

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
October 18, 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, Julie Morin and William Murray. Absent: Todd Gardner, Greg Zutz, Joel Olson
3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Berndt second by Murray to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Berndt, second by Murray to approve the September 20, 2017 minutes. Motion carried 4-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**

a. Conditional Use Permit for Verizon Wireless

Reviewed Application packet, be aware of Section 332 (c)(7). Nine standards apply and this applicant meets those standards. Engineering has reviewed the application and it has met the qualifications.

City Code requires that the applicant request an IUP for the height requirement and will be presenting that application at the November Planning Commission meeting.

City Code requires equipment related to towers to address screening and fencing. Proposal does not include a building, City can recommend building aesthetics and fencing.

Discussion: There are at least two existing cell towers in the city. Code requires we review within a one mile radius, there are no towers within that area. Lighting was discussed, Verizon clarified that lighting is not required on structures under 200' and that towers are registered with the FAA. This tower does not require lighting. The lease agreement with this tower is between a private land owner and Verizon, this is not on City property.

Public Hearing – Open 7:12 p.m.

Eddie Buell – Verizon Wireless

The lease for this tower is 25 years but towers are designed to last decades. This location was found through a coverage search, this is a vacant log and the tower is tucked into the tree line. Soil borings and geotechnical studies were completed along with a NEPA Phase 1 and wetland review. No issues were found. This tower will serve Verizon customers along with the ability to service two other carriers. In the event there is damage to the tower, severe storms, etc., the tower is built on a hinged frame in which it would collapse onto itself verses fall as a whole. Verizon looked at going further west but with the incline of the property there are concerns about access and snow removal for maintenance and service needs. If this tower is required to move greater than 20' in any direction it will force the project back to the beginning and delay construction for up to a year. Verizon is requesting approval of this application based on the location proposed.

Glen Westphal – 23450 Variolite St NW

This tower is very close in proximity to his house and buildings. Has no issues with the tower but instead with the location. No other neighbors are expressing concern about the tower, but he is in the closest proximity to the actual tower. It will not make his property useless or inaccessible but it will create a visual impact that will be looked at in the event of a future sale. He would like to see an example of what this will look like from his property and home. Verizon agreed to provide photos and examples to Mr. Westphal.

Ray Jones – 23723 Nacre St NW

The negotiations between Mr. Jones and Verizon began three years ago. Ray spoke to a few neighbors and they felt as Verizon customers this would be a benefit for service. He compared the tower to an existing silo on the property which is 80' before attachments.

Public Hearing Closed 7:33 p.m.

Murray – is aware of other towers in high end neighborhoods and there are not concerns and once it is there people get used to it.

Steinke – people have asked for improved service on the west side of town since the original towers came to town.

Morin – does not feel the cost and time that Verizon would have to address a better location for the tower is an issue.

Berndt – would like to also see photos of the tower and how it will look from Mr. Westphal property before she will make a decision. This tower is 100' away from his house but there are 26 acres of vacant land.

Berndt made a motion to table this item and request additional information, Second by Morin, 4-0 Motion passed.

b. Ordinance for Solar Energy Systems

Packet reviewed, update on ordinances presented and approved last summer. This will allow for an easier process for residents looking to include solar and allow larger scale projects to move forward.

Question in regards to Definitions and there being two LEPPG terms. Staff will review which is correct and remove the other.

Public Hearing Opened at 7:43 p.m., no comments received, Closed at 7:43 p.m.

Berndt made a Motion to recommend approval of the Ordinance changes for Solar Energy Systems. Second by Morin, 4-0 Motion passed.

7. Regular Business Items:

- a. Upcoming date for Comprehensive Plan
- b. Reminder for upcoming November and December Planning Commission dates as there are agenda items for those meetings

8. Planning Commission Discussion:

Discussed outstanding projects

- 9. Adjournment:** Motion by Berndt second by Morin to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: NOVEMBER 15, 2017