

# Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum

## Board of Trustees

### Public Hearing

#### Minutes

A public hearing of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held in the Vanderbilt Museum Lobby, Centerport, New York, on July 20, 2011 regarding proposed telecommunications tower.

#### **The following were in attendance:**

Mr. Noel Gish – President  
Gretchen Oldrin Mones – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Betsy Cambria – Secretary  
Thomas Glascock - Trustee  
Tanya McKay - Trustee  
Kevin Peterman – Trustee  
Joseph F. Buzzell, Esq. – Attorney for Suffolk Wireless  
Danny Schrafel – Long Islander News  
Vivienne Wong - Huntington  
Lance Reinheimer – Interim Executive Director  
Mark Cuthbertson – Town of Huntington  
Ralph Calamusso – Thatched Cottage  
William F. Walters – Centerport  
Andy Mank – Centerport  
Steve Goldstein – Centerport  
Anne Wesp – Centerport  
Jane Bock – Melville  
Stanley Wertheimer – Centerport  
Carol Mule – Centerport  
Sherry Pavone – Centerport  
Bob Avallone – Centerport  
Charles Cross – Centerport  
Dr. Todd Coven – Centerport  
Ginger Jarvis – Centerport  
Jack Geffken – Centerport  
Joseph Albano – Centerport  
Arthur Zimmet – Centerport  
Michael Mule – Centerport  
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer  
Other interested parties

**(Mr. Noel Gish called the public hearing to order at 7:15 p.m.)**

**MR. GISH:**

I'd like to call this meeting to order, if I could please. I'd like to welcome everybody to this community meeting at the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. I would ask everyone to stand for a Pledge to the Flag.

(Salute to the Flag)

**MR. GISH:**

Tonight the Board of Trustees is holding our second community forum to hear opinions from the community on our plans to construct a telecommunications tower on the 46 acre estate property. We had a similar meeting on this topic –

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

We can't hear you.

**MR. GISH:**

We had a similar meeting on this topic in July of 2009. However, at the request of the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality, CEO, we are holding this second session.

The process that we will follow tonight is for everyone wishing to speak to sign those yellow cards that were distributed or that are available to you in the back. Everyone wishing to speak will have three minutes to address the Board. All of the comments by those in attendance and any written comments will be recorded, transcribed, and they will be available on-line, I believe. Is that correct, Ann Marie?

**MS. PASTORE:**

Yes.

**MR. GISH:**

They will be made available not only to the Council on Environmental Quality but the Suffolk County Legislature and the County Executive for their review of your comments.

At the end of the allotted three minutes, I will tap my gavel softly and the speaker should conclude his or her remarks within a brief period of time. There will be no cross debate between anyone in the audience or any member of the Board. I expect only the highest level of civility and decorum at this meeting. Where I can address a specific question,

I will at the conclusion of the speaker's three minutes. But I expect this to remain a community meeting. This Board of Trustees will listen carefully, as will CEQ and County Government, and respond to your concerns.

The Board of Trustees who have arrived tonight are up front. Joseph Buzzell, Esq., is a representative from Suffolk Wireless. Suffolk Wireless is the winner of the RFP that we placed out for the construction of the cell tower. We have yet to sign a contract on that, but he is representing Suffolk Wireless should there be a specific question that would be asked.

First speaker is Dr. Todd Coven.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Can you explain what's it's going to look like and where it is before we get into this whole discussion?

**MR. GISH:**

Okay, on the board over there I placed a site plan that has been drawn up by Suffolk Wireless. The proposal that we put through in July of 2009 is similar to the one that we have now in place. It will be in the parking lot. As you came into the estate tonight, there is a parking lot to your left, which is the main parking lot, and then there's a secondary parking lot with large dinosaur footprints that are in the parking lot. In that section down in that direction in the woods on a small knoll half way down in that parking lot is where the tower will be constructed. It's on that site there.

At present, the tower will be 140 feet. It will accommodate, I believe, up to five, at the present, time providers.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

What's the elevation of that area?

**MR. GISH:**

It is probably – rather than have to answer that, it's probably on the site. I can give that to you at the end, if you would like that.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

I would like that because you have to add that on to the 140 feet.

**MR. GISH:**

It's directly right on the road. As you come up Little Neck Road, and you're near that white mason fence that you're sort of passing on the right, probably within 100 feet of the beginning of the fence of the wall, obviously to the north inside that fence will, in fact, be where the tower is. So it will be road level, at that point.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

But I imagine that the elevation there is over 100 feet above sea level.

**MR. GISH:**

I would imagine so, yes. That's the reason why it was placed there, because it will obviously give the cell tower much better communication ability.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

I think it will be helpful –

**MS. PASTORE:**

Can you please come up to the microphone?

**MR. GISH:**

Yes, please do. It's going to be difficult for me to do that. Let me take the comments as we go through. That's the proposal. That's the same proposal I had in July of 2009. It's in the exact same spot.

The reasons I gave at that stage of the game are the same reasons I gave in July of 2009, because it was the furthest away from any of the historic buildings and because it provided easy access for repair of the site. It was far enough away from anything that would – as far the neighbors' point of view – where it would not interfere with the fall zone, which was a concern. That position was chosen specifically because it was the best place on the estate that would not interfere with the historic structures that were here.

Two, would be, obviously, more amenable to communication ability. Obviously, you don't want to put it down on the water when you can't communicate with anyone. That's the problem down there. You have the Harbor Hill moraine that runs along the North Shore, and you've got these little dead spots that are here. That spot was chosen very carefully because we did a frequency test, and that seemed to be the best area that we could market that tower to the providers that wanted to come on board.

The tower at 140 feet will not have to be lit. It is a mono pole. It will not look like the trees on the Hutchinson River Parkway. There are no outside arms. It's a mono pole. It goes up in one line. All of the antennas are inside the unit. It will be two-toned. It will be dark brown below the tree line and it will be sky colored above the tree line. There will be no flag on the pole because in our research we found that residents who lived near a cell tower that had a flag, that there was flapping at night. That created noise. Also our flag pole would have to be lit. So we went with just a single mono pole that would be constructed on that spot.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

And the diameter of that pole?

