

**Ann Machado - Concerns relating to Verizon's October 20, 2015, Conditional Use Appeal Application for 1877 Congress Street, Portland**

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**From:** Michael Rogers <michael.rogers66@gmail.com>  
**To:** <amachado@portlandmaine.gov>, <edsuslovic@portlandmaine.gov>, <estrimlin...>  
**Date:** 12/8/2015 11:11 AM  
**Subject:** Concerns relating to Verizon's October 20, 2015, Conditional Use Appeal Application for 1877 Congress Street, Portland

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Dear Portland Zoning Board of Appeals:

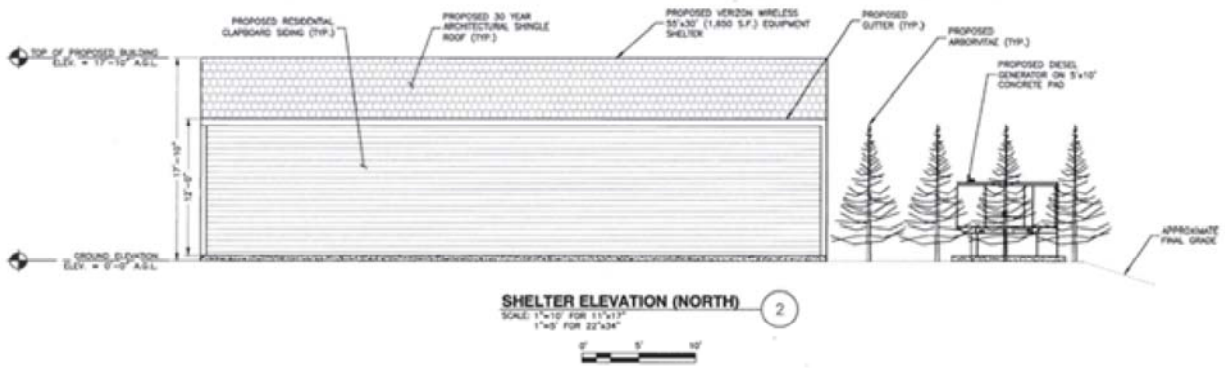
I am an abutter to 1877 Congress Street, Portland, Maine. I live at 66 River's Edge Drive (Lot 9) in the Stroudwater Farm subdivision. I have the following concerns relating to Verizon's Conditional Use Appeal application dated October 20, 2015.

**1) The following is the last of Portland's three standards for a Conditional Use:**

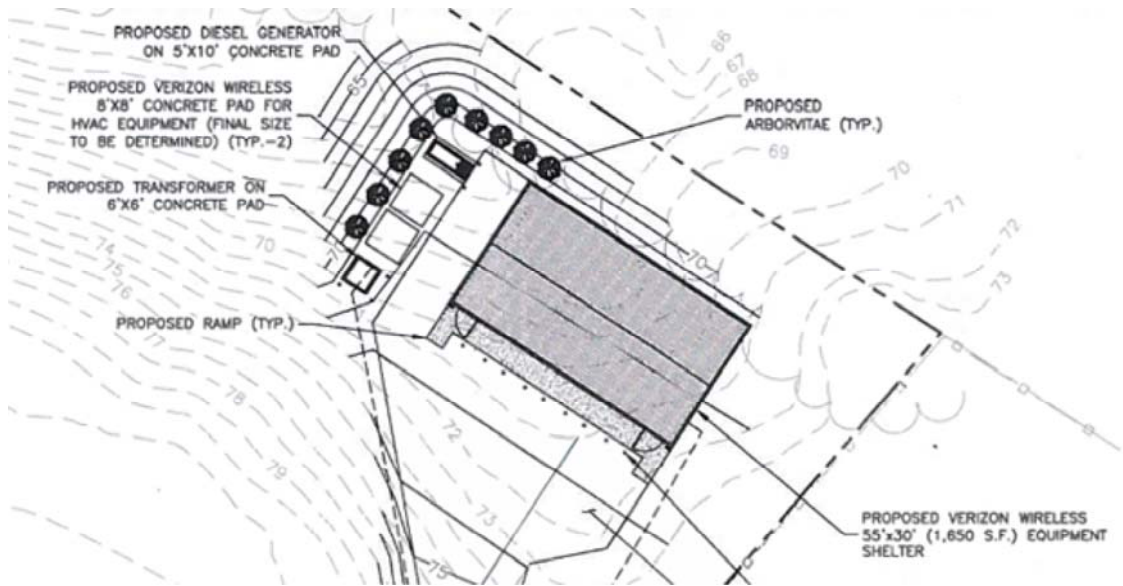
- c. The design and operation of the proposed use, including but not limited to landscaping, screening, sign, loading, deliveries, trash or waste generation, arrangement of structures, and materials storage will not have a substantially greater effect/impact on surrounding properties than those associated with surrounding uses or other allowable uses in the zone.

