

# Zoning board approves wireless communication facility at water tower

By Erin Tiernan

The Zoning Board granted a special-use permit at its meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 17, for the installation of another wireless communication facility at the water tower property on Howland Avenue.

The 10 foot by 16 foot facility proposed by wireless service provider MetroPCS of Massachusetts will be constructed at the base of the water tower and will house apartment radio equipment, as well as provide increased service to residents on the south side of the island, said the company's attorney, Brian S. Grossman.

Several other wireless providers already use the property to house their local wireless telecommunications operations and, according to board member Richard Boren, pay "a lot of rent" to the town.

Grossman assured board members and residents that the facility will have minimal impact on the community, creating little noise, no trash, and no sewage or discharge, nor will it utilize any water resources. He said maintenance will occur once or twice monthly, and construction will not impede vehicle or pedestrian traffic.

According to the application, the facility includes six 86-foot panel antennas, which will be installed on the water tower. Although they exceed the 25-foot requirement for accessory structures on public land, Grossman said they will be painted the same color as the water tower to camouflage the antenna against the tower.

MetroPCS Massachusetts entered into the New England market in February 2009, and competes with wireless telecommunications providers such as T Mobile, AT&T, Sprint and Verizon.

Several Howland Avenue residents voiced concerns regarding the number of wireless facility structures currently located at the water tower and the resulting stress on their properties.

David Greene, of 104 Howland Ave., said he wants to know how his property will be affected by the addition of yet another wireless

facility.

"When will the build out be?" Greene asked. He said the area is a fairly crowded residential district and in the past, he has dealt with commercial company trucks using his property to gain access to their equipment on the adjoining property.

"I want to know the scope," he said. "How many more buildings? It doesn't all have to be at the water tower."

Another Howland Avenue resident, David Berry, agreed.

"Why is everything jammed up on Howland?" he asked.

Boren explained that telecommunications companies required access to create locations for their equipment, and that the zoning board was legally limited in what it could do to inhibit the construction of wireless facilities by the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

"This site offers the necessary height," he said. He said that if other public property was offered for construction of these telecommunications facilities, there would be 100-foot tall, free-standing structures littering the landscape.

Another major concern was

the effect on the aesthetic quality of the Howland Avenue neighborhood.

Board member Richard Allphin suggested that MetroPCS plant foliage along the north side of the complex in order to buffer residents' views of the facilities.

"I'm sensitive to the neighbors and keeping this place looking as neat as possible," he said. "We've got this giant operation really in the middle of a residential neighborhood and I don't see any reason why we can't ask them to help out with the visual problems in the neighborhood."

Boren argued that landscaping the property's perimeter was not the responsibility of MetroPCS. He said that since the town receives rent from MetroPCS and the other companies leasing space for telecommunications facilities, it is the town's responsibility.

Grossman said MetroPCS would be receptive to installing landscaping along its own equipment, but would "have concerns about responsibilities for landscaping the entire distance" along the northern perimeter.

## Redeem bridge tokens until Dec. 31

The R.I. Turnpike and Bridge Authority will redeem Newport Pell Bridge tokens until Dec. 31.

RITBA replaced the token toll-payment system with EZPass in January, 2009.

RITBA will pay 83 cents by check for each token returned by 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31. R.I. EZPass holders may choose to apply a credit to their EZPass accounts. If they choose this option, the redemption value of each token will be 91 cents.

Tokens may be redeemed at RITBA's customer service center on East Shore Road in Jamestown. The EZPass customer service center is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Call 423-0800 or visit [www.ritba.org](http://www.ritba.org) for more information.



## Grennan, Smith wed

Kelly Elizabeth Grennan and Richard "Rip" John Smith Jr. were married July 2 at St. Bernard's Church in Wickford.

The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Ellen Grennan of North Kingstown. The groom is the son of Richard and Michelle Smith of Jamestown.

The bride attended North Kingstown High School and James Madison University. She is employed as a seventh-grade science teacher at Cole Middle School in East Greenwich.

The groom attended North Kingstown High School, the University of Rhode Island and the University of Queensland in Australia. He is a consultant at Deloitte.

Kerri Champagne Smith and Ruth Englehard Burke, both childhood friends of the bride, were the matrons of honor. Bridesmaids were Megan Hanselman Spittler, Kaitlyn Shoener Rooney and Stefanie Smith, sister of the groom.

Jesse Barbera was the best man. Ushers were Timothy Smith, Dylan Ryder and Matthew Grennan, brother of the bride.

A reception was held at the Quidnessett Country Club and featured floral decorations created and designed by family friends, with many of the flowers cut from local gardens.

The couple honeymooned on safari in South Africa. They live in Jamestown.

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