WBAL, Baltimore, MD (Fac. ID No. 65696)
WBAL HEARST TELEVISION INC.
Form 2100, Schedule 387 Transition Plan Progress Report
10 weeks before the end of the assigned construction deadline

WBAL 10-week Transition Plan Progress Report

The exhibit is to provide additional information on repack issues faced by WBAL.

The broadcast tower used by WBAL is jointly owned by three stations, WBAL (Hearst Television), WMAR (Scripps) and WJZ (CBS). The candelabra tower presents unique challenges for each of these Phase 9 repacked stations. Given the difficulty and time required to change the antennas using conventional gin pole tower rigging methods, the decision has been made to use a helicopter service for this task. The time saved is significant, and this is considered the safest method.

The three-station tower consortium, Television Tower Inc., has identified a nearby parking area of the Ridley Athletic Complex, which is part of Loyola University, as the only viable staging area for a helicopter lift. TTI, along with consultants and tower crew, has been in negotiations with Loyola University for the use of this area for almost two years. It appears an agreement is possible but has not been signed at the time of this report. The use of the area is limited to the very short window of time, May 25-June 8, 2020.

Helicopter lift regulations require a 300-foot radius safety zone which means portions of the Ridley Athletic Complex and both WBAL and WJZ studios must be evacuated during a helicopter lift. This means the helicopter lift must be done on one of the two weekends inside the May 25-June 8 time window.

The success of this operation depends on completing an agreement with Loyola University, and clear weather one of the two weekends. The 15-16 helicopter lifts can be done in two days. The second weekend is a backup. If inclement weather or other circumstances prevent the helicopter lift on both weekends, a conventional gin pole installation will be used and will take 6-8 weeks to complete.

Construction Permit documentation has been submitted to the appropriate local government agency for review. Approval is expected in mid-March.

This timeframe is after the May 1, 2020 Phase 9 completion date. WBAL will replace their auxiliary antenna, modify the license and use this auxiliary antenna to timely (i.e., by the Phase 9 deadline) transition to their post-repack channel. WBAL filed a request to extend the Repack Construction Permit on February 3, 2020. Approval of the CP extension is pending.

WBAL will not be fully constructed by the Phase 9 transition date.