

FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2015

AGENDA ITEMS

- 4. 15-0460** Hearing to consider a request to allow the construction and operation of a wireless telecommunication facility [Special Use Permit S14-0011/Verizon Wireless Telecommunications Facility-Merrychase Drive]* on property identified by Assessor's Parcel Number 082-421-05, consisting of 0.7 acre, in the Cameron Park 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 S14-0011 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.
- (Supervisory District 2)

Mel Pabalinas presented the item to the Commission with a recommendation for approval.

Chair Stewart questioned one of the exhibit simulations shown in the Staff Report and noted that one of the existing/proposed exhibits showed a fence with slats instead of a wall with vines and confirmed that the fence was part of the original submittal but has been changed to the wall with vines. Stewart also confirmed the type of mono-oak that would be used as a broad leaf oak.

Mark Lobaugh, applicant's agent, made the following comments:

- Extended an invitation to the Commissioner's to attend a sight visit once one of mono-oak towers is completed within the County of El Dorado;
- Design parameters included issues with being close to a heritage oak, PG&E easements, and property lines;
- Designed to not impact the existing tree;
- Pre-cast concrete panels to create a solid enclosure instead of fencing. By using the concrete panels no dredging will need to be done to help preserve the existing oak tree root system; and
- Spoke on coverage versus capacity and that this project would primarily address capacity.

Commissioner Pratt stated the existing commercial zoning allows for capacity.

Chair Stewart shared concerns:

- Mono-oaks new to El Dorado County;
- Concrete painted panels (coloring); and
- For the long term maintenance for the proposed planted vines.

Mark Lobaugh agreed that the mono-oaks are new and also confirmed the concrete panels will be painted a light gray to match the existing European Auto Repair Facility.

Mel Pabalinas stated that there is a Condition addressing the maintenance of the proposed planted vines and confirmed this project requires a 5 year review.

Commissioner Shinault stated he didn't see a concern with the proposed concrete walls and noted that people won't see the walls, they will see the tree.

Commissioner Pratt agreed with Commissioner Shinault and also noted that the area is not within a Scenic Corridor.

Dyana Anderly with the Cameron Park Design Review Committee made the following comments:

- Expressed concern that the Cameron Park Design Review Committee comments were not included in the Staff Report;
- Concerns that the mono-oak will stand out next to the existing heritage oak;
- Concerns for height, the staff report doesn't show enough simulations to show what an 85' tower would actually look like;
- Questioned the possibility for the project re-locating due to site constraints; and
- Questioned if additional street trees could be added along the roadway to help blend the skyline view.

Chair Stewart closed public comment.

Mark Lobaugh made the following comments:

- Photo simulations are done using actual surveyed data;
- Design review comments were included minus one comment which was to plant additional trees. This was excluded at the owner's request due the placement of the trees blocking visibility of the business, additional water usage and screening issues;
- Tower height is required due to regulations requiring the ability for towers to have the ability for co-locations;
- No public comments have been received for this project; and
- Alternate locations were looked at: a rooftop facility off of Cambridge but height restrictions would not allow; an existing PG&E tower but current regulations will not allow connections above conductors; and also the hilltop church near the skate park but, Verizon specifically did not want to place a tower there due to interference with existing towers.

Chair Stewart questioned the possibility of planting additional trees between project parcel and the freeway. Mark Lobaugh noted that the area in question is Caltrans right-of-way and the planting of additional trees would not be allowed by Caltrans.

Commissioner Pratt noted the following:

- Questioned the height of nearby AM/PM sign. Lillian MacLeod, Development Services Division, stated that it was between 40-50 feet in height;
- The height of the existing power lines that run along the highway at 80-100 feet. Mark Lobaugh stated that the tower will be lower in height than the power lines;
- Additional trees would make an issue for business visibility;
- Tower height is needed due to regulations; and
- With a broad leaf oak, winter time will allow for the tree to stand out more.

Chair Stewart questioned placing the tower within the Caltrans right-of-way under the power lines. Mark Lobaugh noted that the right-of-way would not allow for any ground equipment.

Chair Stewart questioned staff on comments received from Cameron Park Design Review. Chair Stewart noted that the Staff Report included comments addressing the camouflage of the building.

Mel Pabalinas stated that the comment sheet was sent via email. Email responses were received and included in the Staff Report.

Commissioners Shinault and Pratt expressed that the exposure based on simulations show that there are other trees around, not necessarily in a grove of trees but, exposure will be unavoidable due to Caltrans right-of-way, business visibility and the area is not within a Scenic Corridor. Commissioner Miller and Chair Stewart expressed their agreement with Commissioners Shinault and Pratt.

There was no further discussion.

Motion: Commissioner Miller moved, seconded by Commissioner Shinault, 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 S14-0011 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.

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

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