



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #:
Date:
Recommendation:

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 331-333 Broadway

Applicant Name: Sprint Spectrum
Applicant Address: 101 Palisades Circle Stoughton, MA 02072
Owner Name: A&P Development Trust
Owner Address: 141 Sylvester Ave. Winchester, MA 01890
Agent Name: Gerry Squires
Agent Address: 101 Palisades Circle Stoughton, MA 02072
Alderman: Tony Lafuente

Legal Notice: Applicant, Spring Spectrum, and Owner, A&P Development Trust, seek a special permit to add panel antennas, remote radio heads, and equipment to an existing wireless facility. CCD55 zone. Ward 4.

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board – April 16, 2015

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is an 11,778 square foot parcel that contains a mid-rise residential structure that covers 9,161 square feet of the lot. Located in a Corridor Commercial District 55 (CCD 55) in the Winter Hill neighborhood, this masonry structure at the corner of Langmaid Avenue and Broadway is four stories in height with a flat roof and a fully enclosed courtyard. There is moderate space at the rear of the building for parking and a number of street trees that surround the property.

This ca. 1914 building, the Princeton, is designated historic at the local level which requires the Applicant to submit an application to the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and receive a Certificate before any work begins. The building retains a high degree of historic integrity due to the architectural



design and workmanship of the building. The Princeton also retains historic significance as the construction took place at the time when the apartment house became an acceptable solution for more dense housing in urban areas, such as Somerville.

This site received a Special Permit in 2005 and 2012 to establish and add to the wireless telecommunications facility on the roof of 331-333 Broadway for the current Applicant, Sprint Spectrum.

2. Proposal: The proposal is to add three panel antennas and three remote radio heads to the rooftop penthouses that already exist on the building. There will also be a battery cabinet installed in the enclosed courtyard.

3. Green Building Practices:

4. Comments: None listed on the application.

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has no comments at this time.

Wiring Inspection: Has been contacted but has no comments at this time.

Lights and Lines: Has been contacted but has no comments at this time.

Historic: The project will go before the HPC on Tuesday May 19, 2015. Staff recommendation is for a certificate of appropriateness provided that the antennas are painted to match the penthouses. Planning Staff will provide an update of the HPC meeting at the Planning Board meeting.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has no comments at this time.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT:

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: *The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."*

The Applicant seeks a Special Permit under §7.11.15.3 of the SZO which requires the Applicant to follow guidelines and procedures set forth in Article 14 for the "regulation of wireless telecommunications facilities so as to allow and encourage uses in the City with minimal harm to the public health, safety and general welfare."

Staff finds that minimal harm would be imposed upon the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding neighborhood. Sprint Spectrum is a licensed company that is required to comply with all state and federal regulations.

Review Criteria for Telecommunications Facilities:

- a) *Height of proposed facility:* The building is four stories in height with a partially raised basement, making it one of the tallest in the surrounding area and there are no buildings in the immediate area along Broadway that have more height.
- b) *Proximity of facility to residential structures and residential zoning districts:* The property is located in the Corridor Commercial District (CCD-55) and acts as a buffer to the residential neighborhood north and east of the Princeton Apartments. A large majority of the residential buildings adjacent to this apartment building are three story multi-family structures.
- c) *Nature of uses on adjacent and nearby properties:* The subject property is located within a CCD-55 zone. The surrounding area has a wide variety of uses including residential of all types, commercial, office, and retail. The proposed installation will not generate any objectionable odor, fumes, glare, smoke, or dust nor require additional lighting or signage. Noise from the equipment will be minimal and should not be heard beyond the confines of the property where it will be placed. No increased traffic or hindrance to pedestrian movements will result from the proposed installation either. Furthermore, in connection with its FCC license, Sprint is prohibited from interfering with radio or television transmissions.
- d) *Surrounding topography and prominence of proposed facility:* Winter Hill is a broad hill that extends northwest along Broadway toward Magoun Square. The subject building is the tallest within the immediate area. The height regulation in the Corridor Commercial District (CCD-55) is 55 feet.
- e) *Surrounding tree cover and foliage:* Trees located in the immediate area will be unaffected by the proposed changes to the cellular equipment.
- f) *Design of tower, with particular reference to design characteristics that have the effect of reducing or eliminating visual obtrusiveness, as specified in Section 14.3:* Guidelines of Article 14 of the SZO state that antennas should be located more than 10 feet from above the roofline, should be located at a minimum of 10 feet from the roof edge and below a forty-five degree plane, beginning at the cornice of the building.

