Franklin Township was approached to establish a Verizon monopole to provide necessary cell coverage in Pittstown, NJ. The Township’s mandate is to serve the public and community’s overall interest. Fundamental duties that fall on the Township are (1) public safety, (2) public infrastructure and (3) long-term fiscal responsibility. It is through these three factors, in the order above that the Township reviewed and analyzed the proposed monopole.

Cell coverage is vital to emergency response and communications during exigent circumstances. The Township’s primary concern is the public safety. The Township was provided an opportunity to expand necessary cell coverage that would save potential lives within the community and the general public. It would be irresponsible and grossly negligent of the Township to ignore these real improvements to public safety.

In 2018, a tropical storm created severe damage throughout the state. Franklin Township suffered extended power outages and residential landline service interruptions. Residents throughout Franklin Township were left without the ability to access vital emergency services or general communications because there was an absence of the necessary cell coverage. A resident had visited the municipal building in order to gain access to cell coverage and other modes of communication.

It is vital for the Township to maintain and improve the infrastructure that our community utilizes on a daily basis. Similar to roads, the Township has a fiduciary responsibility to assure that our community is provided with fundamental infrastructure. The public’s usage of telecommunication via cell coverage is universal. This need will only grow with the development of future technologies. Thus, the Township must keep pace with the needs of our community’s future.

Lastly, the lease agreement provides revenues that would offset the need to generate increased taxes on the Township to meet the Township’s appropriations and its related costs from inflation. The Township is sensitive and respects the community, thus the Township will always seek to find avenues to lower the Township’s fiscal burdens. Based upon Verizon, the monopole must be in the vicinity of the area in need of coverage. Thus, the Franklin Township municipal building was chosen as the overall superior site.

**Summarized Public Actions Taken:**
- The monopole was first discussed 30 months or 2.5 years ago on 4/6/17.
- The lease was fully executed 18 months or 1.5 years ago on 3/19/18.
- There were 7 Public meetings discussing the monopole over the last 2.5 years.
- There were 2 Public notices advertised in the Official Newspaper.
- There was 1 Ordinance (2018-01) created specifically for the project.
Franklin Township Municipal Code Section 220-73(B)(1)(a) explains that an antenna or tower is a permitted use on municipal property that does not require a variance. The ordinance was adopted 14 years ago in 2005.

**Summarized Timeline**

1. April 6, 2017 – Verizon Wireless Proposal was received by the Franklin Township Clerk’s Office
2. May 25, 2017 – Verizon Wireless made a presentation to the Committee at their Regular Meeting
3. June 22, 2017 – Committee discussed the proposal in Executive Session
4. July 27, 2017 – Committee discussed the proposal in Executive Session
5. September 28, 2017 – Committee moved to advertise and receive bids for the cell tower
7. November 9, 2017 – Bid Opening – Results needed to be discussed in Executive Session prior to action. Executive Session took place that night.
8. December 14, 2017 – Bid Award
11. February 8, 2018 – Land Lease Ordinance No. 2018-01 Adopted with no comment from the public.
15. March 14, 2019 – Mayor Authorized to sign Zoning Application.
16. June 11, 2019 – Meeting between Verizon and Township Officials regarding application and Township concerns. (Verizon proceeded to provide all requested documentation.)
17. September 9, 2019 – Residents of Sidney Road forwarded their concerns to the Town Committee.

**Timeline With Details Provided via Public Minutes:**

April 6, 2017 – Verizon Wireless Proposal was received by the Franklin Township Clerk’s Office

- The proposal states, “Pittstown, NJ currently requires a Macro Cell Site to provide adequate wireless coverage in the vicinity.”

May 25, 2017 – Verizon Wireless made a presentation to the Committee at their Regular Meeting

- The minutes to the agenda state, “Demand for service is higher than what the network currently provides and this creates a need for another tower. There is currently a service gap in this area. The municipal site is the most suitable. An agreement has been made for a new tower in the Town of Clinton at the Holiday Inn.”

- “As per Franklin Township's code, the Municipal Building is a permitted use for a tower.”
  - Franklin Township Municipal Code Section 220-73(B)(1)(a) states, “The uses listed in this section are deemed to be permitted uses and shall not require a conditional use permit or variance application. (B) The following uses are specifically permitted: (1) Antennas or towers located: (a) on property owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the Township of Franklin.”
The Ordinance above was adopted in August 11, 2005 (2005-17).

- “Emergency services may also choose to use the tower.”
- “George Reichert as OEM Coordinator commented on having the DPW and OEM use the tower.”

June 22, 2017 – Committee discussed the proposal in Executive Session

July 27, 2017 – Committee discussed the proposal in Executive Session

September 28, 2017 – Committee moved to advertise and receive bids for the cell tower

- The minutes to the agenda state, “Motion to authorize advertising for receiving bids for Cell Tower at Municipal Building site.”

October 12, 2017 – Discussion to extend November 8th deadline for cell tower bid proposal. Decision – not necessary.

- The minutes to the agenda state, “There was some discussion regarding possibly extending the November 8 deadline for the cell tower bid proposal. It was decided it was not necessary.”

November 9, 2017 – Bid Opening – Results needed to be discussed in Executive Session prior to action. Executive Session took place that night.

December 14, 2017 – Bid Award

- The minutes to the agenda state, “Motion to award cell tower bid to Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless at an annual rent of $28,080 plus 2% increase per year for 2-5.”
- “The Municipal Attorney will have an ordinance ready for introduction in January for the Lease of the Land on which the tower will be constructed.”


- The minutes to the agenda state, “Motion to Introduce on First Reading Ordinance 2018-01 An Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Lease of Certain Property Owned by the Township and Not Required for Public Purposes and more Commonly Known as a Portion of Block 16 Lot 40. Public Hearing to be schedule for a meeting to be held on Thursday, 8, 2019 at 8:00 P.M.”


February 8, 2018 – Land Lease Ordinance No. 2018-01 Adopted with no comment from the public.

- The minutes to the agenda state, “Motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance 2018-01.”
- “Comments from the public: None”
- “Motion to close the public hearing on Ordinance 2018-01”
- “Comments/Discussion by the Committee: The applicant for the cell tower will (not) need to go before the Land Use Board. The township will also receive income from Verizon. The township has also been requested to approve coming on site for drilling and they have been advised to give three day notice to the township and they must also provide the township with their signed copy of the lease agreement. Underground
utilities will also need to be marked out before drilling occurs.” Correction to the prior clerk’s transcription error.

February 15, 2018 – Adoption Notice in Official Newspaper.


March 19, 2018 – Fully executive copy of Land Lease Agreement. (Signed by Township on February 8, 2018. Signed by Verizon on March 19, 2018.)

March 14, 2019 – Mayor Authorized to sign Zoning Application.

• The minutes to the agenda state, “Authorize Mayor to sign zoning application for Verizon Monopole on Municipal property.”

June 11, 2019 – Meeting between Verizon and Township Officials regarding application and Township concerns. (Verizon proceeded to provide all requested documentation.)

September 9, 2019 – Residents of Sidney Road forwarded their concerns to the Town Committee.