

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
February 5, 2020

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a Meeting on February 5, 2020, at the City of DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Max Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

Recording Secretary Aaron Walker called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Chair Max Maxwell, Christina Doe, Steve Becker, Ron Klein, and Jerry Wright. Commissioners Vicki Buckley and Trixy O’Flaherty were absent. Principal Planner Dan Olson was present representing the City.

B. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Chair Maxwell requested recommendations for the position of Vice Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Klein motioned to appoint Christina Doe to Vice Chair. Mr. Becker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Becker – Yes, Mr. Klein – Yes, Mr. Wright – Yes, Chair Maxwell – Yes. Ms. Doe – Abstain. Motion passed 4-0-2, with one abstention. Ms. Buckley and Ms. O’Flaherty were absent.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the February 5, 2020, agenda as presented. Ms. Doe motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Klein seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 4, 2019 – Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the December 4, 2019 minutes as presented. Mr. Klein motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Wright seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Open Floor to Anyone Wishing to Speak on Record)

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Public Hearing** – Petition by Verizon Wireless, represented by Dolan Realty Advisors LLC, for a special use permit to co-locate an antenna onto the existing AT&T tower located at 1500 S. 7th St. and construct associated equipment.

Doug Dolan with Dolan Realty Advisors, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, stated they are requesting approval of a special use permit in order to install cell antennas on the existing 300-foot-tall AT&T tower located at 1500 S. 7th St. He advised there will be a total of six antennas, with the ability to add three additional antennas. The antennas will be installed 125 feet up the AT&T tower, which is approximately 300 feet tall. Mr. Dolan advised the new antennas would increase cell service and data speeds in the area.

Mr. Dolan stated Verizon Wireless had past issues with the AT&T tower because it could not support the proposed Verizon equipment. He advised Verizon Wireless discovered several unused horn antennas located at the top of the tower which, when removed, would allow for the installation of the proposed antennas.

Mr. Dolan advised a new building pad and associated equipment would be installed at the base of the tower as well. The equipment will be properly screened with a 7ft chain-link fence and landscaping, which will be compliant with the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). He added the landscaping will include 6ft evergreen shrubs, which will screen the equipment area.

Principal Planner Dan Olson went through the staff report dated January 31, 2020. He advised Verizon Wireless has been looking to locate cell antennas in the area since 2014. He stated in 2014 Verizon Wireless had originally petitioned to build a 140-foot-tall cell tower on the property directly north at 1300 S. 7th St., however the petition was eventually withdrawn by the applicant due to opposition from neighboring residents. Mr. Olson added there was also direction given to Verizon to investigate the opportunity to co-locate on the adjacent AT&T tower.

Mr. Olson advised in July, 2015, Verizon Wireless submitted a special use permit application to co-locate antennas on the AT&T tower and was subsequently approved by the City Council on September 28, 2015. He noted the applicant received a permit in February, 2016 to construct the antennas and supporting equipment, however no work was conducted on the project after issuance of the permit. He continued by stating in 2017, Central States Tower II LLC, acting on behalf of Verizon Wireless, submitted a petition for approval of a special use permit to construct a 140-foot-tall cellular communications tower on the property to the north located at 1300 S. 7th St. Mr. Olson advised the petition was denied by the City Council due to opposition by neighboring residents. Mr. Olson also said Central States Tower indicated Verizon did not

go forward with the construction of the antennas on the AT&T Tower because of the costs AT&T was charging to Verizon to install the necessary equipment. Mr. Olson mentioned the current applicant has stated Verizon and AT&T have worked together to reduce the costs of the proposed co-location. He noted the existing four large horn antennas on top of the AT&T Tower will be removed as part of the work as they are no longer needed by AT&T. He stated this will also reduce the modification cost to install the needed equipment on the tower. Mr. Olson added Verizon will be installing less weighted equipment and proposing the installation of a new concrete pad instead of cutting the existing foundation and replacing asphalt, which is more expensive.

Mr. Olson advised the proposed cell antennas would comply with all the regulations of the "LI" Light Industrial District and the UDO. He stated co-locating on the existing AT&T tower will have minimal impact on the profile of the structure and would not extend past the current height of tower. Mr. Olson advised the proposed ground equipment will be approximately 275 feet from the nearest residentially zoned property.

Mr. Olson noted two citizen responses were received by email. He stated Katie and David Poole of 630 Karen Ave indicated their support of the project. He also advised Scott Cole of Cole Pallet Services located at 1600 S. 7th St. mentioned he had no objection to the special use request.

Chair Maxwell then invited attendees in the audience to speak.

Toni Moon, of 1503 S. 7th St, questioned if there were any health and noise issues related to the antennas. She stated she was worried if the tower fell over, it would hit her home. Mr. Dolan advised the proposed antennas will be in compliance with all FCC and FAA regulations and it has been proven they do not pose a health risk. Mr. Dolan stated the associated equipment (generator) will be no louder than a standard air conditioner when active.

David Lehman, of 621 Karen Ave, stated he was involved when Dolan Realty first proposed the antennas in 2014. He advised he was happy the co-location was being pursued. He noted he was concerned the ground equipment area for Verizon would be too close to the residential properties and was hoping it could be moved further to the east. Mr. Dolan advised the equipment area would be screened off by landscaping and wouldn't be visible from the street (S. 7th St.). Mr. Olson added the proposed Verizon equipment area would be no closer to the residential area than the existing AT&T tower and AT&T's associated equipment building. Mr. Lehman inquired on the timeline for the project. Mr. Dolan advised it is up to Verizon Wireless and several federal and local government reviews are still needed, however they are looking at completion in 2020 or 2021.

Chair Maxwell gave the Commission members the opportunity to speak.

Ms. Doe noted she was in favor of the request and Mr. Klein stated he had no questions. Mr. Wright questioned what the old horn antennas were used for. Mr. Dolan advised they were used for microwave transmissions but have been obsolete for years. Mr. Wright inquired if the co-location would provide the same wireless service as the previous plan to construct a new tower. Mr. Dolan stated it would provide the same services, however at a much cheaper price.

Chair Maxwell gave the public one more opportunity to speak. There was none.

Mr. Klein moved that the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of a special use permit for a cellular antennas on the AT&T Tower located at 1500 S. 7th St. per the plans dated 12-10-19 and attached as Exhibit A to the staff report and subject to any staff comments being addressed prior to issuance of a building permit. Mr. Wright seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Becker – yes, Mr. Klein – yes, Ms. Doe – yes, Mr. Wright – yes, Chair Maxwell – yes. Motion was passed 5-0-2. Ms. Buckley and Ms. O’Flaherty were absent.

G. REPORTS

Mr. Olson welcomed the new Chair Max Maxwell and noted the appointment of Trixy O’Flaherty to the Commission. He said Trixy is the owner of Gordon Hardware and had previously served on the City’s Economic Development Commission. He advised the Commission of activities of the City Council including an upcoming discussion regarding changes to the sign ordinance and the approval of a one-year extension for the zoning to accommodate a solar farm to be located along the north side of Gurler Road, just east of S. 1st St.

Mr. Olson advised of the two public hearings scheduled for February 19th, including a petition for a therapeutic day school to be located at 900 E. Garden St and a petition for a drive-through coffee/ice cream shop for 1406 Sycamore Rd. Mr. Olson also noted plans were recently received for a Raising Cane’s Chicken Fingers Restaurant to be located on the Applebee’s lot along Sycamore Road with a public hearing to be scheduled in March.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Doe motioned to adjourn, Mr. Wright seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The Planning and Zoning Commission adjourned at 6:37PM.