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C E N T R A L P I N E B A R R E N S
C O M M I S S I O N M E E T I N G

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HOMELAND TOWERS COMPELLING
PUBLIC NEED CORE PRESERVATION AREA
HARDSHIP WAIVER APPLICATION

-----x

July 16, 2025
2:53 p.m.

4 West 2nd Street
Riverhead, New York

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

July 16, 2025

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

JUDITH E. JAKOBSEN, Executive Director

TIMOTHY C. HUBBARD, Riverhead Supervisor

DAVID WILCOX, Southampton Town Representative

MARIA Z. MOORE, Southampton Town Supervisor

MATTHEW CHARTERS, Riverhead Representative

JENNIFER JUENGST, Suffolk County Representative

DAVID J. PANICO, Brookhaven Town Supervisor

JULIE HARGRAVE, Joint Planning and Policy Manager

TARA MURPHY, Environmental Planner

JOHN C. MILAZZO, Commission Counsel

ANGELA BROWN-WALTON, Administrative Assistant

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2 MS. JAKOBSEN: This is the
3 continuation of the public hearing held on
4 May 21, 2025 for Homeland Towers Compelling
5 Public Need for a Core Hardship application.

6 The Commission members and reps
7 should enter their appearances for record
8 with their name and who they are
9 representing.

10 MR. WILCOX: David Wilcox, Town of
11 Southamptn representative.

12 MS. MOORE: Maria Moore. Southamptn
13 Town Supervisor.

14 MR. HUBBARD: Timothy Hubbard.
15 Riverhead Town Supervisor.

16 MS. JUENGST: Jennifer Juengst,
17 Suffolk County Town Executive representative.

18 MR. PANICO: Dan Panico, Brookhaven
19 Town Supervisor.

20 MR. CHARTERS: Matt Charters, Town of
21 Riverhead Designated Representative.

22 MS. JAKOBSEN: Okay. Does the
23 Commission staff have anything they'd like to
24 provide in terms of updates or additional
25 information for the record at this time?

MS. HARGRAVE: Just a brief overview of the project and where we are.

Just to summarize for the Commission and the public the project and then through to date. Again, back on March 5, 2025 the Commission received a Core Preservation and Compelling Public Need Waiver Application for development in the Core Preservation Area. The project is to develop a 150 foot tall wireless communications tower with a 3,000 square foot equipment compound and 1,500 gallons of propane storage capacity for an emergency generator.

The tower would serve Verizon and other private carriers, including Dish Wireless and two future carrier. The project site is 6.1 acres. It is in the CR 60 residential zoning district in Flanders, in the Town of Southampton and the Core Preservation Area. The site is developed in a previously nonconforming junkyard, surrounded by a significant amount of open space against County open space. Development in the Core is prohibited without a hardship.

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2 Other options in the Core include the Pine
3 Barrens Credit Program. This applicant is a
4 lessee and does not own the property. The
5 owner has not applied for a letter of
6 interpretation for a Pine Barrens credit. It
7 could be eligible, if it was cleaned up.
8 Again, there's no letter of interpretation on
9 the record.

10 The project is classified as an
11 unlisted action pursuant to SEQRA. On
12 March 16th the Commission coordinated for
13 lead agency and scheduled a public hearing
14 for April 16th. After an extension by the
15 applicant, a hearing was held on May 21st and
16 was left open to continue last month on
17 June 18th. There was another extension
18 request for the continuation of the hearing
19 to occur today, July 16th.

20 On June 18th the Commission
21 established lead agency and the SEQRA
22 determination is pending. The Town responded
23 in the coordination process comments,
24 including the potential it has on the
25 character, land use, and visual and scenic

resources, and conflicts with the zoning code in the Town Wireless Master Plan, and it being in an area defined as an avoidance area in that plan; and the precedence of any nature and the requirements for a site plan special exception approval and potential variances, including adding another use to the site, which is a pre-existing nonconforming use.

