

Sent: May 2, 2022, at 12:35 PM

Subject: Letter to Mayor Nyenhuis to all Council Members and Plan Commission members

Dear Mayor:

There is no good reason to build a cell tower that defaces the expensively restored prairie at the nearby state park, raises health concerns, divides a small town pitting one neighborhood against another, and gives some city government officials a looming conflict of interest.

Is it that the city is scrambling for revenue due to mounting expenditures downstream from its incredible decision to buy the school for \$1,000,000? If so, please be straightforward. Just as incredible: the city is demographically one of the eldest in the state. Also, aren't there very few school age kids in Marine with only about 350 taxpayers?

But for the sake of argument, let's ignore all of the above for the moment and reduce the argument to the functional. Can the citizens of Marine expect access to high quality digital communications anyway?

It's my belief they can, yes, Starlink can provide such communications immediately via satellite and they will soon add a breakthrough satellite phone service!

If you have not investigated the possibility of Starlink providing telecommunications to Marine citizens you have not yet done due diligence. And Wi-Fi phone service has been available all along!

Do not go forward with the construction of a cell tower. That would be an ill-informed decision that would make our pleasant little town a laughingstock. This is just the kind of story certain big media would love to have fun with.

Thank you for all your work on behalf of Marine. I know your job is difficult. But please drop your support for the ill-fated cell tower.

Jim Mortwedt

Marine on St. Croix

May 17, 2022

Mayor Kevin Nyenhuis & Council Members
City of Marine on St. Croix
121 Judd St.
Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

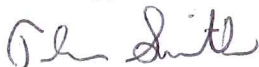
As Chair of the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, I am writing to you today thanking you for the progress you have made to date toward addressing poor wireless coverage for public safety in the Marine area. This letter is following up on our continued support for a proposed wireless cell tower in the City of Marine on St. Croix that would provide leased space to FirstNet, built by AT&T.

FirstNet is the first nationwide public safety wireless broadband platform dedicated to first responders and those who support them. The Marine on St. Croix site is one of the key locations identified by Minnesota public safety personnel as having limited or no wireless coverage. The successful build out of wireless service to Marine on St. Croix remains an integral part of the FirstNet network buildout plan for the State of Minnesota.

With this new site, first responders and their supporting agencies will have the dedicated wireless coverage and capacity they need to respond to emergency situations and help save lives.

Please continue to support this proposed tower and the plans to expand FirstNet in Washington County and throughout the state.

Sincerely,



Thomas Smith, SECB Chair
Assistant Commissioner – MN Department of Public Safety

Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 7:29 PM

Subject: Proposed cell tower in Marine on St Croix

Dear Mr. Mayor and members of the Marine Planning Commission:

My name is John Bowlin. My wife (Mimi) and I purchased the house at 17790 St. Croix Trail North last August. Juli Hagstrom was the previous owner. We live in New Jersey, but we have a long-standing connection to the St. Croix river valley. We have a place in Otisville, which has been in our family for 5 decades and which we visit every summer and fall. Right now, there are tenants in the Marine house, but we intend to retire there before too long.

We write to oppose the proposal to place a cell tower at the city compost site. We do so for a number of reasons.

1. Property values. A cell tower at that site, so close our house, will negatively impact our the value of our property. This should be obvious, but perhaps it needs to be said. These same negative impacts will also be felt by our neighbors at the Stugas. This is something that no other property owner in Marine would tolerate or be expected to tolerate.

2. Visual effects. You will notice that, of the five views of a potential tower listed in Vinco's conditional use permit application, none regard the tower from the boundary of our property, or from the Stugas, or from the compost road. This gives the citizens of Marine an inaccurate picture of the tower's actual visual effects. From the back door of our house, we would have a direct view the tower. Across every day, it would loom in our visual field. Again, this is something that no other property owner in Marine would tolerate or be expected to tolerate.

3. Drain field. Placing a cell tower in the compost site will eventually compel the city to move its drain field to the border of our property. I refer to the last page of Vinco's conditional use permit application. A city drain field tucked right up to our property line would be terrible, something (again) that no other property owner in Marine would tolerate or be expected to tolerate. If the cell power is not placed in the compost site, the replacement drain field could be tucked into north west corner of the compost site, away from both our property and the Stugas.

But note, the crucial point is this: by placing the cell tower at the compost site the city will be disadvantaging me and my family twice: once with the placement of the tower, and again with the placement of the drain field.

4. Health effects. A cell tower placed so close to our house and to the Stugas has a potential to negatively impact our health and the health of our immediate neighbors. As you may know, the data on the causal connections between cell tower radiation and various health deficits are inconclusive. They point in different directions. But given that uncertainty, and the gravity of the potential health deficits, it would be irresponsible to place a cell tower so close to human dwellings.

