



# MEMORANDUM

## City of Watertown Planning Office

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**TO:** Norman J. Wayte II, Chairman, Planning Board

**FROM:** Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Amended Site Plan Approval – 491 Eastern Boulevard

**DATE:** July 26, 2011

**Request:** Amended Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 104' monopole communications tower, a 360 square foot building, driveway, parking area and related appurtenances at the rear of 491 Eastern Boulevard, Parcel Number 5-26-103.007.

**Applicant:** Michael E. Cusack, Esq. on behalf of St. Lawrence Seaway Cellular Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless.

**Proposed Use:** Wireless Communications Tower.

**Property Owner:** Parkside Bible Church of the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

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### **Submitted:**

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Property Survey: Yes

Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes

Site Plan: Yes

Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: N/A

Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes

Construction Time Schedule: Yes

Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes

Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

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SEQRA: Type I Action

County Planning Board Review Required: Yes

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### **Zoning Information:**

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District: Light Industrial

Maximum Lot Coverage: None

Setback Requirements: None

Buffer Zone Required: No

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**Project Overview:** The applicant is proposing an alteration to the previously approved site plan for the construction of a 104' monopole communications tower and related appurtenances, including twelve panel antennae, two microwave antennae, a GPS unit, a 12'x30' equipment shelter, fencing, driveway, and parking area. When the initial application was approved by the Planning Board on March 1, 2011, the proposed location was near the southwest corner of the parcel at 491 Eastern Boulevard, behind the Parkside Bible Church. The current request proposes that the tower and appurtenances be shifted approximately 180 feet to the northeast, putting it within 150 feet of the Huntington Street margin.

**General Comments:** As stated by the applicant in their July 8, 2011 letter, the proposed relocation will cause the distance to the nearest residential structure to increase by 53 feet. Additionally, the absolute elevation of the top of the tower will be roughly 3 feet lower, due to a lower base elevation. Parking, drainage, grading, utilities, and lighting are all largely unchanged.

The relocation may have a slight negative effect on the visibility of the structure from areas to the north, like Marble Street Park or residences on Water Street. This effect will be partially mitigated by the 3' reduction in height.

**Landscaping:** The applicant has reduced the proposed landscaping, largely due the fact that less of the site is being disturbed. The rear of the building is now cut into a more densely wooded area, and thus the number of new trees necessary to fully screen the structure is reduced. Conversely, the new location's proximity to Huntington Street will require a more substantial staggered planting strip along the front of the structure. In general, despite a reduction in the gross number of plantings, the applicant's amended landscaping plan appears to provide a sufficient visual buffer.

Two minor changes are recommended. First, the applicant should vary the species of tree in order to prevent loss to disease. Currently all 14 trees are Blue Spruce, and the Planning Board's Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines recommend that no species be more than 15% of new plantings. Second, the applicant should consider planting small trees or shrubs along the margins of the driveway between the tower and Huntington Street.

**Summary:**

1. The applicant shall vary the species of tree planted on the site, ideally following the 15% rule as set out in the Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines.
2. The applicant shall install trees or shrubs along the margins of the driveway between the tower and Huntington Street.
3. The applicant shall obtain a General City Permit for any digging in the City's right of way.

cc: Planning Board Members  
City Council Members  
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney  
Justin Wood, P.E., Civil Engineer II  
Michael E. Cusack, Esq.  
Sarah Mayberry Stevens, Verizon Wireless