



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

STAFF

MADELEINE MASTERS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*
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DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*
FREDERICK J. LUND, *SENIOR DRAFTSMAN*

Case #: ZBA 2008-15
Site: 39R Medford Street
Date: May 1, 2008
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Applicant Name: MetroPCS Massachusetts LLC
Applicant Address: 285 Billerica Road, Chelmsford, MA 01849
Property Owner Name: Bryce Greer
Property Owner Address: 357 Neck Road, N. Weymouth, MA 02181
Alderman: Heuston

Legal Notice: The applicant seeks Special Permit Approval under SZO §7.11.15.1a for the installation of a wireless communications facility.

Zoning District/Ward: IP / 2
Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO§7.11.15.3
Date of Application: March 28, 2008
Date(s) of Meetings/Public Hearing: (PB: May 1, 2008 / ZBA: May 7, 2008)
Date of Decision: N/A
Vote: N/A

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The property is a 28,500 s.f. parcel located within an Industrial Park (IP) District. On the property is a 54,148 g.s.f. self-storage facility operating under the name Planet Self Storage. The rear of the property is adjacent to railroad tracks and a Business A zoning district.

2. Proposal: The applicant, MetroPCS, is proposing to install 1200 s.f. of wireless communications equipment in the interior of the existing warehouse. Tenant space would be retrofitted to allow for the proposed equipment. The applicant will be providing wireless service to Somerville through a third party antenna and fiber optic network and does not anticipate this facility needing traditional wireless antennas. Exterior changes would be the addition of an 5'5" high GPS antenna and two 4'3" HVAC condensers that would be mounted on the roof towards the rear of the building.

3. Nature of Application: Under SZO §7.11.15.3 establishment of a wireless communications facility requires a Special Permit approval.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The area immediately surrounding the property has a mix of industrial uses. Railroad tracks are located along the rear of the building and additional industrial uses are located across the tracks.

5. Impacts on Abutting Properties: The GPS antenna and two HVAC roof top systems would be visible from abutting properties. The surrounding area is relatively flat and the rooftop components will be set back from the edge of the building, which will limit the impacts of the exterior systems.

6. Green Building Practices: None indicated.

7. Parking: Additional parking would not be required.

6. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Deputy Chief Steve Keenan has reviewed the application and would require the installation of a manual fire alarm pull station at the exit door in the equipment room (see sheet number A-2) as well as the installation of smoke detection devices and audio/visual horn strobe units in the equipment room. This is currently a storage facility so it is fully sprinklered.

Alderman Heuston: Has been contacted and has not yet provided comments

Historic Preservation: Kristi Chase has reviewed the application and has concluded that the project will have no adverse effect upon historic properties.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO§7.11.15.3):

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 such uses in the City with minimal harm to the public health, safety, and general welfare."

Staff finds that the proposal would not be substantially more detrimental to the area than the existing structure and minimal harm would be imposed upon the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff finds that the proposed change would only affect about 1200 s.f. of the structure and the building would remain predominantly as the existing self-storage facility. Electrical Engineer and Radio Frequency Specialist, Kamal Johari, stated in a letter to the ZBA that the, "proposed facility complies with all applicable Federal and State standards, including those regarding radio-frequency emissions."

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 Staff finds that the proposal **is consistent** with the purposes set forth in Article 1 of the Zoning Ordinance; and, with those purposes established for the Industrial P (IP) zoning district in which the property is located, namely "(t)o provide opportunity for development in an environment free of excessive noise, odor, smoke, dust, glare, heat, visual disarray, or other nuisance." The majority of the operations will be located within the existing building and will be undetectable from the surrounding area.

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."

Staff finds the project to be compatible with the surrounding area and land uses. The proposed use is a passive business use and keeps with the current office, manufacturing, and warehousing uses in the area. The component of the proposal that will affect the exterior of the building will be located on the roof of the structure. The two HVAC units will be located at least 12 feet away from the roof's edge and the GPS antenna will be located at least 40 feet away from the edge of the building. Staff finds the nature of these components and the distance from the roof's edge adequate for reducing the visual affects on the surrounding area.