5. Coverage. Here there are two points. First, on page 20 of Vinco's application, we find maps of existing cellular coverage and likely coverage if/when a tower is placed in the compost lot. We do not

find equivalent maps for the other potential sites. Crucially, we do not find equivalent maps for other potential sites. Here I have in mind sites 1, 3, 8, and 12. This makes comparative judgments impossible to make. How then can a decision be responsibly made?

Second, the coverage maps included in Vinco's application regard ATT service alone. Since we are not offered equivalent coverage maps from the other carriers (Sprint, Verizon, T-Mobile), the maps provided give a potentially false impression. They unfairly tilt the argument in ATT's favor. But why do that?

6. Other options. Here I refer to the options discussed in point 4 of Jon Fogelberg's April 25, 2022 letter to the Marine Planning Commission. But I would suggest a few others.

a) If it is fact the case that carriers other than ATT offer sufficient coverage in Marine, then perhaps the town council could, with the consent of the voters, approach one of those carriers and strike a deal: you improve your service and we will guarantee a customer base.

b) Surely there are other landowners in May township who could be approached, who may be willing to have the tower placed on their acreage.

But the crucial point is this. Since the placement of the tower unfairly disadvantages some citizens of Marine while benefiting others, since it pits one section of town against others, dividing our little village in a political age already riven with toxic divisions—why go forward? Why not (instead) take the necessary time, expend the necessary creativity, and come up with an alternative?

Perhaps you will say "because we have already waited too long for improved cell service." To which I reply, it is never too late to do the right thing.

Respectfully yours,

John Bowlin

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 11:12 AM

Subject: Comments for the Cell Tower Hearing

Dear Mayor Nyenhuis, Council Members and Planning Commission Members,

We have a few questions and comments regarding the proposed cell tower to be built at the city compost site.

The big question is: what is the City's goal regarding a cell tower for a population of 700 people? Under the current proposed plan, AT&T is the only provider scheduled to locate on this tower for a very small subset of customers.

Will this AT&T tower offer any benefits to Marine Verizon and TMobile customers? The short answer is no per Ron Mitchell of AT&T. Verizon and TMobile can offer enhanced signal strength if they choose to co-locate on the tower, but Vinco does not have any commitments from these two providers. And it is unclear who would even advocate for these providers to locate once it is offered in "their budget cycle."

And the million dollar question is why would Verizon or TMobile even want to co-locate on a Marine tower at the compost site? The Marine compost site elevation is 870ft. The Paul Ave/May Township Verizon tower located 2.2 miles away from Marine is at 923ft. The TMobile tower located 2.7 miles away in Osceola, WI is at 935ft. Why would they invest to co-locate on a tower with less elevation, located less than 3 miles away from their current structures?

<https://www.antennasearch.com/HTML/search/search.php?address=marine+on+saint+croix>

Washington County emergency services is not co-locating on the tower, the compost site elevation height does not work for their needs.

Is the City's messaging trying to convince folks to move over to AT&T? We won't even find out if AT&T will offer a battery back-up until the City signs an agreement. Lease details are only negotiated after the City signs an agreement. Will the City even benefit financially from this project?

We invite you to listen to the replay of the April 26th Marine Planning Commission meeting, fast forward to minute 1:12. This is where AT & T and Vinco talk about "if Verizon and TMobile were to choose to co-locate on the tower." Nothing is in the works to have them as co-locators!

City leaders have stated "we need to start somewhere." That is fine, if we have a strong plan to add other customers to the tower, but we don't and very unclear if anyone is advocating for this. It almost feels like "we are checking a box" to put up a metal 180 ft cell tower and not fulfilling the objectives to really enhance cell coverage for the betterment of our 700 population.

If this project goes forward, the City leader's have a lot of explaining to do to the citizens of Marine. This is all we have heard about since December of 2019, that Marine is working on a cell tower. And now the only deliverable is an enhanced AT&T signal, a better AT&T propagation to downtown and a bunch of unknown wants. In addition, we are putting the current drainfield at risk because of construction.

Do your own research on satellite technology, this technology is right around the corner. This proposed project is for a very small subset of folks. Why are we even going forward with this?

We propose that you go back to the drawing board and revisit other sites that would welcome having providers co-locate or wait for satellite technology to enhance cell signal strength. Do it right or don't do it all!

