

MINUTES OF WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING ON AN
ORDINANCE DECLARING A SIX (6) MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE
ERECTION OF COMMERCIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWERS OR ANTENNAE

May 28, 1997

Council Chambers

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Councilor Madeline McKernan called the hearing to order at
7:00 p.m.

Councilor McKernan: Before we begin the first one which is on the moratorium on the telecommunications tower let me explain the composition of the Council tonight. Mrs. Glass who usually sits here has had an accident, a fall down some stairs and is now in the emergency room at Hartford Hospital. It seems to be not life threatening but she has some bone breaks I think. Mrs. Klebanoff and Mr. McCabe are this evening involved in activities that concern their work and Mr. Connors is out for personal reasons.

The first hearing we are going to do is on the telecommunications tower and you should have in front of you the ordinance declaring a six month moratorium on the erection of commercial telecommunications towers or antennae; a letter from CRCOG and a letter from the TP&Z. Mrs. Cronin would you call the roll please.

Present were Councilors Rob Bouvier, Zoning Alternate Lisa MacDonald for Kevin Connors, Liz Gillette, Harry Schaecter for Nan Glass, Bernard Jacques, John Tucker for Sandy Klebanoff, Deborah Buckley for Patrick McCabe, Madeline McKernan and Alfred Turco.

Councilor McKernan: The first person to sign up to speak, Mr. Genduso.

Mr. Genduso: Domenico Genduso, 80 Blue Ridge Lane, West Hartford. Madam Mayor, members of the Town Council. I'm opposed to the commercial telecommunications system even though the Congress, and we have no representation in Washington anymore, either in the Senate or the House of Representatives. We need a change of those people because I never heard, I lived for nineteen years under a dictatorship but at least you could talk. The only thing you could not do is talk against the government. Over here in 1996, last year, they passed this communication pact so stupidly and I'm sorry that the newspaper didn't publicize at that time so much about what it was all about.

I know that we have to progress, get new things going on, but with everything that is new there is always headache for the people and today it looks like we have a government not for the people but for themselves, for the party they represent. That is unfortunate.

The federal telecommunications act said that bar municipality from banning the towers. Now those towers they know there tends to be about every six miles and let's say in West Hartford they need to build for or five towers, one in the north, one in the south, one in the west, one in the southwest for what? Because they want to improve the telephone, cellular telephone or other communications? We have enough communications already, too much, actually, including the internet, that happens to be like I predict an ugly organization for profit.

If I want to have, I think, I'm not sure, there is a town ordinance because I don't know all the ordinances but if I needed for instance to put an addition on top of my house, I have to have a permit, or I have to have this or that and I own the house. I own the area around. It will not interfere with anybody but because maybe it would look ugly on top of the roof.

Now, we have to allow business people that will do business and they don't give a damn about me or anybody else, that they have to build towers. Like for instance, progress, the helicopter was a beautiful thing to do, but you know when at 12:42 in the morning, this morning, a helicopter goes by on top of my house at night, that's sickening. Where is the federal agency that regulated that stuff. Do they think about the people? No. That is what this is. When they passed this act here, the Congress, I think they were all drunk. Thank you for listening.

Councilor McKernan: Thank you Mr. Genduso. Mr. Norman Asbridge, please.

Mr. Asbridge: Norman Asbridge, 24 North Quaker Lane. I would like to speak against placing the towers and for the moratorium as long as possible on such towers on such speculation. It seems to me it is against the interest of the people. I can see nothing that we can gain from such towers, hideous though they may be, that will compensate for their unsightliness. I originally became involved in this through my membership on the Farmington Avenue East Task Force. I was alerted to a tower about to be erected on Farmington Avenue but I am indeed against them anywhere in the town where they can be visible, where they interrupt the town scape, the landscape.

The towers, whatever we may gain from them, and most unlikely to gain anything immediately as far as I understand it, is a slightly clearer message which will probably be selling us something over the telephone. Since the break up of AT&T, and so forth, competition has become absolutely out of control in all directions regardless of their usefulness, appropriateness and regardless also of what impact it would have on the landscape.

There is a rush everywhere in every city and town and moratoriums are being suggested where they can be suggested. I am told also there is likely to be, if not already, a national or perhaps state by state ban on such moratorium as we would like to see imposed.

Ninety percent of the taxes of this town, ninety percent come from the residents. They do not come from industry. They do not come from commercialism. Ninety percent comes from the people who live here and who live here because they like what we have and we like to keep it. That is why they moved here. That is why we moved here. There are placed in the town I admit more appropriate than some of the chosen ones.

I would also like to comment on an article in the paper where Mr. Linblad, Vice President, said the company intends to build 170 towers throughout the state. We have seen, he said, amazingly successful in getting our plans approved. In some places we have had to work harder because we have had to educate people. In seventy years I have never come across that chutzpah as using the word educate in order to impose an eyesore upon the town. I realize that what I am saying may be in vain. I realize that perhaps we may be subject to the outrageous (inaudible) which is overwhelming the world but at least I would like to register a protest against it. I would, if possible, even for the shortest time, like to support the moratorium. Perhaps if it is done often enough and in enough places it might have some effect. I don't know. That is all I have to say. I am very intently opposed to imposing upon our landscape what we do not need and shall never be able not to observe. Thank you very much.

Councilor McKernan: Thank you, Mr. Asbridge. Mr. Asbridge, before you leave the podium, this is from you, the 255 signatures?

Mr. Asbridge: Yes. While the tower was about to be erected I and other interested people collected, I think it says how many....

Councilor McKernan: It says 255.

Mr. Asbridge: I think you will find that they are all correct and all approved. I hate to ask you but I would like it back because I don't have a copy. I don't want it back immediately.

Councilor McKernan: Thank you very much. Mrs. Wilder.

Mrs. Wilder: Does that relate to the specific tower that was proposed for Farmington Avenue, not to this hearing, is

that correct?

Mr. Asbridge: That relates specifically to one tower but it does give some kind of impression of the sentiments of West Hartford.

Mrs. Wilder: Thank you very much.

Councilor McKernan: Thank you. Is there anyone who has not signed up who would like to speak to this hearing? Mr. Feldman, do we have an administration presentation?

Mr. Feldman: Mrs. McKernan, no. Actually it is just a summary of the ordinance which is an I'm sure you is the moratorium for a six month period to investigate the issue.

Councilor McKernan: Is the applicant here?

Mrs. Wilder: This was proposed by the Physical Services Committee and it was in response to the fact that our ordinances haven't really kept up with the changing technology and federal law and the State law which does regulate the siting of other kinds of towers also hasn't kept up with this new, or doesn't specifically relate to this new technology. I have seen some pending State legislation which may or may not ultimately preempt the field but this will give us an opportunity to study all of our options.

Councilor McKernan: Thank you very much. I will declare this hearing closed.

The hearing adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Norma W. Cronin
Town Clerk/Council Clerk

WEST HARTFORD
TOWN RECORDS
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