

Caitlin Schafer - Public Comment Support for AT&T Cell Tower at Hartstone

From: Dave Dick <dave@hartstonebiblecamp.org>
To: "pbs@mendocinocounty.org" <pbs@mendocinocounty.org>, "Mendocino County:P...
Date: 6/26/2019 6:14 PM
Subject: Public Comment Support for AT&T Cell Tower at Hartstone
Cc: Dave Dick <dave@hartstonebiblecamp.org>
Attachments: PastedGraphic-3.tiff; Dave Dick Support Letter to Planning Commision Board.pdf

Dear Planning Commission Board,

(Please see attachment to post for Public Comment)

My name is Dave Dick and I am the Director for Hartstone Bible Camp. I live at 18050 Van Arsdale Road, right next to the location of the proposed AT&T cell site. I manage Hartstone Bible Camp at 17856 Van Arsdale Road, and I give my full support as both a resident of the neighborhood and as a representative of the Hartstone Bible Camp. I have lived in Potter Valley since 2009 and the camp has been in existence since 1967.

When AT&T first approached us about putting a cell tower on the property, I was ecstatic, but I quickly learned that there were beliefs out there that cell towers were dangerous and posed a safety risk. After a year of study and deliberation with the Board of Directors for the camp, we came to the conclusion that there is no scientific proof or evidence to support those claims. These speculations are unfounded and unnecessarily skeptical. The FCC, FDA, the American Cancer Society, and World Health Organization, all attest to this. I am completely convinced and confident that this tower poses no safety risk for my family, my staff, the guests that visit Hartstone and the neighbors in the surrounding area. After the Board of Directors for Hartstone and I came to this conclusion, we gave AT&T permission to pursue approval with the Mendocino County Building and Planning Department to place a cell tower on our property.

As a California sanctioned 501(c)3 Non-Profit organization, the monthly lease payment that will be received from AT&T to Hartstone is an appropriate means by which to support children and families from Mendocino County and beyond that visit this beautiful location. Instead of these funds going to support an individual land owner, the funds will benefit the service that Hartstone Bible Camp provides to families all across northern California.

I was unable to attend the last hearing on May 16th but I was able to watch the recording of the meeting. I was surprised by the outcome because of AT&T's thorough adherence to the requirements set by the Planning and Building Department. It seems that everything would have been approved. I know that much time (2 years) and money has been spent in order to finalize the permit.

I know that some opposition is to be expected, but I am so thankful that the Planning Commission Board agreed to have another hearing in order to witness the overwhelming support from the community for this project before they made their final decision. Of the four people that spoke in opposition to the tower during the public comment, only one of them actually lives here and is a part of this neighborhood. That person is Joan Torreano, but she lives outside of the setback waiver (a half mile away). Another property owner, Kari Williams Reba, does own a piece of property that is within the setback but I would like to give some clarity on the comments that she made. She gave the Planning Commission Board the false impression that the entire neighborhood was in opposition to this tower going in when in fact this is exactly the opposite. Out of the seven neighbors within the setback, she said that only three have signed and that four were opposed. This is not true. Four neighbors have actually signed.

I have spoken with all the neighbors within the setback and one of these neighbors has told me that they are indifferent to whether or not the tower goes in, they just didn't want to sign anything. The other neighbor told me that they were in favor of the tower but that they didn't feel comfortable signing anything. This leaves only one person left-Kari Williams Reba, who is in opposition. Here's the shocker, she doesn't even live here! She has lived and worked in Oakland for what I believe has been the last two years. I feel that her complaints were unfounded and should not be taken into consideration because she does not live here or participate in our neighborhood.

Also, Hartstone has a great relationship with all of its neighbors except for the two neighbors that spoke in opposition at the hearing; both have a past history of problems that the camp has had to deal with. (If desired, details can be provided) I believe in part that their representation at the hearing has other ulterior motives.

In regard to the setback, its context has to do with aesthetic visibility. None of the seven properties are able to see the tower. There is literally a forest of trees between them and the tree tops of the mountain. The location of the tower is the only ideal location to be able to maximize the efficiency to serve the most amount of people.

In layman's terms, Hartstone's 95 acres sticks out like a high peninsula in the middle of the two mountain ranges, making it the best location for the tower. With the hundreds of people that congregate on the water at the public access below the bridge that crosses the Eel River as well as

the hundreds of campers that come to Hartstone every summer, the need for safety services that this cell tower will provide makes it a necessity.

Not only will it provide the much-needed safety, but it will also be a benefit to all of the neighbors financially. The whole community will be able to save money on their phone bills and internet and this will also increase everyone's property values by having these services available.

If this tower is not approved, we may never have another opportunity like this again. President Obama put this grant into motion to help people like us. We need this and if it's not approved, there's no way that it would be cost effective for a cell service provider to spend the money to invest in a tower in our area because of its low population density.