**RESPONSE:** The proposed Facility has been designed to fit into the existing landscape of the site. The equipment shelter has been designed with an architectural shingle roof and residential clapboard siding to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. There will be no signs, loading, deliveries, trash, waste generation, or materials stored at the facility.

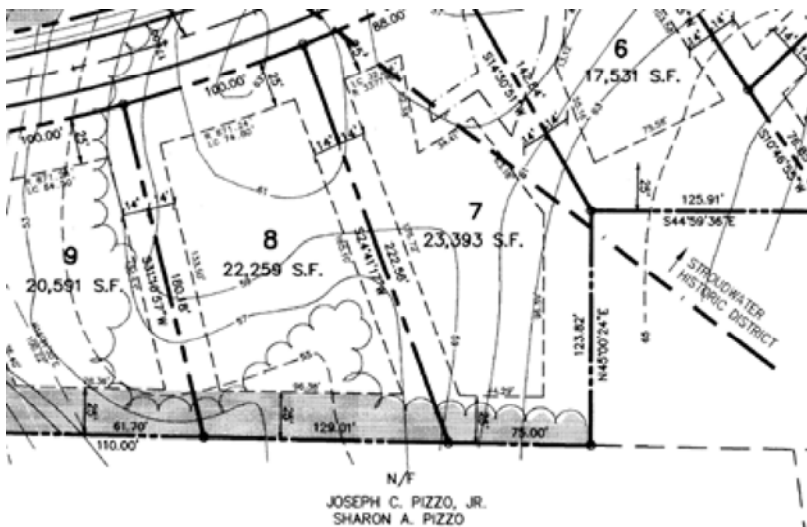
The Facility plans show a final elevation just below 18' above grade.



As planned, the center of the grade for the Facility would be 71' above grade. Adding the building's 18' elevation, depicts the center of the Facility would rise about 89' above sea level.



Consider the grade levels of the abutting neighbors (proposed location is in the lower right corner of this plan - N/F Pizzo):



The following are the average grades of the abutting lots in comparison to the Facility's highest point:

Lot 6 63' Facility is 29% higher

Lot 7 60' Facility is 33% higher

Lot 8 59' Facility is 34% higher

Lot 9 55' Facility is 38% higher

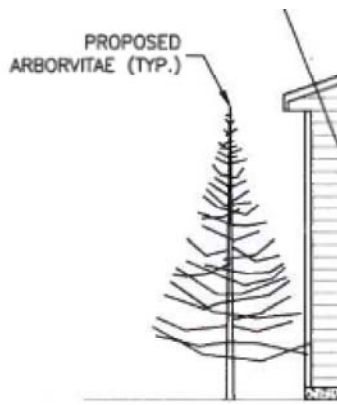
Lots 6 and 7 are most adversely affected given their close proximity. Is it necessary for the building to be so tall? Could the building be partially constructed below grade to lessen its height and thereby better "fit in to the surrounding neighborhood" as quoted from the application?

Given its plan, how can the Facility truly "fit in to the existing landscape of the site"?

Rather than fitting in, it would dominate the site. Its flora is slow growing and nowhere near 18' in height in unison. The statement, "fit in to the existing landscape of the site", is a non-sequitur.

**2) The application indicates arborvitae will be planted, yet did not submit a landscaping plan.**

The following is all I gleaned from the application.



Wouldn't it be reasonable to at least proffer the following?

types of arbovitae (ideally, there should be a mix, as there are five species of which two are indigenous to North America)

Number of trees

Location of said trees (optimally they would be staggered)