The State DOT responded indicating the project would require a highway work permit. There is a study, and the State Historic Preservation Office indicated there are no archeological resources that would be impacted by the project.

The application included a review of other properties that were investigated for this project, including County owned parkland where the County indicated, according to the applicant, that they were not interested in pursuing a lease with Verizon. The applicant also looked at other sites, including existing cell towers, water tanks were Verizon is already co-located, and also

privately owned properties where land owners did not respond to their requests.

The SEQRA process allows for alternatives to be explored. And there are potential alternatives, additional alternatives that could be made available to the project, including alternatives such as the development under the existing zoning district which could allow approximately three residences. Alternative technologies to reduce a visual impact, including exploring other sites outside of the Core on the proposed site on the north side of Flanders Road. Alternative technologies may include one or more shorter poles to achieve the same coverage that's needed; so, a few poles that are shorter, such as utility poles. We distributed an article that recently, on May 22nd, there was an article in the East Hampton Star that discussed this type of technology being developed in the Town of East Hampton to address coverage issues and protect the character of the area and reduce visual impacts.

After the continuation of the hearing today, the hearing would be closed. A comment period, up to the Commission, of five days or seven days for written comment period to allow the public comment on the material that was supplied by the applicant recently, and the new material that was submitted by the applicant on July 22nd, which the applicant is here to cover and include letters from Verizon recognizing the gap in service.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Do we want to add that East Hampton article as an exhibit?

MR. MILAZZO: Yes. We'll mark it whatever we're up to.

MS. JAKOBSEN: I think it's G.

MS. HARGRAVE: Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, the above-referred to document was marked as Exhibit G, in evidence, as of this date.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: What is the title of the exhibit?

MS. HARGRAVE: Small Cell Solution to Improve Poor Service.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Is there a date?

MS. HARGRAVE: May 22, 2025.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Thank you.

Does the applicant want to provide any additional information, at this time?

MR. GAUDIOSO: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair and Commission. Robert Gaudio with the Law Office of Snyder & Snyder on behalf of the applicants, Verizon Wireless and Homeland Towers.

Without reiterating everything that we discussed back at the May hearing, I do want to touch on a few high level things. This is a very important application, for a number of reasons. There's a public utility facility to serve a significant gap in service, particularly along Flanders Road from the location in Flanders all the way through Hubbard County Park and the surrounding areas. This is not a small gap in service. We actually submitted a report of coverage maps. We did a dry test with a crane and we actually tested the signal. This is an area that spans not only the road,

residences, but also, obviously, all of the surrounding parkland which is, obviously, heavily wooded.

What we discussed last month were the visual renderings. We did a full visual resource evaluation that showed the minimal visual visibility of this facility. We proposed a number of different alternatives of your standard monopole of which there are in the area, but we also showed the internally mounted cell pole, and that's in the package. We submitted, obviously, the concurrences from the New York State Historic Preservation Office. There is no impact on historic resource or archeological resources.

We looked at numerous alternative sites. We have Mr. Ray Vergati's affidavit with all the alternative sites that we looked at. Again, there's an area that is along Flanders Road. This is the over six acre property which historically has been used and has a certificate of occupancy for a junkyard. It's the one commercially used property in the area. If we were to go

1 further to the west, quite frankly, we would
2 be right next to the residential
3 neighborhood. So, we pushed as far away as
4 we could go. If we go to the east, that's
5 all parkland, and we're not allowed to go
6 into the parkland for various reasons. We
7 looked at all the different alternatives both
8 inside the Core and outside the Core, and
9 this is not only the least intrusive, but
10 really the only alternative available.
11

12 We also submitted a report confirming
13 that the facility is safe from an engineering
14 standpoint. We submitted a structural report
15 that we discussed. The facility is designed
16 to stay within the property. We submitted an
17 FAA determination that there is no lighting
18 required. We submitted the full site plan
19 confirming the wetlands, no water causing
20 impacts. We also confirmed there were no
21 impacts to threatened or native species.