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Burke and Roger Lyle
Marine on St. Croix

Sent: Wed 5/18/2022 8:38 PM

Subject: CELL TOWER CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

My name is Jon Fogelberg and I am the current President of the Marine Stugas Association. Our Association owns the land on the hill adjoining the proposed cell tower site. We currently use this land as a pet walking area and for our hiking activity. Our ownership of this land has not been recognized by the Planning Commission and we fear that the proposed tower will both limit the use of our land and obviously lower the property value of the land and limit future potential use as a recreation site. Please do not approve the use permit until this conflict is recognized and analyzed. As you may know, we are a retirement community for ages 55+ and many of our townhome owners have grave concerns about building the tower so close to our land. We are also concerned about the health of city workers or contractors who work around the drain field site, cutting the grass, and other maintenance issues. A related issue is that I understand the tower footprint will be 100' by 100' or 10,000 square feet. Will not this have a negative impact on expanding the drain field site which is reaching its capacity limit and age limit? The current site is bounded by the William O'Brien State Park land and our Association land. Is there enough room for future expansion of the drain field or what other contingency plans exist?

There are so many existing alternatives to a cell phone tower it is difficult for some of us to support its construction unless we have greater transparency and understanding. The brand new Elon Musk Starlink satellite system is now available in Marine and could easily solve any of the safety or access concerns that caused the study of a cell phone tower to be initiated in the first place. Have you looked into this new system? You should.

The only obvious beneficiary of a new tower is AT&T. Their current service level is poor for reasons only they understand. Please table this project and rethink it!

I know and recognize the time and effort you have in this project. Considering the downside of an ugly tower in our community, I urge you to table or reject this project. Thanks!

Jon Fogelberg
Marine on St. Croix

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 9:20 AM

Subject: Cell Tower

TO: Marine Planning Commission

c/o City Clerk

mosc@cityofmarine.org

RE: Vinco Inc.

Proposal Number: MOSC-2022-1

Dated April 25, 2022

- 1) What are the elevations of the existing towers mentioned in the subject report?
- 2) What are the current "blind spots" from which the need for a cell tower originated? Please list by approximate Latitude and Longitude similar to those of the proposed tower cited under PROJECT INFORMATION.
- 3) Are the "blind spots" identified in Question #2 above identical for all existing carriers (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, Other)?
If not, please identify each blind spot by carrier name.
- 4) Assuming technological change since the cell tower study was initiated, have any of these possible alternative solutions, directly or in combination, been explored by the Planning Commission to correct any or all of the blind spots listed in Question #2 and Question #3 above?
 - a) Use of existing landlines?
 - b) Use of Midco (Mid-Continent) cable and Midco Wi-fi?
 - 1) For residences?
 - 2) For downtown city-wide Wi-fi?
 - c) Adding residential boosters to enhance existing carriers' propagation?
 - d) Recommend changing carriers to residential owners?
 - 1) Using an existing tower or
 - 2) demolishing the same and constructing a more prominent tower on the same site?
 - f) Adding or using the New Starlink satellite system, now available to Marine citizens in zip code 55047? Either directly or in combination with the existing solutions listed in 4. a) through 4. e) above?
- 5) Have any citizens communicated other possible solutions via email, petitions, or voice during public meetings, and may we have access to these communications, whatever their format?
- 6) Have the mayor, council members, or planning committee members communicated other possible solutions via email, petitions, or voice during private or public meetings, and may we have access to these communications, whatever their format?
- 7) Has AT&T or Vinco indicated what rent they are willing to pay to Marine if a tower is constructed? Is there a minimum acceptable rent established by the City of Marine?

Jon Fogelberg

Marine on St. Croix

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 1:56 PM

Subject: Comments for Cell Tower Public Hearing on Monday

I will be traveling next week and not be able to attend the public hearing on the cell tower. If there is an opportunity to read the following at the meeting, I would be most grateful.

City Council Members, Planning Commission and fellow citizens of Marine,

You know that I have been working on this Cell Tower Sub-committee for the past many months - seeking to put data around the opportunity and the priority for it's importance for the safety and connectivity for work and home.

We've had three emergency events in the past week that have made this incredibly personal and more important for us to move forward.

1) May 10 - Grass Fire between Judd Street and Highway 95 at 230pm. I heard the siren sound, followed by a lot of commotion outside. When I looked out my second floor window there were flames all across the marsh area. John was at work, my car was at J-Rods. All I could think about as the 3 fire departments showed up and parked in front of our house, was the images of wildfires and how to make sure I was prepared to evacuate if needed. I was at the end of my driveway trying to assess that likelihood - and frantically trying to text John, call a friend to help me get my car, and be prepared. None of my texts or calls were able to go through. I had to run back and forth to the house in order to be safe, and be ready. Thanks to the Marine, Scandia and DNR Fire departments, we were all safe.

