

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building and Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: AT&T Right of Way Antenna Revised Waiver Request

Prepared By: Robert Duncan, Assistant Township Manager

Date: December 7, 2018

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Consider a request from AT&T to install Wireless Communication Facility antennas mounted to existing Township street lights in the Township Right of Way at nine locations.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

In June, the Board of Commissioners granted a waiver to allow these antennas in the Right of Way subject to a condition that any installation requiring the replacement of a Township light pole or any installation mounted to a Township light pole be brought back to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable): N/A

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Board's approval of this antenna installation in June included five conditions as listed below. Condition c as amended requires AT&T to come back to the Board for approval of all light pole installations, or any other poles without utilities. The five approval conditions are included below.

- a. This approval only applies to antennas and associated equipment being installed on utility poles.
- b. Any replacement of poles must be replaced in kind.
- c. Antennas and associated equipment proposed for installation on light poles or any poles without utilities must be brought back to the Board of Commissioners for approval.
- d. The color of the equipment being installed must be adjusted to blend in with the poles upon which they are located.

- e. The bottom of the shroud must be a minimum of 12 feet above the ground at the base of the pole.

The original request for antenna sites was tabled with no specific date to reconsider at the July Building & Planning Committee meeting. A meeting was scheduled with staff, Commissioner Manos, Commissioner Sinai, and AT&T representatives to develop design standards for these installations to provide a consistent aesthetically pleasing appearance for the new street light pole installations. AT&T has agreed to incorporate the antenna and equipment into the street light pole design. This resulted in a few different pole designs to be considered. One would place the antenna and equipment at the top of the pole and the other would place the equipment at the bottom of the pole. Both designs incorporate the antenna and equipment into the pole design. This will result in a larger diameter street light pole, but they will not have any equipment mounted to the exterior of the poles. AT&T requests the Board of Commissioners approve the pole design with both the antenna and equipment incorporated into the pole and located at the top of the pole due to the coverage being reduced when the equipment is not located close to the antenna.

If any of these proposed new Township light poles are damaged and require repair or replacement, the agreement with AT&T will place responsibility for repairs/replacement on AT&T.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

These antennas will result in a minor increase in revenue to the Township in accordance with the Township's antenna permit fee provisions. The actual permit revenue will depend on the total number of antennas to be installed.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

In previous applications, the Board has placed a high priority on upgrading service through the use of small cell sites and avoidance of new larger towers to improve coverage throughout the Township. This is the first application to install antennas and related equipment on Township light poles. If the Board of Commissioners decides the use of small cell sites should be expanded to include the street light poles, staff recommends the Board of Commissioners approve the street light pole locations subject to AT&T agreeing to take responsibility for repairs or replacement of these light poles if they are damaged or require replacement. AT&T must also install the street light poles that incorporate the antenna and equipment into the street light pole design as presented to the Board of Commissioners. The Board will have to decide which pole designs are preferred for these sites. Staff prefers to use one pole design throughout the Township to avoid the need to purchase and stock multiple styles of street light poles. This recommendation for approval is also subject to the Township Solicitor's approval of the agreement with AT&T and Township staff's approval of the final light pole design.