**MR. GISH:**

We can give you the specifics on that. Do you have that?

**MR. BUZZELL:**

I don't have the exact diameter of that.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

We should really know the diameter of that pole.

**MR. GISH:**

I will give you Suffolk Wireless' number at the end of the meeting, and you can give them a call directly.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Would the gentleman from the Wireless Company have any further –

**MR. BUZZELL:**

Typically it's under four feet at the base. I can't tell you how much exactly. It tapers as you go up on the pole. So the widest point is at the bottom.

**MR. GISH:**

I will tell you that the final pole design was left off because we were contemplating the addition of emergency services on the top of the pole. The way that the emergency services on the top of the pole would, in fact, change the base size of the pole as we went up. That's one of the considerations. But it's not going to be 20 feet. It's not a 20 foot diameter pole. It's under ten feet.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Who in the County –

**MR. GISH:**

No cross talk debate, please. I will try desperately to answer all of your questions. If I can, I will answer them. I am not an expert in that field. I'm a member of the Board of Trustees of the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium. I will do the best I can to answer your questions.

I'm going to continue in the manner that I set forth before. At the end, we will deal with additional questions. If you want to address that question, as you come to the microphone, that might be the best way to do it.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Can you all just introduce yourselves?

**MR. GISH:**

Yes, my name is Noel Gish. I'm President of the Board of Trustees for the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium here in Centerport. Lance Reinheimer is our Interim Director on board now. The other people that you see up front here are members of the Board of Trustees, along with Joe Buzzell, who is the representative from Suffolk Wireless.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Do you have any idea how --

**MR. GISH:**

I'm going to ask you to please follow the directions – I don't think that's too difficult to ask.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Why don't you just answer the question.

**MR. GISH:**

Because it's a public record, and the Council on Environmental Quality wants to be able to review your comments. The stenographer in the front of the room can't hear you, and, therefore, it is not going to be addressed, and they will not look at this as a formal meeting unless it's being recorded and on the record. I ask you, please, to follow the very simple directions that I have given you. You can make that statement, if you choose. You just need to sign a yellow card and I

will announce your name. You can come up here and make your statement.

Dr. Todd Coven.

**DR. COVEN:**

May I ask a question of Joe Buzzell first before my time starts?

**MR. GISH:**

No, you have three minutes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

We can't hear you back here.

**MR. REINHEIMER:**

This is a recording device. This is not an amplification system.

**DR. COVEN:**

So I'm not allowed to ask safety questions to Joe Buzzell. Is that correct?

**MR. GISH:**

You have three minutes to make a statement.

**DR. COVEN:**

We have Joe Buzzell here. I would like to ask about the safety –

**MR. BUZZELL:**

If you'd like to follow up with me after your time at the microphone, I would be happy to answer your questions.

**DR. COVEN:**

Okay. I would like to address – as a newcomer to Centerport, I just moved here. I am a physician who specializes in cancer, more specifically skin cancer. My concern – I live about a mile from here. My concern is for the people around this area, let alone the aesthetic concerns of the cell tower.

The problem is this, cell towers have not been around for a very, very long period of time. In specializing in skin cancer I can tell you that solar radiation can take 20, 30, 40 years to show their effects. I operate on those individuals. There is no study that is long-term to my knowledge that shows 30, 40 years of effects of cell towers.

My concern is for the residents around the neighborhood and around the cell tower. If Joe Buzzell can tell me definitive data that 30 or 40 years down the road that the cell towers do not produce increased risk of cancers, and that's a serious issue, more than money, then I would be very, very happy to hear that information.

Again, my concern is the safety around these cell towers, let alone the aesthetics concerns. You're on the north shore, and obviously every other town has dismissed these notions of having a cell tower. I am firmly against it from that safety standpoint. Thank you.

**MR. GISH:**

Charles Cross.

**MR. CROSS:**

You mentioned a short while ago that the size and the shape of the proposed cell tower wouldn't compromise the architectural beauty of the Vanderbilt Museum. But how about it affecting our aesthetic value of our homes in reducing our property values? That's what I'm concerned with.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Jack Geffken.

**DR. GEFFKEN:**

Dr. Jack Geffken. I'm here representing the Centerport Fire District. I'm one of the Fire Commissioners. We have long battled with communications in Centerport. The typography creates a lot of challenges. We communicate a couple different ways. We have low band radios that we use to talk from the fire trucks, the bay station, in addition to activating people's pagers.

As you're well aware, we do have an antenna on this property currently on the Hall of Fishes. Unfortunately, the elevation of that antenna renders it fairly useless in our every day operations. We are hoping that if this antenna goes through, that that additional elevation would help with life safety issues and the operations of the fire department.

In addition, we also use text messaging to alert our members of alarms. As we all know, Centerport can be very dicey as far as getting a cell signal.

The fire district is taking the stance that this will enhance our communications and improve our ability to provide services to the community.

On a personal note, not speaking on behalf of the fire district, we can sit here and debate whether this is causing cancer all night. There have been many studies saying yes and no. I don't think we have the true answer there. But being almost a life long resident of Centerport, I'm concerned for the fiscal stability of this museum. You have to think about if this doesn't go through, would you like to see this place mothballed and what would come in here next? Thank you.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, Jack. Vivian Wong.

**MS. WONG:**

I'm Vivienne Wong. I oppose the cell phone application. I really believe Suffolk County should look at Nassau County as a model because last September they created a code for wireless telecommunications facilities. It's very extensive.

One example is rather than guessing at the height and what it looks like, they say in order to better inform the public in the case of a new telecommunications tower, the applicant shall prior to the public hearing of the application hold a balloon test. The applicant shall arrange to fly a rope upon a temporary mast a minimum of three feet in diameter a brightly colored balloon at the maximum height of the proposed new tower. The size of the balloon must represent of the size of the antenna configured.

