

## FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2015

### AGENDA ITEMS

**5. 15-0881** Hearing to consider the Swansboro Verizon Wireless Cellular Tower (Mono-Pine) project [Special Use Permit S15-0001]\* to allow the construction of a wireless telecommunication facility on property identified by Assessor's Parcel Number 085-010-06, consisting of 39.75 acres, in the Mosquito/Swansboro 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 S15-0001 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented. (Supervisory District 4)

Aaron Mount presented the item to the Commission with a recommendation of approval. He referenced the public comments received.

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

- Provided history on project;
- Location is an under-served area;
- Aware of the letters of opposition but project has also received public support;
- Proposed site is close to road because there is a ridge and that site provided them screening ability;
- Topography played a significant role in the proposed location as it is the flattest area before it dramatically drops off;
- Would be agreeable to moving the site back by 5 feet; and
- Nearby National Forest/BLM land is inaccessible and there is no power nearby.

Anthony Webb, resident, made the following comments:

- Lives above the project site and has been there since 1995;
- Requested the Commission reconsider this Special Use Permit;
- It's very quiet out there and sound travels very far;
- Proposed tower would be 300 feet from his home and cause an obstruction of his views;
- Tower is 25 feet from the road and if lightning struck it, it would fall across the road that he and the other residents would need to access in order to escape any fire danger;
- Property owner of proposed site won't be affected because it's vacant land; and
- Neighbors do the upkeep on the private, graveled road that is accessed by 12 homes.

Joyce Rademacher made the following comments:

- Country graveled road is used only by the residents;
- No industrial-type trucks go on that road;
- Industrial business is being brought to a quiet residential area where it is not welcomed;
- This has caused stress to the residents;
- Tower will not blend into the environment;

- Needs to be moved back and applicant should help maintain the road;
- Signs (i.e., stop sign, “not a county maintained road) have been put up in the wrong locations;
- Resistant to construction of any building next to the road;
- Will ruin aesthetics for at least 3 families that live next to the proposed site;
- Poorly chosen location;
- This winter may be an El Nino and the road will be impacted, so it should be paved by the applicant;
- This is a dead-end road and lightning will be attracted to the tower and residents that live near the top of the hill will be in trouble in an emergency situation;
- Industrial effects, including health concerns, is an issue; and
- Residents will suffer so a property owner can make lots of money.

Don Wagner, resident, made the following comments:

- Bought property 1 ½ years ago;
- Proposed site location should be moved farther up the mountain;
- This will affect his property value as he is so close to the tower;
- His grandchildren are not allowed to stay at his house for very long periods due to the parents’ concerns on potential health issues; and
- Requested the Commission do a site visit.

Marty Desmond, resident, made the following comments:

- Agreed with all of the previous speakers’ comments;
- The property owner of the proposed site owns the entire 40 acres, yet the tower is being proposed next to the road because that location is more convenient for the applicant;
- Better for the community if the location is moved;
- The local fire response team is a volunteer fire department;
- There are no water facilities for fire danger proposed for the project;
- Will attract crime due to the copper components;
- Property values will decrease;
- Large generators will be holding significant amounts of diesel on-site; and
- Noise issues.

Rich Wanner, resident, made the following comments:

- Proposed location is next to a road and across from a house;
- Agreed with all of the previous speakers’ comments;
- Respects other neighbors and this is a tight knit community that is fighting this proposed tower;
- Quality of life will be intruded by this tower;
- This is an easy, quick, and cheap spot for the applicants to place the tower;
- Requested the Commission do a site visit; and
- Asked the Commission to deny the project.

Loretta Webb, resident, made the following comments:

- Not against progress but against the location of this project;
- Last year the neighborhood was evacuated due to the King Fire;
- Strangers would be using the private road;
- Voiced concern on potential fire dangers;
- This has caused extreme stress to her and she is now on prescription medication to help her cope; and
- Requested the Commission deny the project.

Kaiva Darrian, absentee property owner, distributed her statement and read it into the record. She also stated that they have created a road association.

Sue Taylor suggested continuing the item so the applicant could work with the neighbors on a new location for the tower.

Chair Stewart closed public comment.

Mr. Lobaugh made the following rebuttal comments:

- Applicant doesn't want to pose any undue stress to the neighbors;
- Met with many of the neighbors regarding the possibility of using their property for a proposed site and is surprised at their opposition now;
- Spoke on lightning concerns;
- Spoke on road issues;
- Stated they would repair any damages done to the road during the construction phase;
- Had explored the possibility of contributing to a road association but none existed;
- Maintenance tech would be using a pick-up truck during the occasional maintenance trips;
- Provided suggestions for noise mitigation and aesthetics;
- Spoke on the signs being a mitigation measures requirement by Transportation and would be required regardless of this proposed project; and
- Agreeable to continuing the item to review if the location could be moved back.

Lillian MacLeod explained the various reviews staff would be required to do if a new location was proposed.

Doug Picard, Verizon Radio Engineer, made the following comments:

- Verizon has provided benefits to the County and is interested in being a good neighbor;
- Some statements have been overblown due to emotions;
- Spoke on the process used to select a location and the search ring used for the area;
- Bald Mountain co-location project is currently in the works but it wouldn't be able to cover this area;
- Doesn't want to cause undue hardship to the neighbors; and
- Can move the tower back but it would have to be taller due to the topography and it still would need to be by power.

Commissioner Heflin was disappointed with the submitted Alternative Site Analysis and stated that a legitimate site analysis was needed in order to make the findings for this project.

Commissioner Miller felt that in the interest of the neighbors, the Commission needed to be confident that there wasn't another acceptable location to cover that area.

Commissioner Pratt made the following comments:

- Appreciative of applicant expanding services throughout the County, particularly the rural areas;
- Identified a significant typo in the Staff Report;
- Suggested item be continued off-calendar;
- Suggested reconfiguring the proposed site with outdoor equipment and away from the residents, even if the same parcel was used;
- Alternative Site Analysis needs to have other sites outside of the neighborhood;
- Need to address the road maintenance element;
- Time needs to be provided to the neighbors to allow them to finish creating the road association; and
- Spoke on the coverage map.

Chair Stewart spoke on a water tank being located on the project site and inquired on any needed tower lights for airplane safety.

Mr. Lobaugh suggested a continuance to allow them to look at re-designing the project.

There was no further discussion.

**Motion: Commissioner Pratt moved, seconded by Commissioner Miller, and carried (5-0), to continue the item off-calendar.**

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