, the facility site and the rest of the zoning lot will be enclosed with a twelve foot high metal fence with 2 inch grid openings.

Further, the Commission notes that the 112-foot high telecommunications tower would be set back approximately 57 feet from the Storer Avenue frontage. The related equipment cabinets and back-up generator have been determined to be safe and would be located on the mobile trailers within the enclosed facility site which is screened by fencing and trees. The facility will be exclusively used as part of the New York City Channel 16 Network.

The Commission notes that the proposed facility is an integral component of the Channel 16 Network which will provide enhanced radio communications across the city between FDNY and other agencies including NYPD. This network will allow greatly improved voice communication capacities among the city's emergency first responders.

The Commission believes that this facility, as part of the citywide Channel 16 Network, will ensure improved dispatch and response radio communications abilities among emergency first responder agencies.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and be it further

RESOLVED that the City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the City Coastal Commission, has reviewed the waterfront aspects of this application and finds that the proposed action is consistent with WRP policies; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 200 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination, and the consideration and findings described in this report, the application (C 080477 PSR) submitted by the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) and the Department of Citywide

Administrative Services (DCAS) for site selection of property located at 40 Storer Avenue (Block 7315, p/o Lot 82) Borough of Staten Island, for use as a public safety wireless facility, is approved.

The above resolution (C 080477 PSR), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 24, 2008 (Calendar No.21), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair,
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman
IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, AIA., ALFRED C. CERULLO III,
BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL,
SHIRLEY A. MCRAE, JOHN MEROLO, KAREN PHILLIPS, Commissioners