This would make much more sense than looking at drawings and people guessing. I do believe that Suffolk County, before anymore applications are proposed, should have a code like Nassau County did. They did an excellent job. It covers radio frequency, where people live, and things like that.

I do agree with the cancer issues. We don't have enough information on cancer. My husband right now has cancer, lymphoma, and who knows where he got it. It is escalating on Long Island, the cancer, and maybe these things are adding to it. Thank you.

**MR. GISH:**

Ginger Jarvis.

**MS. JARVIS:**

Good afternoon. My name is Ginger Jarvis. Initially I would like to begin by complaining about the microphone system. In the back there, we cannot hear. And that would be to the advantage of the Board, not to the advantage of the homeowners. That needs to be corrected. The system isn't working.

**MR. GISH:**

The system only feeds the transcription. It doesn't feed the room. We're trying to get an exact account of what people say so that the people who are not here can read exactly what takes place.

**MS. JARVIS:**

This is designed so that the homeowner does not hear. This is designed to filter the information that the homeowner gets and to misconstrue the information that is sent out. With the discussion here, everyone should be provided with a copy of this map to see where the proposal is to be set.

In addition to that, they are talking about putting up a tower with one antenna. Once they get the tower in, then the other companies can come in and put up all their other antennas in addition on the same tower. That will increase revenue. It will also increase the opportunity for cancer, as the doctor just explained.

If we are being warned now not to be talking on cell phones constantly because of the threat of brain cancer, we certainly should consider that living under it. I just live on the other side on Prospect Road, right across from the bridge, the house with the red roof. Thank you.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, Ginger. Just to comment on the statement dealing with the number of providers that will attach antennas, it will forever be a mono pole. There will be no antennas attached to the outside. It will be one solid pole, and the antennas will be inside the mono pole. There is room for five. There is no more room at that level. They need ten feet. There is no communication below 90 feet based on the frequency test, which we took with a crane that was here. So there will be no extremities that will be outside.

The only thing that would be outside would be whips at the top that would deal with police, fire and marine units. They are very small, little whips that occur at the top, which is what I've been told would be

extended beyond that top. But it's not going to be arms out. There is no tree involved here.

**MS. JARVIS:**

But what is established here is precedent. Once precedent is established, they can bring in other towers.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Joseph Albano.

**MR. ALBANO:**

Good evening. My name is Joseph Albano, and I live with my wife at 54 Mariners Court. I wasn't aware of this until just recently, as we were driving by and saw the sign outside. I think this disingenuousness of this meeting is apparent with that sign. I didn't realize the Vanderbilt Museum was in the business of providing cell phone coverage for us. If Verizon, if AT&T wants to do it, let them come in there and put an antenna up on a pole somewhere. I'm not really convinced that all you're going to do is put up five small internal antennas up there. What other antennas are you going to sell, sir? What other services? Is it going to be microwave? Is it going to be satellite service? What other provider? What are your plans for this?

**MR. BUZZELL:**

All that's proposed – it only has room for five carriers, no more. The only other facilities that are proposed are public service with antennas that would go on top of the antenna that's there for police, fire and emergency services.

**MR. ALBANO:**

Why can't the antennas be placed on top of the top of telephone poles, small innocuous things that are all over anyway? Why are you putting up a large thing? The preceding woman was correct. It starts a precedent. This is public land. This is our land. We own it. You work for us. Why do we have to have this monstrosity here? Well, I don't hear any answers.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Andy Mank.

**MR. MANK:**

My name is Andy Mank. I'm a resident of Centerport. I have lived here about 16 years. Let me start by saying that I'm proud resident of Centerport. I'm happy to be here. I'm glad that the Vanderbilt

Planetarium facility is here. I would like it to stay here. I would like to understand many things.

I'm embarrassed to say that I'm totally uninformed, as a member of the community. The things that we are talking about are missing preparation. I would hope that in the spirit of this evening is to exchange information so that we can all make informed decisions.

I don't believe we're off to a good start with that. If I was a CEO running this meeting, I would probably be suspended or fired or some other thing. We need to repeat this meeting. We need to have a PA system. I will be happy to provide one for you, if you'd like that. I would like to have notice sent to all of the surrounding residents so that they understand what is happening. Please provide them with the proper documentation.

There are many things that I'd like to understand. What is the revenue stream that we're talking about here? What is the proximity to the closest residents? I know we're protecting the buildings, but I think we have a risk there.

I'm willing to help spearhead an effort to find you the revenue in substitution of this proposal. I'm sorry that will impact Suffolk Wireless, but this is not the right answer. This is a community. We do not need 140 foot pole impacting permanently the aesthetics of this community. I live a quarter mile away from here. I'm here because of its beauty. We don't need this. We need to find a solution together to solve the revenue problem.

I'd like to have an answer on when we can hold a subsequent meeting where we can all be properly informed. The revenue, understanding the proximity to the residents and that we will have a commitment from the Board to just properly inform us with the right paperwork. Do I have that commitment from the Board to do that?

**MR. GISH:**

I will –

**MR. MANK:**

Part of our job is to be civil. We should have proper information exchange, and that needs to happen. If it doesn't happen, then trust me, this meeting will be repeated one way or another because I'm not going to stop. You can't have a meeting going this way. I'd like your commitment to do it. I'm telling you, I will help and be a force just as

much for helping you find your revenue as I will against this proposal, if that's what's necessary. I'd rather operate in a cooperative way. I'm looking for your commitment to help inform us and help us do the right thing.

**MR. GISH:**

This is the second meeting that we have held on this. There was – when you're talking about announcements for this meeting, the first meeting that we had in July 2009 was done with voter registration cards. We mailed them out. I was chided for the fact that some people didn't vote, and therefore they didn't get the announcement that the meeting was being held. This meeting was announced – the signs that you see out in front of the Vanderbilt has been there for four weeks for people going by. It was also listed in the *Long Islander*. It was listed in the *Long Island Press*. It was in the *Huntington Patch*. It is on our website and has been for over a month. *Newsday* mentioned it.

**MR. MANK:**

How many people approximately were at that 2009 meeting, about the same attendance?

