

*Village of New Maryland*  
*Public Information Meeting*  
*Proposed Rogers 65-metre Wireless Communications Tower*  
*27 November 2024*  
*Session Notes*

**Present:** Mayor Judy Wilson-Shee  
Councillor Laurie Pearson  
Councillor Alex Scholten  
Scott Sparks, Treasurer  
Rob Pero, Building Inspector/Development Officer  
Nate Murchison, Assistant Building Inspector

Deputy Mayor Mike Pope  
Councillor Tim Scammell  
Councillor Mariet van Groenewoud  
Maggie Kitchener, Assistant Clerk

**Also Present:** Approximately 8 (eight) residents attended the meeting, as well as Honourable Cindy Miles and Roxanne Reeves

**Guests:** Michele Klein, Municipal Planner with Scott Telecom Services, Rogers Representatives

**Absent:** Cynthia Geldart, CAO/Clerk

←—————→

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Judy Wilson-Shee called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the acknowledgement that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq people and that we should live and work on this land in relationships of peace, friendship and mutual respect.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

**MOVED BY** Councillor Mariet van Groenewoud and **seconded by** Councillor Tim Scammell that the agenda be approved as circulated. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. Disclosures of Interest**

No *Conflicts of Interest* were declared.

**4. Public Consultation: Proposed Rogers Telecommunication Tower**

- Mayor Wilson-Shee clarified that this Public Information Meeting is not intended as a venue for debate on the matter. The purpose of the consultation is to allow the Applicants to provide a brief explanation of their proposal and give residents an opportunity to express any comments they may have to Council. She further explained that Council will not be making any decisions at this meeting, and any written comments submitted previously, as well as verbal statements shared this evening, will be carefully considered by Council. A decision will be made at a future Council meeting.

**i) Introductions and Background Information:**

- ❖ Rob Pero, Building Inspector/Development Officer, continued the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He introduced Michele Klein, Municipal Planner with Scott Telecom Services, representing Rogers Communications, who would present the details of the proposal.
- ❖ He explained that the federal government holds regulatory authority over the placement and installation of telecommunications towers in Canada, not the local Council. As part of the federal consultation process, the proponent is required to engage with nearby property owners and the local Council to gather statements of concurrence or non-concurrence with the proposed location.
- ❖ Rob highlighted that, in this case, Rogers also requires access to the site across Village-owned property. In accordance with Village policy, Council has initiated its own public notification and consultation process in parallel with the federal requirements, which is why notifications were made via letters, social media, website postings, and advertisements in the *Daily Gleaner*.
- ❖ He further noted that this meeting provides the public with an opportunity to ask questions and share comments

**ii) Presentation of Proposal:**

- Michele thanked residents for attending and explained that she was there to represent Rogers Communications.
- She explained that, in her role through Municipal Affairs, she has been working with Rob. Michele noted that this presentation was intended to aid Rogers' path forward and invited those in attendance to share their feedback.
- She provided a PowerPoint presentation which included the following key points:
  - Towers in Canada are regulated by Safety Code 6, which includes strict limits on radio frequency (RF) exposure to protect people, animals, and the environment. The guidelines are based on extensive scientific research, which is regularly reviewed and updated.
  - RF levels from cell phones and towers are typically hundreds of times lower than safety limits, offering reassurance that they are well within established safety standards.
  - Rogers connects with communities nationwide through donation programs, including the Rogers Youth Fund, arts and culture sponsorships, and employee-driven initiatives such as the annual United Way campaign.
  - The Telecommunications Process involves planning, public notification, and municipal approval. Michele noted that they are currently in the public notification stage, where community feedback is gathered and forwarded to the municipality, with the goal of obtaining concurrence for the tower.
  - Rogers follows public consultation guidelines established by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) or municipal policies, where applicable. Notification packages have been provided to 17 nearby properties, and public notices have appeared in the Daily Gleaner. Feedback is collected over a 30-day period, in accordance with ISED requirements. Depending on municipal requirements, other engagement methods, such as an open house, may also be used.
  - Land Use Authorities (LUA), represented by municipalities, collaborate with telecommunication companies on proposed antenna systems. Their local knowledge helps address concerns through prioritized planning meetings and the exploration of alternative solutions when necessary.
  - The Spectrum Management and Telecommunications Sector of ISED manages Canada's RF spectrum and ensures compliance with national and international standards. Before construction, Rogers meets all regulatory requirements, including engineering and environmental standards, and seeks approvals from Transport Canada (TC), NAV Canada (NAV), and ISED following municipal and public consultation.
  - Wireless technology supports the safety and connectivity of over 25 million Canadians, enabling critical services such as EMS, police, fire response, and rural broadband. With 75% of households using wireless phones and over half of 911 calls made via mobile wireless devices, this technology is essential for emergency response.
  - Two photo simulations of the proposed site location were displayed: the first was 158 meters from the tower on Highway 101, and the second image was 269 meters away. Michele directed residents to the notification package for clearer images.
  - Primary areas of coverage concerns were centered on Highway 101 and Daniel Road, including residential areas along Highway 101 and those east of it. Colour-coded diagrams were presented, showing existing coverage versus coverage with the new site (A1731), which reflects the expanded communication area. Michele explained that blue represented in-building coverage, and green represented in-car coverage.
  - Michele summarized the site survey, noting that the proposed site location would feature a 60-meter tower with a 5-meter lightning rod, recognized by Rogers as a 65-meter tower. The site is located in a Commercial Community (CC) zone, meeting the setback guidelines established by Village Policy. It also has a willing landlord, appropriate zoning for use, and available access to power. NAV and TC approvals were obtained for the tower's installation, with no lighting or markings required for aviation safety.
  - Residents were invited to share comments or complete the provided questionnaire, and Michele stated she would respond to them.