Of the 3 antennas proposed, 1 antenna is located less than 10 feet from a roof edge at 9'-1" from the rear edge of the building; however, this location is consistent with the previous Special Permit granted in 2005 and 2012. The proposed antennas and equipment cabinet are of similar size and appearance to the existing and the antennas will not exceed the height of the penthouse.

- g) *Location of tower, with particular reference to the existence of more suitable locations, as specified in Section 14.3:* The application is in compliance with this review criterion. The Applicant is proposing to add the antennas on an existing wireless telecommunications facility within a commercial corridor district. The height of the building at this site makes it an attractive location for wireless installations. The antennas will remain virtually hidden from view, due to the height of the building, and will not protrude above the roofline of the shelters, so the viewshed of the area will remain the same.
- h) *Proposed ingress and egress:* There is access to the roof through a penthouse. The ingress and egress to the site would not be impacted by the proposal.

- i) *Distance from existing facilities:* This proposal requests to add to an existing wireless facility not establish a new facility within the neighborhood.
- j) *Availability of suitable existing towers, poles, other structures, or alternative technologies, as discussed in Section 14.5.2. Section 14.5.2 states that no new sites for telecommunications facilities shall be permitted unless the Applicant demonstrates that existing sites cannot meet the Applicant's need:* The site where the Applicant is proposing to install the three new antennas is currently operating as a wireless telecommunications facility.

3. Consistency with Purposes: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal, as conditioned, is also consistent with those purposes established for the Corridor Commercial Districts (SZO §6.1.22) which are to promote appropriate infill development along heavily traveled transportation corridors, especially where those corridors meet at named Squares. Primary goals for these districts are to encourage active mid-rise commercial and residential uses that contribute to a multi-modal-friendly street; increase commercial investment in high-profile and accessible areas; preserve and complement historic structures; discourage inappropriate auto-oriented and trip-generating uses along transit corridors; and to promote pedestrian and bicycle activity. Staff finds that the replacement of the antennas and associated equipment, as conditioned, will not negatively impact the local commercial, office, or residential uses in the area.

Furthermore, the Staff finds that the proposal, as conditioned, is consistent with the purposes set forth in Article 14 of the SZO as conditioned in this report, to:

- a) *Protect residential areas and land uses from potential adverse impacts of towers and antennas;*
- b) *Encourage the location of telecommunication facilities in non-residential areas;*
- c) *Minimize the total number of towers and antennas throughout the community;*
- d) *Strongly encourage the joint use of new and existing tower sites as a primary option rather than construction of additional single-use towers;*
- e) *Encourage users of towers and antennas to located them in areas where the adverse impact on the community is minimal;*
- f) *Encourage users of towers and antennas to configure them in ways that minimize the adverse visual impact of the towers and antennas through careful design, siting, landscape screening, and innovative camouflaging techniques;*

- g) *Enhance the ability of the providers of telecommunications services to provide such services to the community quickly, effectively, and efficiently;*
- h) *Consider the public health and safety of communications facilities; and*
- i) *Avoid potential damage to adjacent properties from tower and antenna failure through sound engineering and careful siting of structures.*

4. Site and Area Compatibility: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."*

The subject property is located in the CCD 55 zoning district and is predominantly surrounded by other commercial properties. There is a small park located across Langmaid Avenue and several residential properties are located behind the Princeton. The majority of these residential buildings are multi-family and commonly known as triple-deckers. The subject property is the tallest building in the immediate area along Broadway in Winter Hill, which is why the Applicant chose this rooftop location in the past and is currently requesting to update the present equipment.