**MR. GISH:**

A little less than what you see here.

**MR. MANK:**

So if we're going to do this responsibly, we need to have the people here who live here, who own the property and pay the taxes. How many people live right within half mile of here? I ask you to please be responsible and help us help you.

**MR. GISH:**

And I will address that concern. I will address that.

**MR. MANK:**

Like I said, I am very willing to help and be a voice of civil health to you, but I'd like your help and cooperation to do this the right way.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, sir. Arthur Zimmet.

**MR. ZIMMET:**

I live just on the other side of the wall. I am pretty close. The preparation here isn't so great for this meeting. I'm not quite sure how I feel about this now because I think that the preparations that

you guys have made to confront the people who have an interest is terrible. You have no feelings for the people that are in this audience. None. If I was sitting in your place, I would call an end to this meeting and come back with a prepared meeting instead. The whole purpose of this meeting is to get our input and your input so these people know what's going on. I personally think that having a tower on the property is not a terrible idea. But you have a site plan, but you don't have a rendering of what this would look like for somebody driving up this road in either direction. What are you trying to do for us?

**MR. GISH:**

We do have those pictures. Those pictures were provided to the CEO and were put together by Suffolk Wireless. I did not believe at this stage of the game that that was necessary at this meeting. I was purely responding to –

**MR. ZIMMET:**

If you want to do something positive, you have to remember what this meeting is for. It's for us, as well as for you to get what you want done. I have been a backer of this museum for a long time. But I have to tell you, this is a bit of a disgrace. We have a man here from the wireless company. We don't have any other expertise here. We have a doctor that says this could cause cancer. There is nobody on your side that says whatever studies there are, whether they're positive or negative, no response to it. You're not going to win this way. You're going to get a lot of teed off people, including me now.

**MR. GISH:**

I thank you, sir.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Excuse me, I'd like to make a motion. I move to adjourn this meeting to a better time where –

**MR. GISH:**

That motion is out of order. William Walters.

**MR. WALTERS:**

I'm Bill Walters. I live on 3 Sherry Court in Centerport, off of Idle Day Drive. I've lived here since 1976. I am absolutely appalled by the people here that don't know the history of Idle Day Drive. They don't know the history of the Van Idlestein estate. The Van Idlestein's were friends with the Vanderbilt's. There so much more that I won't get

into now. This is an extremely historic area to put up a cell phone tower.

I was down at the Sagtikos Manor a few weeks ago for a tour. The people said, "If a tree goes down there, we have to really apply to have the proper tree put back up and to make sure it's the same tree and everything. Everything has to be just so." I spoke to Michael Mule who is involved with it. I'm sure you know who Michael Mule is, as far as the historic preservation. They said the Vanderbilt isn't quite at that level yet. They are applying for it, but it's not quite at that level yet. We will never get at that level if we're going to put up a cell tower here.

I was hoping that Jon Cooper would be here. He is kind of in favor of this because he just moved in here at the curator's cottage where they want to put the cell tower, which is very close to Idle Day Drive, this historic area of the Van Idlestain's, who are just as historic as the Vanderbilt's, by the way.

It's too bad that Cooper's not here. His term limitation is up, though, so he doesn't care about this. He's supporting this to bring in money. It's all about the money here.

I'm asking, what were you thinking? You have chosen to pursue the erection of an ugly and potentially dangerous cell tower in one of the most beautiful and historic neighborhoods in all of Long Island and the nation. What were you thinking?

The Town of Hempstead has imposed much tougher restrictions on the placement of new cell phone towers that are among the most stringent in the United States -- the Town of Hempstead. Where are our standards in Suffolk County and the Town of Huntington?

By the way, I believe there are many people on the Board of the Town of Huntington who are against this project. Petrone made a comment on this himself. I think we should badger them because they certainly should have influence on Suffolk County. This is a Suffolk County deal here. These people are controlled by Suffolk County. I'm surprised that Jon Cooper is not here. I'm really upset about that.

I say, what were you thinking? According to a memo dated July 18, 2011 by Congresswoman Carol B. Maloney, and I passed out some of these to some of the people, of Manhattan and Queens, and I quote, "Most recently I protested the placement of cell phone towers directly

facing an Astoria elementary school. I'm especially concerned about the potentially harmful effects of children of microwave transmissions, particularly since cellular phone technology is relatively new. It's long-term health impacts are not yet fully known."

Are the children of Little Neck Peninsula any different? You're going to be like 100 yards from tons of kids along Idle Day Drive, Cobblestone Court, and Sherry Court. I just can't believe it. What are you thinking?

In an article entitled, "Beating the Bust" in the Long Island Home Section in *Newsday* dated July 1, 2011, maybe some of you have seen this. How many of you have seen this? I just want to show this article. I'm just about finished. I can't find the article now, but anyway, property values have risen 14.2 percent in Centerport. We're number one out of the five towns they featured. They said it's because we always oppose development here. People want to live in a quiet community.

**MR. GISH:**

Please sum up.

**MR. WALTERS:**

I'm just about finished. Please let me finish. It is an unarguably fact that when cell towers go up, home values come down. Our leaders, the people who we hire through our government to be sensitive to that and to be on our side, are on the side of the cell phone people.

When you had the first meeting on this topic about a year ago, few people from our neighborhood are attended, as you well know.

**MR. GISH:**

You tried to call me, if you remember –

**MR. WALTERS:**

That's right and you gave me a special invitation, and I made sure that I went around -- I have all kinds of signatures from our community.

**MR. GISH:**

Bill, you have ten seconds.

**MR. WALTERS:**

I have here these signatures. In communications last year -- may have added this ill advised project – and I say, what were you thinking?

One final point, despite the 1996 federal law prohibiting – and I urge you to look into this – prohibiting municipalities from considering health issues and improving locations for cell tower sites a group of mothers successfully lobbied the Town of Hempstead and seemed to have won the battle for now. I hope so. According to the Supervisor Kate Murray, then Supervisor, and I don't know if she still is, the new regulations provide real protection against the siting of cell phone towers in locations that would adversely impact home values or the character of local neighborhoods. We deserve, in my opinion, even better protection than the minimum covering the residents of Hempstead. Don't you think? My question to you then, are you on our side? Or are you with the powerful phone companies?