**(iii) Public Comments:**

- ❖ The following residents shared comments during the meeting:
  - Doug Charters
  - Brock Coswick – Philips Drive
  - Lynne Appleby – Highway 102
  - Howard (Village resident)
- ❖ The comments included the following issues and concerns:
  - **Doug Charters**, a property owner adjacent to the proposed tower site, expressed concerns about the potential devaluation of his property. His family has lived in the Village for over 100 years, and he is upset that the Village is considering the tower's location. He expressed concerns about the proximity to residential homes and stated that future research may reveal potential issues with radiation. Doug highlighted that his house is just 200 feet away, and if the tower were to collapse, it would damage his home. He has submitted photos to Council for reference. Doug questioned why properties to the east, rather than those in the center of the Village, could not be used instead. Michele explained that an investigation was conducted, and no other suitable co-locations were found. Doug asked Council whether they would approve a tower so close to their own homes. Michele emphasized that the lack of communication access could also reduce property values. She noted that the search for suitable village properties began six years ago, starting with Village-owned properties and then extending to privately owned properties. Rob added that other locations were ruled out due to RF transmission criteria for the targeted area Rogers was considering. Doug inquired about the possibility of erecting a tower near the new water treatment plant off Sunrise Estates Drive or converting the Sprucewood Drive tower to 5G. Michele responded that there were no towers in the Sunrise Estates Drive area and explained that Rogers requires towers to be at least 60 meters tall within their search area. She also noted that other criteria, such as access to power and the ability to support a 5G upgrade, were not met in other locations. Michele acknowledged receipt of his emails and stated that his concerns have been documented.
- ❖ Deputy Mayor Pope clarified that this was a Rogers initiative, not a VONM initiative, and reassured the public that Council is not responsible for the decision but is merely part of the process to address concerns.
  - **Brock Coswick** shared concerns about the maintenance building being cluttered with storage cans and the tower being placed nearby. He feels other locations such as behind the fire station or other high-ground areas, away from residential homes, should be considered as better options.
  - **Lynn Appleby** expressed concerns about the lack of information provided and that Rogers is not providing unbiased safety information due to the lack of long-term 5G research. She disagrees with the tower and believes its erection will negatively impact wildlife, property values, and health. Lynn submitted a letter opposing the easement and urging Rogers to consider a less intrusive location. Michele acknowledged receipt of her emails and assured that her concerns have been documented.
  - **Howard** thanked Michele for the presentation and stated that the tower would not impact his sightlines or way of life. As the manager of the second-largest electromagnetic RF location in North America, with extensive experience working with service providers, including Rogers, Howard offered advice to Council. He strongly discouraged granting an easement for access and instead recommended considering a license or access agreement, where the Village retains control over the property. He explained that once an easement is granted, it is difficult to retract, as it is unfettered and uninhibited, making it challenging to reverse if issues arise with the tower. He suggested that Council engage with private landowners, particularly in self-supported sites, to understand the terms of their agreements with Rogers, as this may provide insight into potential concerns. Regarding Michele's claim that the tower would benefit emergency response, Howard acknowledged that while it is not part of the TMR service, it could contribute to the triangular location systems for Rogers' customers in emergencies. He also mentioned that Industry Canada mandates additional bandwidth on towers when space is available, benefiting multiple providers (Bell, Eastlink, etc.), including emergency services. He further noted that, if the local fire department's radio system encountered issues, there

may be opportunities to collocate and benefit the community. Howard encouraged the Village to work with the private landowner to review the terms of their contract, as landowners are not obligated to use Rogers' standard agreements and can negotiate their own terms. He concluded his comments by recommending that Council avoid granting an easement if possible, and if an easement is deemed necessary, ensure that it includes terms, conditions, and cautionary agreements to address potential future concerns.

- ❖ Rob thanked everyone for their input; he then turned the floor back over to the Mayor.
- ❖ Mayor Wilson-Shee, in an effort to ensure everyone had been heard, called 3 (three) times for further comments in favor of, and in opposition to, the proposal. After hearing none, Mayor Wilson-Shee concluded the Public Hearing and thanked the residents and Michele for attending.
- ❖ Mayor Wilson-Shee concluded the meeting by expressing her gratitude to the residents for their time and attendance; she highlighted the significance of public notification meetings in matters such as this, as they provide residents with an opportunity to remain informed and offer input, which is vital to informing Council's decisions; she assured attendees that Council would give full consideration to the information provided by both the proponent and the public; the matter would be discussed with particular regard to access needs and the potential impact on the community prior to any decisions being made;
- ❖ Mayor Wilson-Shee thanked all participants for their involvement in the public review process and encouraged anyone with further inquiries to contact Rob at any time.

### 5. Adjournment

**MOVED BY** Councillor Alex Scholten and **seconded by** Councillor Mariet van Groenewoud that the meeting be adjourned. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Maggie Kitchener*

Maggie Kitchener  
Assistant Clerk



*Judy Wilson-Shee*  
Judy Wilson-Shee  
Mayor

*Maggie Kitchener*  
Maggie Kitchener  
Assistant Clerk