

**MINUTES OF THE
AUBURN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
February 2, 2010**

The regular session of the Auburn City Planning Commission was called to order on February 2, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Spokely in the Council Chambers, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, California.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Snyder, Worthington, Vitas, Young, Spokely

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Will Wong, Community Development Director
Lance E. Lowe, AICP, Associate Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLIGIENCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 1, 2009 and December 15, 2009 were approved as submitted.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

- A. VARIANCE – 169 BORLAND AVENUE (AT&T MONOPINE CELLULAR TOWER) –FILE # VA 09-4.** - The applicant requests a Height Variance for a proposed 78 foot monopine cellular tower with twelve - ±8 foot panel antennae and two - ±2 foot microwave antennae. AT&T is also proposing to locate nine Base Transceiver Station (BTS) cabinets and associated utilities within a 30 by 40 foot leased area.

Planner Lowe presented the project and discussed the project location, site plan, photo simulations, search ring and RF analysis.

Chairman Spokely questioned the Variance entitlement being considered. A Use Permit is not required for the project?

Planner Lowe explained that the City did not have an adopted Wireless Ordinance that would require a Use Permit and as a result, the Variance entitlement process is

the only entitlement process that is in place. Planner Lowe noted that staff is working on a draft Wireless Ordinance.

Commissioner Young asked about Condition of Approval No. 5 which requires the applicant to cooperate with the City in providing shared cellular facilities (i.e. co-locations). Would the tower have room for City antennas if desired and/or needed?

Planner Lowe responded that City facilities were not contemplated at part of the proposal, but future carries could be located on the monopine.

Commissioner Worthington asked about the number of antennae on the cellular tower.

Planner Lowe replied that there will be 12 – eight foot panel antennae at a 70 foot centerline and 2 – two foot dishes at a 60 foot centerline.

Commissioner Worthington appreciated the conditions that modified the tree to look like the photo-simulations and the Initial Study that identified the scenic corridor along State Route 49.

Commissioner Worthington questioned whether the future development of the Agricultural Residential to the east would be impacted with either Radio Frequency or aesthetics impacts.

Planner Lowe noted there are currently single family dwellings just south of the project site that are much closer than the Agricultural Residential property that is below the site to the east. The Radio Frequency Analysis prepared for the project indicates that the project is significantly below the FCC's requirements for Radio Frequency energy. With respect to aesthetics, the subject site is within the City's Heavy Industrial (M-2) Zone and taking into account the context of an Industrial Zone, the aesthetic impacts should not be significant.

Commissioner Worthington also questioned the aesthetic impacts to State Route 49 coming into the Auburn City limits; the City's gateway.

Planner Lowe replied that a photo-simulation was presented from State Route 49 looking west into the City limits and the visual impacts appear to be minimal considering the design of the monopine.

Commissioner Worthington appreciated the photo-simulation and acknowledged that the visual impacts appear to be less than she had originally anticipated or envisioned and thanked staff for the photo-simulations from State Route 49.

Commissioner Vitas noted an I-80 monopine that is in bad shape and asked about maintenance of the monopine. What ability does the City have in ensuring that maintenance of the site is kept up?

Planner Lowe explained that with the approval of the entitlement on the site, the applicant is required to maintain the site.

Chairman Spokely questioned how tall the existing pines to the south are?

Planner Lowe showed the site plan and referenced the existing trees, buildings and proposed monopine. Based upon the photo-simulations the existing trees are approximately 60-65 feet or 10 to 12 feet below the proposed monopine.

Chairman Spokely noted that he has concerns about aesthetics and noted that some monopines are done well and some are done very poorly. Chairman Spokely also agreed that the monopine that Commissioner Vidas mentioned along I-8 is in bad shape.

Chairman Spokely did note that from certain places in town, the monopine will be very noticeable and cited the parking lot next to the Big Salad Shop as an example and noted that the monopine will look artificial if not designed correctly.

Chairman Spokely opened the public hearing.

Jacob Reeves of 151 Landis Drive, Folsom, CA representing the Lyle Company, introduced himself as the project proponent. He has been working on the site for over a year. The site is necessary due to supply and demand and lack of cellular service in the area, but notes that the site is tricky.

Mr. Reeves relayed that other candidate sites were considered but were rejected due to height and topographic concerns. The main objective is to provide better service along Highway 49 and for existing businesses around the Borland Avenue and the downtown area.

Mr. Reeves noted that in an effort to further conceal the antennae, an antennae sock could be installed in front of the antenna and dishes. The material will be the same as the branches. Also the antenna mounts should be painted and he is agreeable to both conditions being added.

Commissioner Worthington questioned whether or not the antenna height could be reduced?

Mr. Reeves noted that the height is critical. Considering the topography of the area, a reduction of 10 feet in height equates to approximately 25 percent reduction in the coverage area. With the existing topography, the coverage area is already reduced

approximately 25 percent meaning that lowering the monopine 10 feet would be a reduction of approximately 50 percent.

Commissioner Worthington noted that she is not an I-Phone user and does not have AT&T and has great coverage in the area. Has AT&T looked at competitor cell sites and are there any possibilities for shared use?

Mr. Reeves replied that he frequently mountain bikes on the trails along State Route 49 and knows the area quite well. He has had T-Mobile, Sprint and Metro PCS service in the past and noted that all of these carriers dropped service around the State Route 49 area. Existing and proposed sites do not cover the needed cell coverage in the area.

Chairman Spokely asked if Mr. Reeves would be willing to allow additional co-locations on the monopine. Mr. Reeves replied that is a standard condition of jurisdictions and agrees with the Conditions of Approval.