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, Bill.

**MR. WALTERS:**

We will be watching your actions carefully.

**MR. COVEN:**

I'd just like to say, and I know I'm out of order, but I'm leaving now. Joe, who is not even looking at us, and Noel – anyone who develops cancer, and you can say to them, "You did this to us." I want them to go to sleep tonight thinking about that. I'm leaving. This is a sham.

**MR. GISH:**

Steve Goldstein.

**MR. GOLDSTEIN:**

My name is Steve Goldstein. I live down the road on Harned Drive. For the record, I'm very, very disappointed the way this thing was set up. Most of us can't hear what the others are saying. I think it's a sham. I think that if it was possible to adjourn it, technically we should.

We live in a wireless world, as most of you probably realize already. I'd like to express my support for the proposed cell tower to be placed atop the –

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Right near my house?

**MR. GOLDSTEIN:**

Did I interrupt you? Based on the following facts, with the examination show the critical need for this antenna and others of its kind where the public safety is a prime consideration.

Think about this. There are no public telephones in Centerport, so what does that mean? Most calls to 911 services for the most serious incidents such as those involving automobile accidents, children hurt on their bikes or on a playground, people injured on a street requiring emergency medical help for any reason, even in their homes , are made via cell phone.

By using a cell phone, the injured person or the person attending to the injured can follow the directions, respond to questions by the police, fire or EMT personnel in an effort to save lives. The days of a kindly stranger answering their door to someone pounding on it asking for help is a thing of the past. People may not be home or reluctant to let someone in their home. Many cell phone calls for help in Northport Harbor arrive in Connecticut, then have to be re-routed when and if possible back to Suffolk County, due to poor coverage on the North Shore.

Many people are cancelling their traditional landline services at a faster pace than new orders are being placed, in addition to the much cheaper internet phone services.

However, when trees are down for any reason, the phone lines drop out, along with the power and the internet phones. Cell phones may be the only method of communicating for life saving purposes. The fire department itself often has to rely on cell phone services in places where their two-way radios don't have coverage or when they need to discuss confidential information that should not be picked up via scanners.

Despite the fear mongering put out by those individuals opposed to towers for reasons of health, there are no official reports from any accredited agency that cell phone towers are in any way dangerous to the public's health.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

We just had a doctor –

**MR. GOLDSTEIN:**

Excuse me. I didn't interrupt you. You are interrupting me.

**MR. GISH:**

No debating from the audience, please.

**MR. GOLDSTEIN:**

A few years ago during an ice storm, my life was saved by a cell phone call that I made to the fire department. I simply walked out the door to get my mail and slipped on the icy steps and fell backwards splitting my scalp open. It knocked me out for a moment. When I came to, I placed my hand on the back of my head. It was covered with a lot of blood. I was really scared. I didn't know what to do. Fortunately, I had my cell phone on my belt clip. Rather than risk moving and passing out again, I reached for my cell phone and called the fire department. They responded with an ambulance in about three minutes. As a matter of fact, it was Dr. Geffen, now that I recognize him, who was there to attend to me.

I live less than 200 feet from the fire department, the rescue service. I was only ten feet from the phone inside my house. I believe if I hadn't had cellular service, which is spotty, as weak as it is now, I wouldn't be writing or talking about this letter.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to support cellular carriers, Verizon, hopefully, in particular, to erect whatever is necessary on behalf of public safety.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Ann Wesp.

**MS. WESP:**

Hello, my name is Ann Wesp. I used to work in New York City. I'm used to going to business meetings that are run like business meetings. This one has not been, I'm sorry to say. I would have thought you would have started with a presentation and you would have said who you were and what the plan was. There's a site plan over here. Most of us can't see it. It's missing the elevation. We need to know what this thing is going to look like.

I know there are issues about the cancer and everything. I can't make decisions without information. I don't have enough information. I have no idea what 144 feet looks like. I don't know how much it is taller than all the trees here. I'm clueless about that. I don't even

know how high my house is. It's like I'm sitting here in a morass of information that I'm missing.

It's also not clear to me what we're all doing here. Whose meeting is this? Who's listening to us? If we're all against this, does it matter? If this the Board of Trustees asking us for input, we're giving it, but if we're all kind of in opposition, is that enough to stop this?

I hate to say it, but I will say this. I am for the Vanderbilt Museum. I would like you to say in this neighborhood. I'd like you to even solicit me and remind me that I owe you money every year, but you've forgotten to do that for the last five years.

You're not dazzling me as an organization that I even want to contribute to, but I want you in my neighborhood because you're a lot better than whatever else could be here.

Please do a better job of this. If you want our feedback, you have to start by giving us the information we need.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Stanley Wertheimer.

**MR. WERTHEIMER:**

Hi, my name is Stanley Wertheimer. I live at 92 Prospect Road. I just need a clarification. In the beginning, you said that's where the antenna will be. Isn't that a wrong choice of words? Shouldn't it be, "That's where it's proposed to be"?

**MR. GISH:**

Yes, that's where it's proposed.

**MR. WERTHEIMER:**

And who makes the final decision? Is it a done deal?

**MR. GISH:**

Not the Board of Trustees but Suffolk County.

**MR. WERTHEIMER:**

With your recommendation.

**MR. GISH:**

Understand that this Board of Trustees is appointed by Suffolk County. Our role is to do what is best for the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium in Centerport. We're not paid by Suffolk County. We are not employed by Suffolk County. This is a volunteer position that we hold. We hold ourselves accountable to the Vanderbilt Museum.

However, attached to that Vanderbilt is the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium. This meeting was done specifically to get your input so that when County Legislators who are not here, as you were talking about Jon Cooper, they may be able to read your concerns that will be on-line, as will the CEQ, as will the County Executive. So, yes, they will hear your concerns.