5. Review Criteria for Telecommunications Facilities

In addition to those standards outlined in Section 5.1 for the granting of special permits, the SPGA shall consider the following factors in determining whether to issue a special permit for a telecommunications facility:

- a) *Height of proposed facility:* The existing building has two roof tops at different heights (48' and 38'). The proposed GPS antenna and AC units would be mounted on the lower rooftop. The GPS antenna will extend 5'5" and the AC units will extend 4'3" from the lower roof.
- b) *Proximity of facility to residential structures and residential zoning districts:* There is a Residence B zoning district and residential structures approximately 300' from the proposed location of the antennas and HVAC units.
- c) *Nature of uses on adjacent and nearby properties:* There are limited uses directly adjacent to the site including industrial office, office, industrial warehouse and commercial retail uses.

- d) *Surrounding topography and prominence of proposed facility:* The elevation of the area is low and the surrounding area is relatively flat, limiting the prominence of the facility. The proposed rooftop equipment is partially visible from only one vantage point and is not prominent from any public way.
- e) *Surrounding tree cover and foliage:* This area is largely devoid of any tree cover or natural features.
- 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:* Not applicable.
- g) *Location of tower, with particular reference to the existence of more suitable locations, as specified in Section 14.3:* The proposed location of the facility is an industrially zoned area and the siting of the antenna and HVAC units away from the building edges will work to conceal these components and limit their visual impact. The antenna is setback over 40 feet from the building edge.
- h) *Proposed ingress and egress:* Ingress and egress to the site will be at the existing curb cut for 39R Medford Street on Medford Street. Access to the equipment and rooftop components would be through the main entrance to the existing self-storage facility.
- i) *Distance from existing facilities:* (See figures B and C)
- j) *Availability of suitable existing towers, poles, other structures, or alternative technologies, as discussed in Section 14.5.2:* The attached report prepared by the applicant's professional radio frequency engineer indicates that this facility is to be used in conjunction with an alternative technology system proposed by a third party. The MetroPCS facility will be located within the existing industrial site and is therefore compliant with the provisions of Section 14.5.2.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under SZO §7.11.15.3

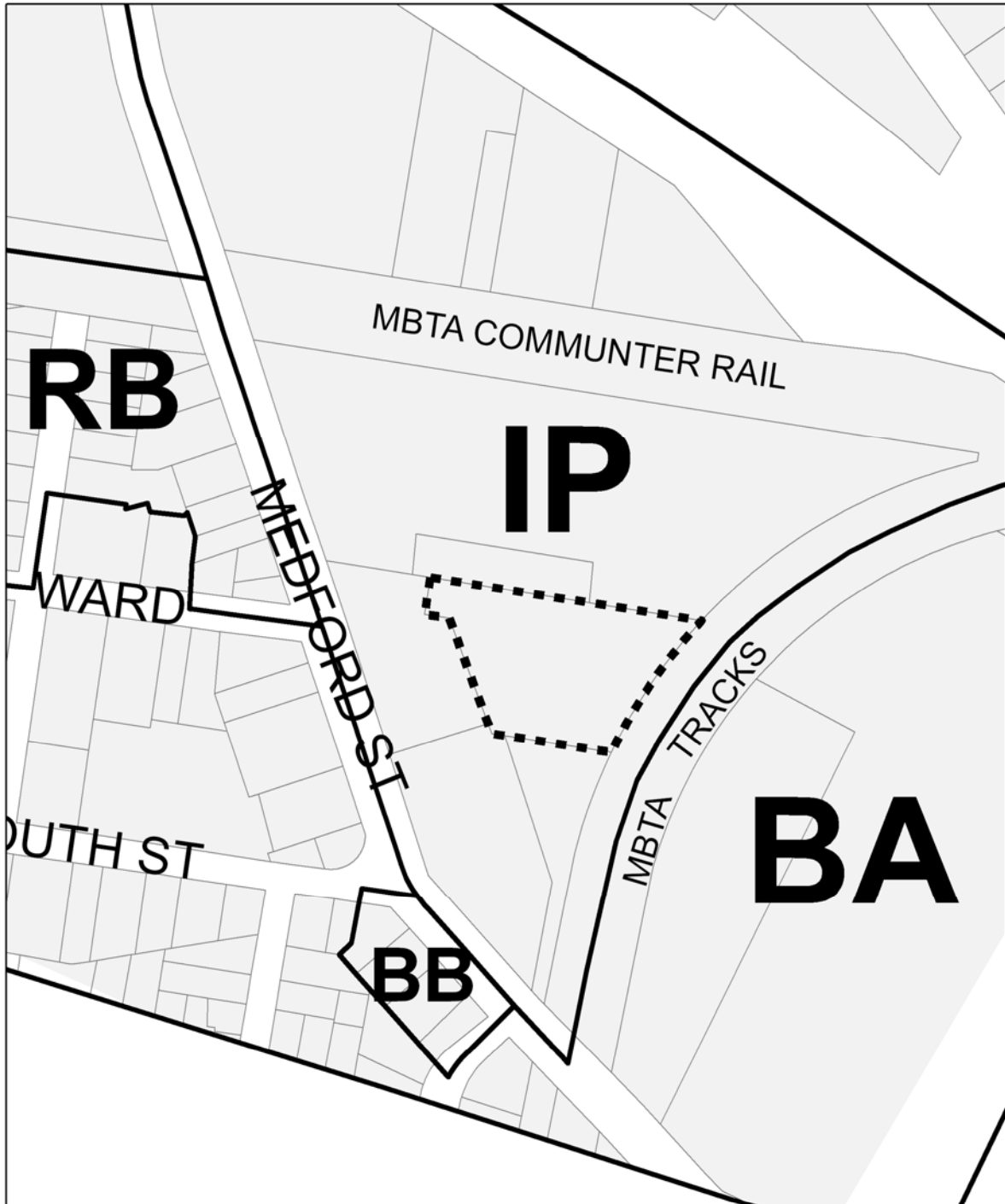
Based on the above findings, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

