

## Cell phone towers to be debated

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middletown

Towers have already gone up on two township-owned properties, a move that upset many residents.

Residents can have their say on proposed cell phone towers at two township-owned properties during tonight's Middletown supervisors meeting.

On the agenda is a discussion about possibly erecting towers at Poplar Park on Poplar Street in the Parkland section of the township, and at the Middletown Country Club on Bellevue Avenue bordering Langhorne.

Last year, the supervisors reached an agreement with TowerOne Partners to seek out and market cell phone tower locations around Middletown, and the company has looked at many township-owned properties. Towers have already been put up at a piece of township-owned land adjacent to the University of Phoenix building on Route 413 and a small piece of the township-owned Styer property on Langhorne-Yardley Road.

According to the agreement, towers erected on township-owned properties are exempt from the usual zoning approval and notification requirements. However, township officials have started putting notices of proposed cell phone tower sites on the township website and government access cable television channels.

The agreement with TowerOne gives Middletown 40 percent of the rental income from each cell phone carrier with an antenna attached to a tower on township-owned land.

That's about \$10,000 a year for the township from each carrier, TowerOne representatives have said. Middletown could potentially earn \$260,000 a year from the agreement and \$7.5 million over the next 29 years, they said.

However, many residents have been upset to suddenly find cell phone towers springing up on township land near their homes.

Most of the supervisors, including Chairman Tom Gallagher, were not on the board when the agreement with TowerOne was approved.

"I know the township needs the revenue, and it's basically free money because we don't have to do anything for it, but residents near those township lands shouldn't have less rights just because it's township land and not private property," said Gallagher.

Supervisor Robert McMonagle has defended the agreement. He said cell phone towers will keep going up anyway, so the township might as well get some money out of it and help reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Tonight's meeting is 7:30 at the township municipal center, 3 Municipal Way.

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