**MR. WERTHEIMER:**

But you heard that the majority are in the negative about this. You will relay that to the County?

**MR. GISH:**

They will be able to read all of your comments on-line.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Can we have a record of who is involved in this?

**MR. GISH:**

I'm not following that question?

**MS. PASTORE:**

Can you please state your name for the record?

**MR. MANK:**

I think what is happening is kind of obvious to all of us. We're having difficulty understanding the process. We're not sure whether our concerns are going to be heard. We're not sure what's going to happen to them. Totally understand. Thank you for that explanation. That was a good start to starting to understand it.

When you talk about Suffolk County, they are people. It's not a thing; it's not a box. It's people. I think we would feel a lot better if we had a lot more transparency to the process and those questions that we talked about, such as, what's the revenue? I don't even know, for instance, if the questions we posed are going to be answered or how. Is there an answer on the revenue that's going to be produced and the process to the final decision?

**MR. GISH:**

If we maximize – for the point of information, if we maximize the five providers it will approximately be \$95,000 a year.

**MR. MANK:**

\$95,000 a year. Okay, so I'm going to ask the Directors here, if I find a way to get you \$100,000 a year, will you cease this plan?

**MR. GISH:**

That would obviously have to be a Board decision. But to be very honest with you –

**MR. MANK:**

So I'd like to move that you give the community an opportunity to raise you \$100,000 per year.

**MR. GISH:**

I will be very honest with you. That was the same proposal that was made at the July 2009 meeting. That's where it fell.

**MR. MANK:**

I understand, but I'm here now.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

I would be happy to pledge \$10,000 for you not to do it.

**MR. MANK:**

I wasn't here in July of 2009. I lived in the community in 2009, and like all of us, we're doing certain things. I'm totally happy to help with the initiative, like I said before. If you look at the homeowners, \$100,000 split by 100 homes is \$1,000. I can get this for you in a week.

**MR. GISH:**

We will seriously address all of those concerns. Honestly – whether you can read my face, I am seriously going to address all of the concerns that are here today. I have no other ulterior motives.

**MR. MANK:**

Thank you. As we adjourn tonight, if you could just maybe talk to us about the next steps and the process, that would be great, so that we can all figure out how to reconvene. Thank you so much.

**MR. GISH:**

Yes, sir. Sherry Pavone? Sherry Pavone?

**MS. PAVONE:**

My name is Sherry Pavone. I live at 19 Fairwind Court, Northport, directly across the water. I can see the flagpole outside. Do you know how tall your flag pole is?

**MR. GISH:**

No, the one outside here?

**MS. PAVONE:**

Yes, with the flag on it. Well, I can see the flag from my house.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

About 25 feet.

**MS PAVONE:**

Twenty-five feet, and they want to put 140 feet. I think it's also incumbent to point out that respectfully that the gentleman was correct that no one should interrupt him, and he was entitled to his view. But I think we should point out that as he was laying on the sidewalk, he pulled out his cell phone and it worked. So why did we need the tower?

In addition to that, this is County property. I am under the impression that as a County park, it is not a commercial enterprise. The Planetarium is supported by my taxes. I don't want it to become commercial. Caroline Maloney pointed out that she wanted to restrict the use of the tower because of the elementary school across the street. Some gentleman pointed out all the local children. What about the bus loads who visit here all the time? They are going to be exposed to these five towers at 140 feet?

With regard to the whip antennas, I'm very sympathetic to the local emergency services, but again the gentleman laying on the ground, his cell phone worked and we can put whip antennas on the flag pole outside, which is probably 25 feet, and it would help. We don't need 140 foot cell tower. The fact that you do not have a schematic for us to see what it would look like is terribly remiss on your part.

I would also ask that everyone who is opposed to this stand right now and let's take a count. Maybe we should have said, "Who is

supporting it?" Practically the entire room is standing. You really need to take this into consideration.

In regard to the other question that was asked, "Who do we contact?" First of all, I think we should all hand out and give our email address to Andy and form a committee to oppose this.

Secondly, call up Jon Cooper and tell him. He is a decent man, and he responds to public input. Call him tomorrow. His phone number is in the blue pages, and tell him what you want. He will listen. Thank you.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Caroline Mule.

**MS. MULE:**

Hi, everyone. Caroline Mule. I live right next door. My name is right on that sheet. I'm a positive sort of individual. This may come to you as a shock, but I think these people do have their hearts in the right place. I think, dare I say, that this community needs to come together even more on a positive note and rally to get something positive done, other than the cell tower.

I hear a lot of negativity, but I think any meeting can be made more purposeful if it's turned around into a positive thought and say, "What can we do if we're all against this?"

This is not the first time they're having this meeting. I've been to these meetings before. Maybe some of you have been here. Maybe some of you haven't. I've been informed. Maybe it's because I live directly next door. I don't know, but I've known what's been going on. They had the community put together Friend Committees trying to save this Vanderbilt before the cell tower was even a figment of somebody's imagination.

This community needs to gather and rally together along with some ideas of what is going to make this place survive. I offered that little idea of a dollar out of your payment or \$52 a year, all these houses. That would add up to something. It's a dollar out of your pocket.

How many of you are members here? Raise your hands? Okay, so we have a community who wants the Vanderbilt to stay but you're not even members. How many people have donated a chair to the new auditorium? Okay, so that's another way.

The Board has reached out to the community. I don't know why some of you are getting communicated to and some not. I can't answer that. Rather than sit here and put down everything that's being done, I want to hear somebody say we should do this or do that. I'm so tired of hearing negative, negative, negative. What are we going to do to rally to pull together to help make up the dollars other than this tower? We have many brilliant minds sitting right in this room. If we're so passionate about, no we don't want this, what are we passionate that we can could do that's going to make something else happen to make this place thrive and put it on the map in a quiet but wonderful way? I don't know. I like my dollar idea, but that's only one idea.

I joined the Friend Committee two or three years ago, and they rallied the community saying that they needed help. They wanted our ideas. Emails were flying around. It went to the PTA.

