

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
NOVEMBER 15, 2017**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Steinke.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Ray Steinke, Brittney Berndt, Todd Gardner, Joel Olson, Greg Zutz and William Murray. Absent: Julie Morin
3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Zutz second, by Berndt to approve the November 15, 2017 agenda. Motion carried 6-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Berndt, second by Olson to approve the October 18, 2017 minutes. Motion carried 6-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**
 - a. Conditional Use Permit/Interim Use Permit – Verizon Wireless
CUP was brought forward in October and tabled for two reasons, 1) the height of the tower required an IUP permit and 2) to have Verizon provide a visual of the view from the neighboring property.

The Verizon tower is a permitted use with a CUP and has met the all applicable codes. The burden of proof is upon the city if they wish to deny this application and identify which facts of finding the project is not meeting. Additionally, the application requires by statute that a decision be made no later than January 15th so a decision needs to be made to move forward to Council.

Steinke would like to point out on page 4, the fourth and fifth bullet, on page 8 number 2 (a) and on page 14 please clarify who the “property owner” is between the owner of the land or equipment. The property owner held responsible is the owner of the land and they would have a contract with Verizon in regards to equipment.

7:09 P.M. Public Hearing Opened

- Glen Westphal, 23450 Variolite, interested in clarifying a couple of points from the previous meeting. He has offered to purchase the property, never said not to up the tower on the property – just does not want it on top of his property, feels moving it west would be higher ground and a shorter tower, concerns with driveway and water movement. Does not want additional water directed towards his property.
- Cheryl Kilpela, 23525 Variolite, discussed plans to remain in home and housing type that there is one main window that will be looking at the tower. Requesting pine trees be planted on her property to block the view of the tower.
- Larry Anderson, 718 209th Ln Oak Grove, friend and realtor showing support for the concerns of Mr. Westphal. Discussed discloser on real estate forms that identify enjoyment of property and how tower will take

away from that. Power lines and towers are questions in real estate that hold perceptions when buyers are searching.

- Eddie Buell, Contractor for Verizon Wireless. Topic of value changes for housing is brought up often, has an article that addressed it does not affect housing values. Towers are a hot topic up front, but once they are up they blend into modern life. The placement proposed for this tower was part of the agreement with Mr. Jones who owns the property and would be placed to allow future development down the road.
 - Zutz requested clarification on location – per Buell, the placement was chosen as it meets code and setback requirements
 - Zutz asked if they would be open to a different location – per Buell they would not
 - Gardner also questioned location – per Buell the location is also driven by the need to operate and maintain the tower. They need to be able to get to the towers for access.
 - Gozola clarified that a building permit would be received by the City and all setbacks and engineering reviews will be considered at that time.

This site is known as a capacity site, it will draw from other towers and expand the capacity of the service area.

- Ray Jones, 23725 Nacre, he is the owner of the property, when approached by Verizon took some time to ask around to see if people would benefit from the improved service and heard coverage was needed. Felt it was a community thing and would create improved service. He used an attorney to make sure nothing was detrimental to him or the City. If this does not go through he has other opportunities for his land, but it is his land.
- Earl Vickroy, 24159 Nacre St, everyone on west side of town has poor cell reception. He has resided there for 15 years with bad service for phone and internet and this tower will benefit an area of people who depend on that service.

7:36 Public Hearing Closed

Commission Discussion

- Olson, appreciates the input from residents, understands the concerns as a planning Commission do not feel we have finding of facts to deny this application.
- Berndt, had hoped it was in a different location, see benefit of a tower in this area, this project meets the criteria, feel communication at the beginning could have been better. Sees it as Verizon did what was the shortest and cheapest option. Just do not agree on location.
- Murray, Verizon as a service provider in this area is poor coverage and it is aggravating. Understands the service problem with coverage. Believes that in a few years the tower will blend in and it does not affect daily life.
- Zutz, thanks the community for coming forward, heard what they had to say, disturbing that Verizon is not here but sends a contractor. Need to take the reality that it is vacant land today but will not be vacant forever. Understands the view and rural concerns but also this day in age when there is a cost to wanting everything at our fingertips.

- Steinke, sees it as smart placement as it leaves the rest of the property available for further development. Does not limit potential. Has heard it said over the years that “we want it, but not here”. Not going to deny the neighbors any enjoyment of property.

Olson moves to make a recommendation to Council to approve the requested conditional and interim use permits based on the finding of fact in the staff report, and subject to the conditions listed on pages 14 through 16. (No amendments were made) Second by Murray, motion passed 6-0

7. **Regular Business Items:** None
8. **Planning Commission Discussion** None
9. **Adjournment:** Adjourned 7:55 PM

DATE APPROVED: DECEMBER 20, 2017