22 Since the last meeting, there were a
23 couple different comments that the Commission
24 had wanted to address, and we wanted to take
25 the time to address that. So, we appreciate

you holding the hearing open until today.

We submitted a letter from Mark Harris who spoke at the last hearing; he is with Verizon Wireless. In the letter he confirmed the fact that not only businesses and individuals use Verizon service, but also very important emergency communications. So, for example, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Offices uses Verizon. Both the Town and Village of Southampton Fire Departments use Verizon's service, and the Brookhaven Police Department, by way of example, uses Verizon's service.

So, this facility will be designed to support all wireless carriers. We have Verizon on the application. We submitted a letter from Dish, we have an application in from AT&T, and we have also shown this to T-Mobile, and we believe they will join as well. So, the tower and the compound and the base and the design are with all those carriers. As we said at the last meeting, Homeland Towers makes its facilities available for municipal agencies to place

their emergency communication antennas on the tower if necessary.

We submitted a letter from Mr. Neil McDonald. There was a staff comment about a propane tank. Number one, there is a fire hydrant right across the street. Number two, if the Commission so desires, we would place the propane tanks underground, which would further secure them. So, we made that offer as well.

We submitted a letter from Mr. Ray Vergati, Homeland Towers, and the property owner. There was a concern from Southampton's standpoint that the property is a junkyard. The property has been substantially cleaned up. I think about 90 percent of the junk has been removed. There is a new fence installed. The front of the property is fully landscaped, and we are also proposing additional landscaping. We made those letters as part of the record.

We also submitted confirmation from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the DEC, that

there are no records of rare or state listed plants or animals or significant communities on the property. And we confirmed that we are not removing any trees, so there is no impact on the endangered or threatened bats.

Regarding alternative technologies. We did address this in our report. It is part of the Southampton Code. In our planning report that you do have, it includes the report from V-Comm, our professional radio frequency engineer. They looked at the issue of alternative technology, they looked at the issue of the height of the facility. They confirmed the facility is the minimum height.

They confirmed what we call the DAS system, a Distributed Antenna System, where you put antennas on utility poles. That's a fine solution in certain circumstances. If you're in a dense residential area, I assume, such as the East Hampton area, like they're proposing. College campuses, sometimes stadiums, they'll use DAS systems. This is a large area. I think even in the materials

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2 that you marked in Exhibit G, which was a
3 newspaper article, conceded to the fact that
4 these facilities cover a very small area,
5 about 500 feet. So, even if you put antennas
6 on the utilities poles, if those utility
7 poles could support those antennas, that
8 signal would not be able reach into the
9 parks, that signal would not be able to reach
10 into the surrounding areas, it would only
11 cover a small strip along the roadway, and we
12 would need one approximately every 500 feet.
13 So, it's not a feasible alternative
14 technology. It does have its uses in certain
15 circumstances, but significantly not in this
16 circumstance.

17 Also, if you look at the utility
18 poles along Flanders Road, they are very low
19 in height. This is all detailed in the
20 alternative technology report, which I
21 believe is Exhibit D of the planning report
22 that we submitted. On page 13, it talks
23 about the height of the utility poles. On
24 top of the utility is a wire. So you would
25 have to go below the top, you couldn't go

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2 tremendous job. Mutual aide was called in.
3 Those agencies have to coordinate, and they
4 coordinate with emergency communications, and
5 they use Verizon service in those instances.

6 So this, we believe, is a very
7 important project and we respectfully request
8 an approval. I'll be happy to answer any
9 questions you have today.

10 MR. PANICO: So, Verizon is going to
11 allow other carriers to co-locate on the
12 pole, essentially?

13 MR. GAUDIOSO: Even better than that.
14 Homeland Towers owns the pole; they are a
15 co-applicant. They are going to allow it
16 and, in fact, they are encouraging it. We
17 already submitted a letter from Dish; they
18 are going to go on the pole. A&T has made
19 an application to us to go on the pole, and
20 we already forwarded this to T-Mobile, and we
21 believe eventually they would go on the pole.