I'm not trying to place blame on these guys or you guys. What I'm saying is the energy is here with the no, no, no. I want to see and hear the energy because I'm ready to get on that team and say, yes, yes, yes to whatever is going to make this place go. I'm sick of the negativity. I really am. I have two kids growing up here. I'm sick of it. Do something.

I'm a Girl Scout leader. I'm a Boy Scout leader. I'm the Program Director of Camp (Inaudible). I'm a mom. I run my house. I teach figure skating. If I can squeeze in an hour a week or a month and you guys have the energy to come down here and say, "This is not being done right. That's not being done right." Then do something about it. I don't know what the answer is, but my dollar a month or a year or a payroll, weekly, whatever, I don't know what kind of money you need to make up.

**MR. GISH:**

\$100,000.

**MS. MULE:**

Is it something that's doable? I'm not trying to insult anybody. I'm just trying to move it forward from – do you think this is a wasted meeting? I don't. What ideas do you have right now to fix this problem?

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, Caroline. Mark Cuthbertson.

**MR. CUTHBERSON:**

I'll be very brief. The Town has made our feelings known about this in a letter from Supervisor Petrone. Obviously, I think all the Town Board Members support that. We are here to work with you to do whatever it is that's going to fill the gap for you. We certainly have limitations.

The biggest thing I want to emphasize is that I live not too far from here. I have been a proponent of siting cell towers where they are appropriate. We have re-written our codes in the Town of Huntington to create a bias in favor of those places. This is just a place that's not appropriate. It doesn't make sense. I hope the County will reconsider, and I hope that the community does get behind trying to find other ways to support the Vanderbilt because it's a gem in our community and we want to make it even better.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you, Mark. Bob Avallone.

**MR. AVALLONE:**

Good evening, everyone. My name is Bob Avallone. I live across the street at One Cobblestone Court. I have a couple things to say. I've been listening to everyone. Just a couple of quick comments.

First and foremost, I have tremendous respect for this Board. I know these people. I have spoken to these people. I know some of them personally. I admire what they do. I'm a lover of the Vanderbilt. I belong to the Vanderbilt. I have a family membership to the Vanderbilt. We send people here to come to the Vanderbilt. I love this place. I'd like to see it stay.

With all due respect to Caroline. She's right and very passionate, but this is a Suffolk County issue. Suffolk County owns this place. These guys run it, and Suffolk County owns it. Although it's very nice if she wants to collect a dollar -- and she's right. We should do something. This is a Suffolk County facility.

I think the elephant in this room is revenue. I was at the meeting we had not too long ago where the Vanderbilt chose a single caterer to run the weddings here. The reason that that was required was because it would bring revenue to this place. That's their job. Their job it to get revenue to keep this place running. With the caterer there were people for and people against that caterer. But I

understand that they have to raise money, and that's what this is all about.

The problem that I have is they are taking this place, 46 acres, and they found one place to put it, which doesn't affect the beauty of the Vanderbilt but is really inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood and our feelings as neighbors. That troubles me.

I also would like to ask -- and one more thing, with all due respect to your answer, it's not \$100,000 issue here. My recollection from the last meeting as to how much revenue this place is short, it's way more than \$100,000. \$100,000 is part of what this place needs. If I'm correct, it was something like \$600,000 we need to run this place.

Frankly, \$100,000 is the deck chair off the Titanic. They need more than that. This \$100,000 is a way to raise \$100,000, but it doesn't save the Vanderbilt. If you want to save the Vanderbilt, you better get to the Suffolk County Legislators, because that's how we're going to save the Vanderbilt.

I have one more thing to consider. In 46 acres and all of this place, has there been alternate site that this is so relevant, it's so necessary, and I haven't heard the word necessary, and I haven't heard the word revenue. Really this is all about money. Isn't there an alternate site that they can put 143 foot tower? Has anyone considered the LIPA stacks across the water? Can't we put one there? They're high enough.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to address the Board before we close this discussion?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

What's next?

**MR. GISH:**

If you've already spoken, I'm going to restrict it to those people who have not spoken. I will tell you that I don't know what's next. I will take all of the comments into consideration.

If we can in some way, shape or form put together another meeting in which -- I don't think anybody will ever be completely happy with whatever I do, but I will attempt to try and address those issues relating to a balloon test and missing elevations and a level of maybe power point presentation to show you the pictures that I have. We do

have a visual analysis. I will attempt to do that and address those concerns and get back to you.

It will be done pretty much the way the last one was done, with an announcement out front in the Vanderbilt. It will be in the paper. We will follow the procedure that is sort of delineated by Suffolk County for announcements of it. It will also be on our website. We are required to put the sign outside here. I will inform you of any changes that take place. Again, I'll take all your concerns into consideration, and we'll see if we can do better the next time. Thank you.

**MR. MANK:**

Can I say one more thing? If we really want to solve the problem and really want to get this done, I'm telling you, we can get it done. We need effective communication. Is it possible for us to provide you our emails or something on a piece of paper in addition to putting all the other things we're suggesting, maybe you can send a note out, that's the best way to get things out.

Second, if we can just start by scheduling a meeting maybe two or three weeks from now, where we can focus not so much on the opposition part of it but just the idea of, how can we generate funds to support the basic problem. If we can do that part, then just watch what can happen.

**MR. GISH:**

Andy, I will be in touch with you. I will give you a call directly.

**MS. WONG:**

If this gentleman can speak second time, I'd like to speak also again. My name is Vivienne Wong. I live in Huntington. We in Huntington have a serious issue with the Town Board allowing the Suffolk County water to put cell phone towers on our water properties without telling us.

We had a consultant, and his name is Dick Comi. He was actually paid to advise us. The income that's normally generated from a tower is between \$3,000 to \$4,000 per day. You're saying five. You're really looking at \$700,000 to \$1 million income that will be generated on the cell phone tower. Why is the Vanderbilt only getting \$100,000?

