

FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2015

AGENDA ITEMS

2. 15-0759 Hearing to consider a request to allow the construction and operation of a wireless telecommunication facility [Special Use Permit S15-0003/Verizon Wireless Communication Facility (Mono-Pine)-Fairplay]* on property identified by Assessor's Parcel Number 094-110-14, consisting of 48 acres, in the Fairplay area, submitted by Verizon Wireless; and staff recommending the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1) Adopt the Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study prepared by staff; and
 - 2) Approve Special Use Permit S15-0003 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.
- (Supervisory District 2)

Jennifer Franich-County Planner, presented the item to the Commission with a recommendation of approval. She also conducted a PowerPoint presentation.

Andrew Lisa, Epic Wireless representing Verizon Wireless, made the following comments:

- Thanked staff for the presentation as well as the time to present to the commission;
- Fairplay area has a reduced level of coverage; and
- Verizon is more than happy to comply with all conditions presented by staff.

Commissioner Pratt questioned if other Verizon cellular towers are within the Fairplay area and mentioned the area is a dead zone. Andrew Lisa agreed with Commissioner Pratt that signal strength is minimal in the area and is one of the challenges for this area.

Commissioner Pratt questioned if any alternatives to the monopine had been reviewed since the area has minimal pine trees. Andrew Lisa mentioned the option of going to an oak tree but naturally oaks cap around 50 feet which does not meet height requirements in place for cellular towers.

Chair Stewart made discussions of a recent oak cellular tower which was approved. Andrew Lisa noted that broad leaf has been used at other locations and noted that going to a broad leaf, the project will take a larger foot space that the current plans do not have allowance for.

Discussions ensued on broad leaf versus monopine options due to high visibility area, alternative location options and distances from surrounding residences/property lines.

Chair Stewart closed public comment.

Chair Stewart stated concerns of applicant not being aware of existing approved mono oak project in the area.

Commissioner Miller questioned if any actual photos are available to see what a mono oak would look like.

Commissioner Heflin stated that the tower will stand out regardless due to the open area of the project sight. Commissioner Pratt agreed.

Chair Stewart brought up the Merrychase Drive Verizon tower project and encouraged the applicant to review those plans. Chair Stewart questioned if the Commission could delegate the authority to the Planning Division Director to approve revised plans if the applicant is requested to revise them for changes to a mono oak.

Roger Trout, Development Services, stated that delegated authority to the Planning Division Director was okay. David Livingston-County Counsel agreed that was okay as long as the project does not expand but previously the applicant noted that if the project changes to a mono oak, the project will grow. Roger Trout discussed prior cellular towers within a highly visible area used to be setup to be just a pole.

Chair Stewart questioned the option of additional pine tree landscaping to be planted in the area. Commissioner Pratt noted that we do not want the coverage to be blocked. Roger Trout mentioned that trees are not currently growing in the area because they do not grow there. Commissioner Miller noted with additional landscaping the land use may change from its current use of grazing.

There was no further discussion.

Motion: Commissioner Pratt moved, seconded by Commissioner Miller, and carried (4-0), to take the following actions: 1) Adopt the Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study prepared by staff; and 2) Approve Special Use Permit S15-0003 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.

AYES: Heflin, Miller, Pratt, Stewart
NOES: None
ABSENT: Shinault

This action can be appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 10 working days.