Commissioner Vitas asked about the other candidate sites. Would those sites be more or less aesthetically pleasing and still serve the proposed coverage area?

Mr. Reeves noted that the other sites were roof top sites and would generally be less aesthetically pleasing. More importantly the sites were determined not cover the needed service area required by AT&T.

Commissioner Vitas asked about potential Radio Frequency impacts to adjoining residential properties.

Mr. Reeves noted that the Radio Frequency impacts are significantly below the FCC standards for radio waves.

Commissioner Young liked the idea of the monopine. Commissioner Young asked Mr. Reeves to explain the requirements and capabilities regarding E-911 and GPS imposed on cellular carriers by new Federal Statute.

Mr. Reeves explained that the new federal statute requires that each carrier needs to be E-911 with GPS compatible. That is, each tower is required to have GPS tracking capabilities so that Fire Department personnel can respond regardless of where individuals are and what service provider they may have.

Commissioner Young also questioned where the other AT&T sites were located along State Route 49 going toward Cool?

Mr. Reeves explained where the other AT&T sites were located along State Route 49 and indicated that more facilities are needed in the Auburn/State Route 49 area.

Commissioner Worthington noted that the area where the coverage needs to be improved is around what is known as the American River confluence.

Mr. Reeves noted that the area is a little further up from the confluence.

Commissioner Young asked about leasing space for the tower and questioned whether or not subsequent co-locators would be subject to the screening requirements of AT&T?

Mr. Reeves noted that all co-locators will be required to comply with the screening requirements of AT&T.

Commissioner Young questioned how the microwave dishes will be screened?

Mr. Reeves noted that the dishes could be painted brown and an antenna sock could be placed over the dishes.

Commissioner Young asked about the training program for people working within 11 feet of the antennae.

Mr. Reeves noted that if someone is working on the panels they would need a lift and the antennae would be turned off.

Chairman Spokely questioned the geometry of the tree from the top of the tree to the bottom.

Mr. Reeves discussed the taper of the tree. The condition requires that a plans be revised to show a 2:1 taper from bottom to top.

Chairman Spokely noted that further discussion should take place regarding the geometry of the tree.

O.C. Taylor 173 Borland Avenue was concerned about the Radio Frequency impacts to him as his property is a little more than 40 feet from the proposed tower.

Mr. Taylor also noted that the rim of the canyon should look pleasant from the view from State Route 49.

Mr. Taylor indicated that he was not contacted until he received notice from the City about the project.

Mr. Taylor noted that the owners of the property are very nice people.

Gary Clark of 165 Borland Avenue indicated that the Borland Avenue area should not be zoned Industrial due to the proximity to the scenic Highway 49 area. Mr.

Clark believes that the tower will add more blight to the area and questions the need to cellular coverage in the area. The area should be kept more pristine.

Chairman Spokely asked if Mr. Clark was north or south of the project site.

Mr. Clark replied that he is north of the project site.

Mr. Clark noted that he believes that residents on Aeolia Drive would also likely oppose this project and questioned the notice boundaries.

Chairman Spokely noted that he confirmed with staff that persons within 500 feet of the project site were notified of the project, but did not include Aeolia Drive.

Mr. Reeves agreed with the comments relating to aesthetics. There are many bad examples in the area and conversely, there are many good examples in the area. So long as this site is designed as a good example, aesthetic impacts should be reduced and it could be a great aesthetically pleasing and working tower.

Mr. Reeves also noted that the tower is needed in the area.

Chairman Spokely closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Worthington questioned the geometry of the tower and believed that the 2:1 relationship should be increased to perhaps 3:1 and that planning approve the elevations prior to building permit issuance.

Director Wong noted that the current process requires planning to sign off prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Commissioner Vitas felt for the neighbors who live in the Industrial Zone, but did not believe that the monopine presented a significant aesthetic issue so long as the geometry of the tree was appropriate and it is designed similar to one of the better examples in the area.

Commissioner Young liked the tree concept and would like to see the shape more like a tree with the appropriate geometry.

Director Wong replied that when staff researched the design and taper issue, the trees that look the most natural had varying branch lengths.

Chairman Spokely noted that wire facilities are a necessity, particularly with respect to the emergency response issue and requirements. Chairman Spokely also noted that since receiving notice of this monopine application, he is much more aware of cellular facilities and now sees them throughout the area. The monopine should at least blend into the natural environment if designed correctly.

Commissioner Snyder **MOVED** to adopt the Planning Commission Resolution 10-1 for the Borland Avenue Monopine Height Variance (File 09-04) as amended by the Planning Commission which includes: 1) Adding tree socks to further conceal the panels and microwave dishes; 2) Painting the ancillary hardware and equipment (flat brown) and, 3) Requiring that co-locations adhere to the same screening requirements and conditions of approval.

Commissioner Vitas **SECONDED** the motion.

AYES: Snyder, Worthington, Vitas, Young, Spokely
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

The motion was approved.

VI. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

- a. City Council Meetings
Director Wong informed the Commission that new dog regulations are being considered by the Council. In addition to dog regulations, staff is updating the City's animal regulations which are part of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Staff will present the updated zoning provisions for Planning Commission consideration in the future.
- b. Future Planning Commission Meetings
There will be a February 16 Planning Commission meeting. Also, Director Wong reminded the Commission that the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan site tour is being arranged; however, no dates have been confirmed.
- c. Reports
None

VII. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS

None

VIII. FUTURE PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEMS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance E. Lowe