22 So, not only the pole, but also the
23 ground area, and all of the utilities coming
24 in would be designed and constructed for all
25 four carriers. If any of the towns emergency

1 service entities needed to place equipment on
2 the pole, we would allow that as well.

3 MR. PANICO: Okay.

4 MS. JUENGST: Is the owner going to
5 continue to use this land for a junkyard?

6 MR. GAUDIOSO: I think the intention
7 is probably to do something else. I don't
8 want to speak for the owner, but we did
9 submit a letter to the owner confirming the
10 fact that it is already cleaned it up. It's
11 90 percent cleaned up. If you look at the
12 photographs from the original aerial, the
13 entire property was covered in junk, and now
14 90 percent is taken out. We submitted
15 photographs from a month ago, and it's been
16 cleaned up even more since then. We think
17 it's a tremendous improvement.

18 MR. PANICO: What is the footprint of
19 the licensed or leased area you are taking?

20 MR. GAUDIOSO: 3,000 square feet of
21 the 6.18 acre of the property. A very small
22 portion of the property.

23 MR. HUBBARD: This tower is designed
24 to collapse down inside itself?
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2 MR. GAUDIOSO: That's correct,
3 supervisor. We submitted a letter from our
4 engineers saying the tower would deflect upon
5 itself and stay on the property.

6 MS. JAKOBSEN: Any other questions?

7 MS. JUENGST: What's the general
8 coverage area?

9 MR. GAUDIOSO: We submitted maps to
10 show it. What we did is not only did we do
11 propagation maps where we used a computer to
12 predict it, but we actually put that crane up
13 there and we put an antenna to see exactly
14 where it would cover. This was very
15 important to confirm the height of the tower.
16 Basically, it covers the gap. There's the
17 firehouse to the west that has a tower, and
18 then on the other side of the park is where
19 the next tower is, and this will cover that
20 gap between those two towers all along
21 Flanders Road. As I mentioned before, not
22 just Flanders Road. There is a residential
23 area, there are some scattered homes in
24 between, and also the parkland on either side
25 as well.

MS. JUENGST: Thank you.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Any other questions?

Does the public have any questions at this time?

(No response was heard.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: I guess at this point we would close the hearing. Do we keep the comment period for seven days open.

MR. MILAZZO: A week, ten days. And then I think there's a SEQRA determination.

MS. HARGRAVE: December 17th.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Can I have a motion to close the hearing and to leave the comment period open for seven days?

MS. JUENGST: So moved.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Is there a second?

MS. MOORE: Second.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Motion by Ms. Juengst, second by Supervisor Moore.

All in favor.

(WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous affirmative vote of the Board.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: Any opposed?

(No response was heard.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: Motion carries
unanimously.

MR. GAUDIOSO: Thank you very much.
See you in September. Have a nice summer.

MS. JAKOBSEN: That's brings us down
to the second public comment period on the
agenda. Is there anyone in the public that
would like to provide comment at this time?

(No response was heard.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: So, we need to go into
closed session to discuss litigation matters.

Can I have a motion to go into closed
session?

MS. MOORE: So moved.

MS. JUENGST: Second.

MS. JAKOBSEN: Motion by Supervisor
Moore, second by Ms. Juengst.

All in favor.

(WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous
affirmative vote of the Board.)

(No response was heard.)

MS. JAKOBSEN: Any opposed?

Motion carries unanimously.

(Time Ended: 3:12 p.m.)

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July 16, 2025

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, BETHANNE MENNONNA, a Notary Public
within and for the State of New York do
hereby certify that the foregoing is a true
and accurate transcript of the proceedings,
as taken stenographically by myself to the
best of my ability, at the time and place
aforementioned.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand this 29th day of July, 2025.

BethAnne Mennonna

BETHANNE MENNONNA