Planting distance between trees

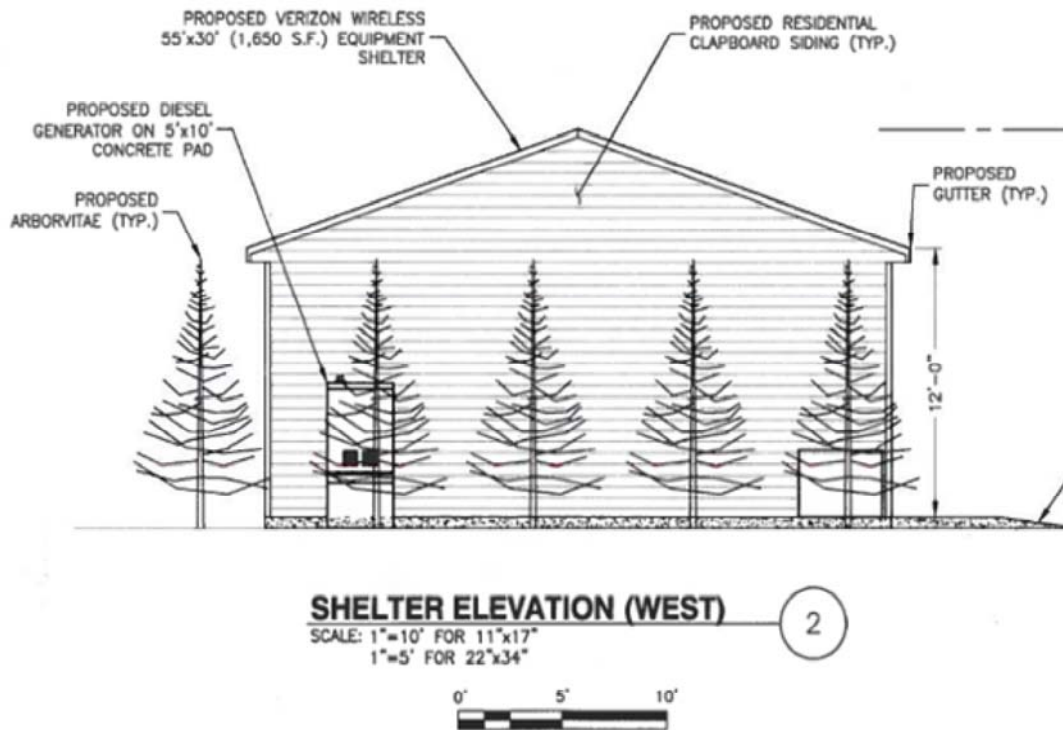
Grade level of trees

Height of trees upon planting

How much of the Facility's north and west side will be obscured with the trees

Tony Muench is a local landscape architect and an expert on designing a landscaping plan to meet the needs of all stakeholders. I highly recommend Tony.

### **3) Why is the diesel generator planned for the west side of the Facility?**



I would think Verizon would want to be a good neighbor and keep the generator away from its immediate neighbors. This plan fails that.

Are there any specifications for the decibel level of the generator?

The elevations should clearly state the clapboard siding would be vinyl.

Why are gutters needed? Properly insulated buildings don't need gutters. Storm water can easily be collected below grade with perimeter drainage and directed a designated area. Further, gutters require constant maintenance.

**4) Verizon wants to acquire 4 acres yet seeks to shoehorn the Facility in one small corner of the property closest to its Stroudwater Farm neighbors and another Congress Street abutter.**







After three years, the 6' stockade fence and immature and sparsely planted arborvitae offer no meaningful blocking of the commercial enterprise abutting the residential zone.

**7) Have you considered designing the Facility to appear like an old barn?**

The present design of the Facility is not inspiring. The planned vinyl sided warehouse offers NO architectural appeal in one of Portland's oldest neighborhoods. Instead of the monolithic plastic building with no break (windows) in its design, perhaps a clapboard (or shingle) building shaped and

stained like an old barn would be more appropriate, visually pleasing and more fitting for the lot, given it is just outside the Stroudwater Historic District.

I am a real estate agent and have also designed and built single-family homes and commercial buildings. I am a native of Stroudwater, trustee of the Stroudwater Village Association (SVA) and resident of Stroudwater Farm. My letter does not represent the position of anyone but me.

Residents are naturally concerned for the further erosion of the character of residential life here in Stroudwater.

Notice of Verizon's intentions occurred so quickly around the holidays it has made it difficult for my fellow Stroudwater residents to properly evaluate the application.

If Verizon truly wants to be a "good neighbor", then I recommend Verizon reach out to the SVA and convene a neighborhood meeting inviting Stroudwater residents and Portland Trails. Verizon would present their proposed plan and listen to the concerns of Stroudwater residents and hopefully reach an agreement meeting the needs of all stakeholders prior to the Portland Zoning Board consider their presently incomplete application for conditional use appeal approval.

Thank you.

Regards,

Michael Rogers, MBA, Realtor