2) May 18 - Tree blowdown knocking out power lines at 730pm. We had an isolated but strong straight-line wind and downburst come through out of nowhere. During the downpour we heard a loud crash, followed by popping. Once again I looked out my second story window to see fire. John called 911 and they already knew about the downed power line. Two of my neighbors on the west side of the street, very close to the line, ran and sheltered at Irene's porch. Again, we were in our driveway trying to assess risk and what we would need to do to help our neighbors be safe, as well as our collective homes and vehicles - which were very close. Once again there was no cell service available. I was trying to call Irene who was working out of town and not able to reach her. And then once the power went out, we were without communication for the rest of the night - as frontier was having issues as well.

3) May 11 - Severe Thunderstorm Warning Siren. Our landline phone went out due to lightning in this storm. Because we had power (and therefore wifi) we were able to maintain connectivity - thankfully.

These are three very concrete and real scenarios that happened in our town, and the kind of things that are increasingly likely to happen again. I need to give a BIG shout out to the Marine Fire Department who was on site quickly - we are so lucky to have them.

I urge us to move forward with the tower as quickly and responsibly as possible.
sara

Sara Rottunda
Marine on St. Croix

May 23, 2022 12:41 PM

Subject: Cell Tower CUP feedback

Greetings:

Unfortunately I cannot make the CUP public hearing because I am on business travel, so I cannot provide my feedback, which is exactly as it has always been.

It is critical for public safety, commerce, and the liberty and well being of our citizens to have the badly needed cellular infrastructure we have lacked for so long.

On a personal note, my 17 year old son Mac lost his best friend in a tragic drowning accident on the river a few weeks ago. His friend (Suleiman) jumped in after another friend was struggling, and then slipped under the water. My son dove trying to get him, but was unsuccessful. It is a devastating loss, for my son, Suleiman's family, and so may others.

In such situations... minutes matter. If there is an emergency in our town, or nearby on the river, there should be the ability to reliably get help fast. It is literally a matter of life or death. I appeal to the PC

The process of site selection has been rigorous, and the guidance to commercial vendors on the requirements and processes made very clear.

It is time to move forward with this very important improvement to our town, and to do so with expedience appropriate to the process. To do otherwise is not in the best interest of our town and citizens at large.

Regards,

_Dana

Dana Vannen Anderson
Marine on St. Croix

May 23, 2022 10:23 AM

Subject: Electromagnetic Radiation from Cellphone Towers: A Potential Health Hazard for Birds, Bees, and Humans | IntechOpen

Please distribute this report to the mayor, council, and planning commission members along with this comment:

The government and carriers state that it is inconclusive regarding cell phone tower radiation on the health impact on humans. However, the government is in the process of selling \$90 billion in new wavelength licenses and it is not in their best interest, nor that of the carriers, to advertise such potential adverse effects.

Remember how long tobacco companies knew tobacco caused lung cancer before it became common knowledge. Remember how oil companies knew fossil fuels caused climate change before it became common knowledge. And how long did asbestos companies know the adverse impact on lungs before their enormous \$ settlements.

Big companies do not reveal knowledge that could negatively impact their companies profits. The carriers know right now whether these towers impact human health. If the answer is that towers do not adversely human health, the companies would have gone public with this fact years ago. The fact that they have not released this information is that they must have an adverse impact on human health. Please do not buy the "inconclusive" argument.

Jon Fogelberg

Marine on St. Croix

<https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/60604>

Monday, May 23, 2022

Dear Mr. Mayor, City Council and Planning Commission members,

We're writing to you as your neighbors. We're writing to you as residents of the Marine Stugas, neighbors of the compost site which has been selected as the new cell tower site. Deep feelings accompany this topic therefore I will separate facts from feelings.

Facts:

A cell tower will negatively affect our property values in the Stugas and those of our close neighbors.

A cell tower will be highly visible to the Stugas residents and our close neighbors.

A cell tower will introduce health risks. So far, every organization we've researched states that more research is needed to determine the safety/health risks of living close to a cell tower.

Studies about the effect of RF waves from cell towers have been done in Germany, Israel, Spain, Brazil, and other countries. Their separate findings, though not identical, have significant areas of overlap linking health risks and proximity to cell towers. In general, the greater the distance from a cell tower base station, the safer an individual is. The distance commonly found to be "safe" is 400 meters, rounded to 1,300 feet.

The distance from the proposed site of the cell tower to the Stugas is in one instance, less than 900 feet, and for the other units, under 1,000 feet.

The proposed site is 1,300 feet away from the nearest city council/planning commission member.

