



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM
808 S 7th AVENUE, SAFFORD
THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016
5:30 PM

MINUTE RECORD

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Gene Fowler, Chairman; Boyce McBride, Commissioner; Tracey O'Donnal, Commissioner; James F. Moser, Commissioner

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Diane Junion, Vice-Chair; E.C. "Buff" Cunningham III, Commissioner; John Q. Figueroa, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Dustin Welker, Planning & Community Development Director; Amber Hogle, Administrative Assistant; Denver Finch, IT Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT: Joe Wright, Wireless Resources; Mike Gallagher, Wireless Resources

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Fowler called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** There was a quorum present. Vice-Chair Junion previously excused herself from the meeting due to her role on the Safford School Board as it could be considered a conflict of interest regarding discussion of the cellular tower item.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA:** None
4. **MINUTES:** It was motioned by Commissioner O'Donnal, seconded by Commissioner McBride and carried unanimously to approve minutes of the October 15, 2015 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting as presented. **MOTION ADOPTED**
5. **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES:** The Commission reviewed minutes of the March 21, 2016 Development Review Committee Meeting. There were no comments.
6. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Chairman Fowler opened the public hearing at 5:37 p.m.

- 6.1 **Case Z-02-16, Dorothy Stinson School Conditional Use Permit: An application has been received from Steve Bernstein Communications (SBA) and Verizon Wireless to request placement of a cellular tower on Dorothy Stinson School's property, located at 2013 S 8th Avenue, Safford, Arizona.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Mr. Welker introduced the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) stating the step process is similar to a rezone. The CUP application is for a 74' cell tower at Dorothy Stinson School. The Safford School Board voted affirmative to conduct the project. Drawings were provided in Commissioner's packet for review. Mr. Welker assured the Commission that the project would uphold current code requirements for towers. Mr. Welker has not received any complaints or inquiries; however the School Board did hear concerns at their meeting from parents. Joe Wright and Mike Gallagher from Wireless Resources were invited to the podium to answer any questions the Commission may have.

Commissioner McBride inquired about radio waves? Mr. Wright stated the tower falls under FCC compliance and did note the antennas transmit horizontally at 74'.

Mr. Wright explained the tower is needed for increased cell phone coverage for customers and emergency services throughout the surrounding area. The 74' mono pine tower consists of 12 panel antennas and will be on a 22'x40' leased portion of Dorothy Stinson School's property. The tower will be enclosed by an 8' CMU wall and include a diesel generator for backup power. The parcel is zoned public facility. The project meets set back requirements. The location desired is the most viable option for Verizon Wireless's needs. There are no interruptions regarding health, safety or existing traffic. The site would be visited once a month for maintenance using the current access area.

Commissioner McBride asked if the land would be leased? (Yes) Is the coverage area needed? Yes, Mr. Wright referred to the coverage zone map and pointed out the current weak coverage area. Commissioner McBride asked if there was a second choice location? (Yes) There was initial interest at the LDS ball field, but interest failed. The city owned substation property located on 8th Avenue was also looked in to however the small search ring for optimal transmission of the antenna would not have been able to cover the area needed.

Chairman Fowler inquired if the nearby substation would cause interference with the tower? No, different transmission type. He also asked if there were any other mono-pine towers in our area. (No) The mono-pine design was chosen to be aesthetically pleasing.

Commissioner McBride questioned if the generator would be the only source of noise? Yes, a notice will be provided to the school when tests will be performed on the generator.

Chairman Fowler stated he would like to see razor wire or similar on top of the fence since children will be around. Mr. Wright stated that is possible if required or needed but also explained it is 20' to the first climbing limb on the structure.

Commissioner O'Donnal inquired if the tower is located within the playground area? No, the area is not in use.

7. **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING:** It was motioned by Commissioner O'Donnal, seconded by Commissioner McBride and carried unanimously to close the public hearing at 5:57 p.m.

MOTION ADOPTED

8. **PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION:**

- 8.1 **Case Z-02-16, Dorothy Stinson School Conditional Use Permit: The Planning & Zoning Commission will review the Conditional Use Permit Request for placement of a cellular tower to be located at 2013 S 8th Avenue, Safford, Arizona and make a recommendation to the Safford City Council.**

Mr. Welker allowed for further questions or comments regarding the tower project.

Commissioner McBride inquired what type of entry gate? Mr. Wright replied it would be an 8' high, steel slat gate.

Commissioner Moser stated he approves the project as is if the school does.

Chairman Fowler recommended wire on top of fence, however Commissioner Moser felt it was not needed. Commissioner O'Donnal feels it is a good deterrent and it may make parents more comfortable. Commissioner Moser is not in favor of the wire due to it being non-aesthetically pleasing. Commissioner McBride stated bars could be used to discourage access over the wall.