In the Town of Hempstead, they had it in their ruling that no more than 10 percent per year can be given out in fees. There is something very wrong or you're being underpaid really to put this up. I'm still

against it, but the numbers are way off. If you would like, I will get your documentation from Dick Comi regarding –

**MR. GISH:**

I'd like you to negotiate for me. That's way out of whack with any of the research that I've done and any of the people that I've met with concerning the cell phone tower.

**MS. WONG:**

Suffolk County Water was – I won't even get into the whole issue. I will say something. The Town Board in Huntington was not on our side. So you should be very grateful the Town Board is on your side in Centerport. But the numbers are way low.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Anyone else who hasn't spoken? Come on up? Just give your name and address.

**MR. MULE:**

My name is Michael Mule. My wife spoke earlier. I live next door to the Vanderbilt. I do have a vested interest in the success of the Vanderbilt Museum.

The only thing I wanted to add is I have come here late, and I haven't heard all the arguments, but I agree with what Andy has said and what my wife has said as far as I think that the Vanderbilt could do better. We should come up with some idea, and you should get some input of those in the community for generating the income to really address the problem, which is to make sure that the Vanderbilt could be a success and could generate the income that it needs to survive.

The one thing about the cell tower is it does nothing to draw people to the Vanderbilt. If there is some solution that could actually help, not only provide income but also bring a draw to the museum itself and to the Planetarium, if we could address some type of solution to that effect, then you're really accomplishing two goals at once.

That's all I have to say. I would welcome additional meetings where you do get some input from the community and hopefully something constructive could happen.

**MR. GISH:**

Thank you. Jane Bock?

**MS. BOCK:**

I want to tell everyone here right now that I don't live in this area but I have a very dear friend who does. I'm concerned about all the issues that were brought up here.

There are a couple of issues that I didn't feel anyone spoke about strongly enough. One is the fact the topography of Centerport is not going to change. You can add more cell towers, but if you're in a valley, you're still going to have problems in a valley. I don't know why more antennas is going to solve that problem. If they're saying something about new technology that will resolve that problem, that's a different story. We don't have that information here, so we can't make that judgment. I don't think that technology exists yet.

The other thing that particularly bothered me was something that you said, sir. That was that you work for the Vanderbilt Museum, and that this Board is responsible for the Vanderbilt Museum. You're not. Is the Vanderbilt a 501 3C?

**MR. GISH:**

Yes, I believe so.

**MS. BOCK:**

Then your fiduciary responsibility is to the people of the State of the New York and to these people here so if it makes revenue for the Vanderbilt, all well and good. But you're ultimate responsibility is to these people here. If they don't want this to happen, that's who you answer to.

I understand that the Suffolk County Legislature, I'm presuming now, because I never heard an answer to that question either, but I'm presuming that they get to vote on this.

**MR. GISH:**

Yes.

**MS. BOCK:**

Everyone is saying to call Jon Cooper to get him involved because he represents this district. In fact, you have to call every single one of them because they're going to vote, and you need as many votes as you can possibly get, if you don't want it. If you want it, it doesn't matter.

I just wanted to offer my words of wisdom. Thank you very much.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Is there a date for the vote?

**MR. GISH:**

There is no scheduled vote. Please understand that I know that all of you are concerned that this is a fait accompli. There has been no contract signed with Suffolk Wireless. There is no contract. There is no license for any providers to come on the tower.

As we were in 2009 when I requested your input at that stage of the game, we are still at that stage now in which we put forth a proposal to raise revenue for the Vanderbilt. That's part of our plan to keep the Vanderbilt open. This was a passive way we thought we could do it.

We had reasons here at the Vanderbilt because we lack communication. I'm not going to go through them all, but we had an incident in the Planetarium where we had a young girl who had an asthmatic attack, due to the lights that went off in the Planetarium. Her mother took her outside and could not call the buses at the top of the hill. She would not leave her daughter to get to a land line. I thought that was the very iffy situation. That happened in 2008. I was not able to receive communications here.

I felt at that stage of the game that there was a need for improved communications in this area. When I approached several people concerning cell tower communication, there were holes in the Centerport area. I felt at that time that we could improve cell phone communication for ourselves and for the emergencies that we might have here. We would also be able to augment emergency services for marine, police and fire.

They have been on it. I should read into the record, at this stage of the game, a letter I received. It says, "Sir, I will be unable to attend Wednesday's meeting to the proposed cell tower. However, I did speak at the meeting in July 2009. At that time the opinion of the Village of Asharoken Police Commissioner that this tower was important for police, fire and emergency communications. I still feel that way. There are many cell phone gaps in our village as well as Northport Bay. The tower high on the hill overlooking the bay would, in my opinion, alleviate these safety communication problems. If possible,

please read my email into the public record. Thank you very much. Sincerely, Peter Masterson."

This was not an arbitrary and capricious decision by this Board to just stick up a cell tower. We thought there were valid reasons for safety here, communication here, improved emergency communication, which seemed to be a positive based on the fire department, the police department negotiations that I had, and there seemed to be a need, based on providers and the people that I talked to.

Again, no one is on-line to be here. But in my discussions with T-Mobile and Verizon and Metro PCS, and AT&T, they all expressed interest that this was an area that they could use a cell phone tower. With that in mind, we move to try and see whether that would be a way in which we could get passive income for the Vanderbilt.

I know that you strongly feel that my concern is for the people of Suffolk County and for the people of the State of New York but I honestly believe at this stage of the game and being a resident of Suffolk County, and being a parent, having children and being very much aware that there are a lot of children here, my aim was to try, with safety in mind, to bring income to the Vanderbilt. That was my aim, along with communications and emergency services, which I thought made a nice package.

Again, I remind you that I do not take this meeting lightly. I will take all of the concerns, which I have written down. I will get back to you. You will see some record. Obviously, you have the press here. You know that you can call Jon Cooper. You know that you can call the Legislators. They will urge me to have another meeting, if that is the case. I will try to address all of the concerns that you made here tonight. I do not take them lightly. Yes, you have been heard.

**(Mr. Noel Gish adjourned the public hearing at 8:30 p.m.)**

NG:ap