

November 22, 2020

Dear Members of the Selectboard and Planning Commission,

As I type this from my kitchen on Putnam Avenue in Hardwick, I am enjoying our beautiful view of Buffalo Mountain with Woodbury Mountain peeking up behind her. I grew up in her shadow and spent many happy days with childhood friends climbing and exploring every inch navigable by foot. We (my husband, Wayne, and I) still occasionally go up during stick season and enjoy the view of the bowl that surrounds our village.

Twenty-three years ago, AT&T attempted to place a tower on Buffalo and the people of this little town fought for that iconic view, a view that is visible from many areas of town.

In the past, Hardwick has been down on its luck, the butt of many jokes and a place few wanted to visit. That has certainly changed. Our downtown looks better than it has in many decades and we are a destination for many due to our outdoor recreational opportunities and our vibrant downtown, pandemic aside.

We're becoming well-known for our single-track mountain bike trails on the Hardwick Trails, the Woodbury Rail Trail and our class 4 roads and old roads turned trails, namely Buffalo Mountain. To some, a better recreational experience is more important than a potential extra bar on their phone.

We've studied the view shed photos as presented by AT&T for their proposed tower and they are laughable at best and otherwise just plain deceitful. They searched for the vantage points that would not show the tower. In some cases, they could have taken a photo from 20 feet in another direction with an entirely different result.

We have also walked all over the village and looked at where the tower would be placed from different viewpoints. From our walks, the tower would be a defining part of the view from, in no particular order:

Slapp Hill
Hazen Union Drive
North Main Street
South Main Street
The Swinging Bridge
Memorial Park
Vermont Avenue
Putnam Avenue
Pearl Street
High Street
Wakefield Street
W. Church Street
Church Street
Glenside Ave.
Riverside Terrace
Brush Street

Upper Cherry
Marshall Street

This is a partial list and doesn't include areas outside of the village, like Mackville Rd, Carey Road, Center Road, Bridgman Hill, etc. along with the South end of town. We request that AT&T provide photos from these and other vantage points after the next balloon test.

Buffalo Mountain is in our town logo, on postcards, Wikipedia, book covers, you get the picture. It's the iconic backdrop of this little town that has fought so hard to thrive. To deface that backdrop for a telecommunications tower that would provide a very minimal amount of additional cell coverage and line a big corporation's pockets seems like an ill-considered decision to us.

Add the fact that a balloon test was done with no notice and their process has been behind the scenes as much as possible, it seems like we need to slow this down. We have been asking members of the selectboard and HED commissioners for updates for a year now and have been repeatedly told that until AT&T could meet construction guidelines, it was stalled. Now that seems to not be the case.

We would urge the Selectboard to decline permitting AT&T access to Buffalo Mountain Trail and leave it in its current state for recreational uses and that the Planning Commission carefully review the Town Plan and bylaws that our citizens so carefully crafted to address telecommunications. The proposal by AT&T violates these documents in several areas.

Thank you for reading our "view".

Respectfully,
Lenore & Wayne Renaud