Staff anticipates few negative impacts from the proposed installation of the updated wireless telecommunications equipment. While the proposed changes will be minimally visible from the ground, the new equipment will not be any more visible than it is currently. The proposed changes to the equipment are of similar size, appearance and height, and, therefore, will not increase the visual impact of the wireless equipment on the property.

5. Adverse environmental impacts: *The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.*

The proposed installation will not generate any glare, light, smoke, dust or vibrations nor will it emit any noxious or hazardous materials or substances. Noise from the equipment will be minimal and should not be heard beyond the confines of the property where it will be placed. The proposed installation will be located on an existing building and therefore no pollution of waterways or ground water will occur. Additionally, the proposed installation will not be tied into any public sewer or private wastewater disposal system.

6. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*

The proposal will have no impact on existing affordable housing.

7. SomerVision Plan: *Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods, transform key opportunity areas, preserve and expand an integrated, balanced mix of safe, affordable and environmentally sound rental and homeownership units for households of all sizes and types from diverse social and economic groups; and, make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high-quality jobs. The areas in the SomerVision map that are designated as enhance and transform should most significantly contribute towards the SomerVision goals that are*

outlined in the table below. The areas marked as conserve are not expected to greatly increase the figures in the table since these areas are not intended for large scale change.

The project will not contribute to the measurable goals of the SomerVision plan but will allow a service provider to continue delivering wireless communications.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	<p>Approval is for 3 new panel antennas and remote radio heads and additional equipment. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>March 12, 2015</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March 5, 2014</td> <td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Photo Sims: Satellite Photo, Southwest View, West View Existing, West View Proposed, West-Northwest Existing, West-Northwest Proposed, North-Northwest, Northeast, East)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February 5, 2014</td> <td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Drawing Set: T-1 Title Sheet, C-1 Plot Plan, Z-1 Roof and Equipt Plans, Z-2 Elev & Antenna Plans, Z-3 Equipt Details & Cable Specs, Z-4 Mounting Details)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Any changes to the approved plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.</p>	Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	March 12, 2015	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	March 5, 2014	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Photo Sims: Satellite Photo, Southwest View, West View Existing, West View Proposed, West-Northwest Existing, West-Northwest Proposed, North-Northwest, Northeast, East)	February 5, 2014	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Drawing Set: T-1 Title Sheet, C-1 Plot Plan, Z-1 Roof and Equipt Plans, Z-2 Elev & Antenna Plans, Z-3 Equipt Details & Cable Specs, Z-4 Mounting Details)	BP/CO	ISD/ Plng.	
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Construction Impacts												

3	The Applicant shall at his expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed to DPW standard.	CO	DPW	
4	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P	
Miscellaneous				
5	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Cont.	ISD	
6	Any antenna that is not operated continuously for a period of twelve (12) months shall be considered abandoned, and the owner of such antenna shall remove the same. Failure to remove may result in a fine or penalty.	CONT.	ISD	
7	The applicant shall remove any of that carrier's unused or non-operating wireless equipment prior to installation.	Signoff	PIng.	
Public Safety				
8	The Applicant shall provide notice of intent to strictly comply with applicable State and Federal regulations regarding air quality including without limitation continuous dust control during demolition and construction.	CO	PIng/ OSE	
9	All antennas and related equipment must be painted, or repainted if necessary, to match, as closely as possible, the surrounding colors and materials of the building;	CO	PIng	
10	The Applicant shall use the existing raceway on the rear of the building and should not place additional wires overhead.	CO	Wiring Insp.	
Final Sign-Off				
11	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	PIng.	