Chairman Fowler inquired if the wall would be made of cement slump block? Concrete

Chairman Fowler suggested the plans for the wall and any wire or bars could be left up to city staff during permit review. Mr. Welker added staff would work with the school if the school feels the extra deterrent is needed since it is their property and their liability. The Commissioners concurred.

It was motioned by Commissioner McBride, seconded by Commissioner Moser and carried unanimously to recommended approval of the CUP as presented to the Safford City Council.

MOTION ADOPTED

- 8.2 **General Plan Update Progress Report: Provide an update on the progress and schedule of the General Plan Update.**

Mr. Welker introduced the item and stated it is in the guidance team review stage, with a meeting set for the 28th of April. The first draft was received late January and was first reviewed by Mr. Welker and the City Manager; then was presented to the Department Heads for their review. Staff feels The Planning Center did a fantastic job of putting the draft document together. It is different than the City's current General Plan, but in a positive way. Mr. Welker reminded the Commission that Chairman Fowler and Commissioner Figueroa were selected to be members of the guidance team, along with other community members from SEAGO, ADOT, Eastern Arizona Railway, Graham County, Thatcher and Pima. The guidance team will experience the same process of review of the document and be able to suggest changes. All changes will be incorporated in the draft document with anticipated presentation to the Commission in May and to the City Council in June. The City Council decided they will adopt the plan without being on the election ballot due to the cost of the election and that it is not required. The original plan had to be adopted, however subsequent plans do not have to be adopted.

Chairman Fowler felt the input received from the public was great. Mr. Welker agreed he was pleased with the participation during the process.

Mr. Welker said the general theme gathered from all participants in our community is beautification and recreation. Mr. Welker was pleased to announce that currently there is a focus to improve Glenn Meadows Park and to look at other parks such as the one on 14th Avenue or in La Tierra. The City has lots of area for improvement. The skate park will begin construction in the next few weeks at Firth Park. Mr. Welker feels the General Plan helped push the skate park project through but was very pleased to see citizens put together the plan and funding. Mr. Welker spoke in reference to future growth areas, with a desire to develop the north growth area for commercial use since there is not a lot of opportunity for building on highway. The eastern growth area is being looked at for future residential growth.

Commissioner Moser reminisced of the 1970s when no one wanted to do anything with landscaping. He commended the City for thinking of that now. Mr. Welker reminded the Commission of the recent water efficiency ordinance adoption which is a soft ordinance but is guiding the community to keep water conservation and beautification in mind.

Mr. Welker projected a photo of the recreation complex plan contained in the General Plan and referred to it as "the big dream" which would be near the Water Reclamation Plant. Mr. Welker stated "It's a plan with no money," however the City owns the property, which is in a flood plain and reclaimed water from the plant could be used for landscaping. He further went on to explain the new General Plan includes a lot of new elements including Economic Development and Housing. Chairman Fowler agrees it is a dream, but if funds or grants come available with this plan in place then the City will be in a position to make the dream a reality.

Mr. Welker mentioned ADOT's bypass plan south of town, but noted the portion of the new General Plan that includes the bypass being on the bank of river to keep traffic coming to Safford. Commissioner Moser stated Wickenburg did same thing. Mr. Welker feels recreation at river could improve.

Mr. Welker informed the Commission an emailed link or hard copy of the draft General Plan will be provided to the Commission for their review sometime in May.

9. **PROJECT UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Chairman Fowler inquired of the progress on the Biggers rezone. Mr. Welker has heard the landscaping portion of the business is booming therefore feels the rest of the business plan including the car lot has been put on hold.
- Palmer Dentist Office: City owned property was auctioned and Dr. Palmer bought the lot to expand his building and parking area.
- Most residential building has been in Copper Canyon. Mr. Welker feels the developer has done a good job with their HOA, well-kept common areas and decent home prices.
- Burrell subdivision is now full.
- Hoping the cleanup of Glenn Meadows Park will encourage redevelopment in older neighborhood areas and continue development in the newer subdivision nearby.
- McDonalds is planning a complete tear down and rebuild at their location.
- Working with Kai's on Mt Graham Shopping Center façade improvements. Staff is encouraging a monument sign on corner to advertise businesses, especially those hidden in the corner of the shopping center.
- Building Inspectors are staying busy with weed and junk car compliance.
- Commissioner Moser commented that the downtown improvements looks wonderful.
- Sun Pumps is adding a two story office addition.
- Days Inn is closed, however have received lots of inquiries including several for assisted living which is allowable in that area. Tour Rest Motel has requested a meeting with staff to inquire about assisted living at their location as well.
- Freeport looking at 2018 for Lonestar Mine project.
- Commissioner McBride will be vacating his term soon. Vice-Chair Junion's term will expire in June, with the option to stay on the Commission if she wishes.

10. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** None

