

On Friday, February 23rd, Mayor Michael Halfacre, Council President Thomas Gilmour, Councilman Christopher Walrath, and our new Borough Administrator Mary met with the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Presentation (DEP) to review the Land Diversion application that was submitted in January. This application would ultimately permit the Borough to locate a Cell Tower in Fair Haven Fields.

The DEP denied this application in the presence of our Borough Officials.

The application was denied by the DEP on fears of potential suits by environmental groups and claims that there were other sites available to install a Cell Tower, having no care or concern that these other sites were near homes or schools.

To review, the key aspects of this proposal were:

- The Borough proposed to provide the DEP with four otherwise buildable lots near the intersection of William Street and Hendrickson Place that border on the “Old Chipping Site,” which is part of preserved land in the Borough.
- The Borough further proposed to revert both these lots and the “Old Chipping Site” back to their original natural state, and incorporate them into the Fair Haven Fields parkland. The result of the swap (which includes the preserving of the “Old Chipping Site” which is part of the Fair Haven Fields) would provide over 1.3 acres to the Fair Haven Fields parkland.
- The smaller parcel of land (approximately 1/10th of an acre) in Fair Haven Fields that the Borough proposed to receive in return is intended to be used as the site for a cell tower in Fair Haven.
- The Borough also proposed that all funds generated from a cell tower located in Fair Haven Fields would be dedicated to recreation and park maintenance in the Borough.
- The Borough said it would require that the contractor selected to install the cell tower and associated equipment be mindful of the preserved land setting in selection of the buildings, fencing, and antenna structure.

This was a sure win for Open Space in our Borough.

Our Borough Officials used a presentation that will be posted on our website (<http://www.fair-haven.com/celltower>). They represented our Borough extremely effectively and did not sit back and take lightly what the DEP dished out. Mayor Halfacre, in particular, delivered an impassioned rebuke to the DEP.

We had two letter/email campaigns which most recently resulted in over 200 letters to the DEP plus a petition drive that netted over 400 signatures. Clearly, the Residents of the Borough were behind this proposal.

It is too soon to think about next steps but Borough Officials will soon huddle for a strategy session.

I want to thank our Borough Officials, our State Legislators in the Assembly (Jennifer Beck and Mike Panter), the leaders of our Resident Groups (Tom Kirman and Markus Hofmann), Maryellen Benkert and her team who led the petition drive, and the other very active members of our Borough team including Terry Simboli, Lisa Laughinghouse, and Robyn Etzler, and numerous other people whose name I will remember later, plus the hundreds of Fair Haven residents who sent in letters and emails, and signed our petition.

But, let's make one thing clear – using the battle cry from the Revolutionary War – “we've only just begun to fight!” We are not going to sit back and take lightly the irresponsible, uncaring, inane, and unresponsive action by a bunch of State bureaucrats, who have little regard for the long term health of our community.

As always, we will keep you informed about our next steps.

Stu Tartarone
Residents for the Future of Fair Haven