I've had almost every neighbor express to me their excitement and support for this tower and I hope that you will please approve the services of AT&T to help our community be a safer place for all of us to enjoy.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our community. God bless

Sincerely, Dave Dick

Executive Director, Hartstone Bible Camp

The following page is a list of benefits this cell tower will bring to our community.

Potter Valley Cell Site - For the greater good of Mendocino County:

1) First Responders: Hartstone is a certified California State vendor and we were just used by Cal Fire for staging purposes during the Potter Valley/Redwood Valley Complex Fire. We had no broadband service available for these first responders. They had to use our business and residential landlines to call out.

2) Mass Notification Alert System: It would be nice to receive alerts from the Mendocino County's Mass Notification Alert System when there is a disaster. Not having broadband service here restricts faster communication in this area. During the Redwood Complex fire, we received a phone call from a concerned friend in the middle of the night alerting us about the fire. When we communicated with several neighbors,

none of them knew about the fire until we told them. This would have been problematic if the fire had originated closer to us and we needed to evacuate in the night.

3) Law Enforcement and Residents Safety: Law Enforcement emergency broadband services are unavailable in this area. My family along with other Hartstone staff families and the many children and families that come as guests to Hartstone are surrounded by neighbors that are involved in criminal activity. With the production and distribution of drugs from the many of my neighbors, this has brought crime all around us. From people trespassing through my property to rob neighbor's marijuana gardens, vandalizing, and even cases of robbery. Furthermore, there have been multiple instances where people under the influence of mind-altering substances have knocked on my door in the middle of the night to ask for a ride, use my phone, etc. For the safety of my wife and children, it would be nice if law enforcement could be reached more quickly and effectively. Officers would also have the benefit of cellular service to have a reliable line of communication, should they need it for backup assistance.

4) Deter and Identify: Some of the neighbors that live out here, live here because they want to be "off the grid" and don't want local and governmental authorities to know where they are and what they are doing. They oppose broadband service in this area as a way to keep in hiding. Hopefully this could deter these types of individuals from coming here.

5) Faster Response for Emergencies: As the director of the Hartstone Bible Camp, I have the privilege of having many children and families come out and enjoy the beauty of the mountains above Potter Valley. We have 95 acres that I am responsible to steward and to provide the safest environment possible for my guests. From campers swimming in the Eel River to hiking the top part of our property, I am concerned, that should an emergency happen, it could take me 10-15 minutes before I could access a landline phone and call for help. Allergic reactions, bee stings, food allergies, and rattlesnake bites are all things that I have to address in looking out for the care and safety of my staff and guests. I also know that in the summer time, there are hundreds of people that congregate on the water at the public access below the bridge that crosses the Eel River. Having emergency cell phone service available there would be a tremendous safety provision. There are also many broke down vehicle incidents out here, probably because of the poor road conditions in Potter Valley and over the hill, that having access to vehicle help services, would be a major benefit as well.

6) Vehicle Safety: Because there is no cell reception, many of the residents and some of my guest campers have to drive to the top of the mountain to check messages and make calls. This has become a dangerous area with cars being parked awkwardly at this conspicuous "Y" intersection. I would be curious to see how many traffic incidents have occurred at this location plus the danger of many people checking their devices as soon as they crest the hill and start coming down a very windy, dangerous road into Potter Valley.

7) Storm safety: Almost every year-if not twice a year- we have a storm that brings trees down on power lines. There have been times when it has taken weeks before we had electricity and phone service restored. A cell tower would help in these situations, being that they are equipped with backup generators for when the power goes out.

***Additional side benefits:**

-Internet: The only internet availability out here is through satellite internet which is extremely slow and very expensive. I spend over \$300 a month and I am very dissatisfied with the speed and restrictions of the available satellite internet service providers. Having a broadband service provider here will allow everyone in this area to save money and enjoy faster speeds.

-Financial Savings: Another benefit is the financial savings that the majority of folks out here could have by not having to pay two phone bills. I would assume that most of the folks out here already have cell phones, (I'm pretty sure because almost every time I drive up the mountain, I see people coming down with their phone on their ear). So, if they have a cell phone bill, they probably have a landline phone bill too since their cell phones don't work over the hill. I have one business and three residential landlines for Hartstone that I pay \$195 for. I pay \$260 for my family cell phone plan and I probably use half of what I could get from it by living in a currently dead cell phone coverage area. So, all this to say: the community could save a lot of money on its phone bills.

Not to us,

Dave Dick, Director

Hartstone Bible Camp

17856 Van Arsdale Road

Potter Valley, CA 95469

[\(707\) 743-1621](tel:7077431621) Camp

www.hartstonebiblecamp.org