The proposed compost site presents no negative effects to the residences of the mayor, or any city council or planning commission members.

The Stugas residents already do water tests every 3 months due to the risk of living just downhill from the city drain field.

Feelings:

Dear neighbors, we're **glad** that you don't live near the proposed site of the new cell tower, because we care about your well-being. We don't want you to bear any negative effects that we, ourselves, are not willing to incur.

We have trusted you, and want to continue to trust you. You spoke of "transparency" at the open house meeting in March. We want to think you're transparent. At the same time, there were not propagation charts presented for all the sites said to be considered. Could that possibly be because AT&T had already made clear to the city that they were interested in renting space on a cell tower here only if the tower was at the compost site? Surprisingly, there were no propagation charts for the city garage site, which is coincidentally near Jackson Meadow where the mayor and at least three other members of the city council/planning commission reside (a planning commission which was appointed, not elected, and included not one person from the neighborhood adjoining the compost site.) Well, you see how this appears, right? But since things are not always as they appear, we're not jumping to conclusions. Nevertheless, it does add to the importance of complete transparency, so our beloved neighborhood

can know the planning commission didn't just go through the motions with a preferred outcome already in mind.

We acknowledge this is a difficult task for the planning commission, and appreciate your willingness to tackle it. Not everyone will get exactly what they want. However, we're also confident a kind solution can be found if there is a willingness to take the time to put each other first and compromise a bit. Perhaps it would be possible for citizens of the Stugas and Marine to donate funds to buy property near or adjacent to the compost site for a tower that would be 1,300 feet from all of us, mitigating at least one of the factors. Please don't leave our neighborhood out of the process, as we have been excluded so far.

We residents of the Stugas have a lot to offer. We are not a group of irrelevant old people who are one step away from the nursing home. We want to add value to our town. Collectively, we have life experiences, education, and professional expertise that ranges further than you may expect. At the same time, we are in a vulnerable season of life.

Please, dear ones, do not expose us to the cumulative effect of placing a cell tower so near to us, burdening us with both the cell tower consequences and the drain field risks. With the single act of placing the cell tower at the proposed site, our well-being would suffer significant loss as...

- Our property values would be reduced.
- We would be exposed to the risk of health consequences that are as yet inadequately understood.
- It removes options for developing Stugas' land only 300 feet from the proposed tower site.
- The prairie planting project in the state park that we all enjoy would be degraded.
- The Stuga neighborhood would lose the feeling that we are a valued part of the city.

We will continue to care about you and want the best for you whatever the outcome. After all, one part of our dear little town cannot say to another part, "We don't need you." Surely, we can all work together, as in the past, for the good of all who live in Marine.

Respectfully and lovingly,

Lizabeth and Michael Towers
Marine on St. Croix

Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2022 1:39 PM
Subject: Cell Tower

TO: Mayor
Council Members
Planning Commission Members

CC: Concerned Citizens (who provided written comments)

Cell Tower

Following my attendance at the May 23, 2022 "Public Hearing: Cell Tower Conditional Use Permit," meeting I recommend the city drop this project.

The attendees at the meeting spoke against the tower but, more importantly, notice who did not attend:

The Fire Dept., the Police Dept., Washington County, the Minnesota DNR, local businesses, commuters, and residents clamoring for better cell service. If there was a need for the tower, these would be the groups who should attend to speak out for the tower. One businessperson spoke up for better coverage; in a private conversation later, he told me he had perfect internet and cell coverage for his business, but some clients didn't like to need to use a Wi-Fi password for their cell phones.

And the coup d'état was the revelation and admission by the AT&T spokesperson that a 4G tower was not necessary to provide the more modern and preferred 5G service to Marine.

Please read all the written testimony provided by concerned citizens before the meeting, as they are now a matter of public record.

Finally, consider that the City of Marine on Saint Croix Wireless Communication Tower Ordinance Adopted on the 14th day of October, 2021 and Amended on May 5, 2022, does not allow the tower to be constructed on the proposed drain field site for two important reasons:

- 1) The Applicant Vinco Inc. has not shown that the telecommunication equipment planned for the proposed tower cannot be accommodated per Section 14: Restrictions paragraph c.
- 2) The Applicant Vinco Inc. has admitted that the proposed tower cannot be visually inconspicuous or stealth-designed from the State Park, and since the boundary of the State Park is less than one-quarter (1/4) mile from the proposed tower, it cannot be built.

While it is true that the City Council can overturn these Restrictions, why would they pave the way for an ancient 4G tower that most citizens oppose and no citizens spoke in favor of constructing?

Sincerely,
Jon Fogelberg
Marine on Saint Croix