Staff finds that this application complies with the requirements for granting a special permit as set forth under §5.1.4 and Article 14.

Although the Planning Staff is recommending approval of the requested Special Permit, the following conditions should be added to the permits:

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	Approval is for the establishment of a 1200 s.f. wireless communications equipment facility. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant and/or its contractor: <table><tr><th>Date</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>March 18, 2008</td><td>Initial application and materials submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>March 28, 2008</td><td>Equipment & Ladder Plans (A-3)</td></tr><tr><td>April 28, 2008</td><td>P.E. materials, Plans and Elevations (T-1, Z-1, Z-2, Z-3)</td></tr></table> Any changes to the approved use, site plan and/or elevations must receive ZBA approval.	Date	Submission	March 18, 2008	Initial application and materials submitted to the City Clerk's Office	March 28, 2008	Equipment & Ladder Plans (A-3)	April 28, 2008	P.E. materials, Plans and Elevations (T-1, Z-1, Z-2, Z-3)	BP/CO	PLNG.	
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2	<i>Compliance with Noise Control Ordinance.</i> Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy Permit for the installation of the wireless telecommunications facility, the Applicant shall submit to the Inspectional Services Department, with a copy to the Zoning Board of Appeals, a sound level measurement certified as accurate by a professional acoustician and shall perform such sound level measurements six months after issuance of the certificate of occupancy, with subsequent sound level measurements annually on or before the anniversary date of the original six month measurement to document that all of the Applicant's installed equipment complies and continues to comply with the decibel level standards established by the City of Somerville, Noise Control Ordinance. The Applicant shall provide the results of such measurements and certify that the facility complies with the decibel level standards established by the City of Somerville, Noise Control Ordinance, with a copy to the Zoning Board of Appeals.	CONT.	ISD									
3	<i>Compliance with Federal Communications Commission Guidelines for Human Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields.</i> To ensure compliance with the standards established by the Federal Communications Commission Office of Engineering	CONT.	BOH									

	and Technology ("FCC") in OET Bulletin 65 as adopted by Massachusetts Department of Public Health under 105 CMR 122.021, the Applicant shall perform measurements, within two (2) months of the date that the Applicant's wireless telecommunications facility commences operation and at intervals of twelve (12) months thereafter, to establish that the Applicant's wireless telecommunications facility complies and continues to comply with the FCC guidelines and applicable state regulations for human exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic fields for human exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic fields. The Applicant shall provide the results of such measurements with certification of compliance to the City of Somerville, Health Department, with a copy to the Zoning Board of Appeals.			
4	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 within ninety (90) days of notice from the City of Somerville informing the owner of such abandonment.	CONT.	ISD	
5	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final sign-off on the building permit to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	FINAL SIGN OFF	PLNG.	



39R Medford Street