

## **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes November 5, 2019**

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 PM.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Bob Bjerke, Chris Williamson, Jane Kansier, Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten. Commission member Jared Sachs was absent.

The meeting was opened to a public hearing for the request of an IUP at 2735 Vermillion River Trail to allow for a 159' monopole wireless communication tower and associated ground equipment. Ed Gerten read the public hearing notice.

Jane Kansier presented a site plan for the proposed project and a memo which included the proposed findings of fact and recommendations. If an IUP is issued, the applicant will need to apply for the proper permits to allow construction of the proposed project, there must be space on the tower to allow for the co-location of an additional commercial wireless service, the applicant will need to remove the equipment and restore the site within four months of termination of the IUP, the color of the monopole must be identified, there will be no lighting on the tower, the applicant must submit a revised landscaping plan to include a minimum of eight trees, the applicant must submit revised plans to show that all accessory equipment will be located in an enclosed building. It was reported that if either the current property owner sells the property at which the tower is located or Verizon Wireless sells the tower, the IUP for the tower will expire.

An engineering report for the proposed tower showed that if the tower were to collapse, the fall zone of the structure would be equal to or less than 10% of the structure height (16 ft. radius).

Karyn O'Brien with Verizon Wireless was present to answer some questions about the proposed tower and reported that there will be no guidewires on the tower as it will be self-supporting. It is proposed that the tower will be its original galvanized steel color as that blends in the best with changing sky conditions and other transmission lines, but she is open to suggestions for other colors.

Residents that live near the proposed project were present to discuss their concerns with the location of the tower. These concerns included; the location of the tower and its proximity to residential neighborhoods, concerns that potential that the tower will be unsightly, the request to view photos of the proposed tower, potential noise from the proposed generator on site, and questions pertaining to why this site was selected for the proposed tower.

Karyn O'Brien reported that a few other sites in the area were identified as potential locations for the tower, however this particular site was selected based on input from radio frequency engineers, the future growth of demand for cellular service in this area, and the willingness of

this property owner to work with the cellular service company. O'Brien also reported that she can work to have a photo simulation to be made available that would show what the tower would look like from other locations in the vicinity of the proposed tower.

The Planning Commission recommended that this public hearing be tabled until more additional information about the proposed tower can be presented. This information includes: an estimate of decommissioning costs for the project, including site restoration; pictures or a photo simulation of the proposed tower; a landscaping plan; a plan for the proposed accessory building size, color and elevations; a decibel measurement for the generator to be placed on the site; additional information for the proposed fence on the site; identify other alternative sites that would be possible candidates for this project, including information on other sites that were previously identified as candidates for the tower.

Karyn O'Brien stated that she should be able to have this information ready for the November 19th Planning Commission meeting. If it is not possible to have the information ready by that date, she will notify the Township Clerk sometime this week and the Clerk will notify residents present at this hearing that the continuation of the hearing is being postponed.

Trent Larson made the motion that this public hearing be tabled until the November 19th Planning Commission Meeting. Seconded by Bob Bjerke. Motion carried 4-0.

It was reported that the Vermillion River Watershed has sent a letter regarding their approval of the Dakota County Rural Collaborative Comprehensive Plan and adoption of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan by reference. Jane Kansier reported that Empire Township's portion of the collaborative 2040 comprehensive plan is still waiting for the letter of completion from the Met Council.

Scott Sauter, owner of the parcel at 16275 Chippendale Ave W, was present to discuss his concerns regarding a potential sale and future use of the property. Earlier in the year he was told by the Planning Commission that the property cannot be zoned for another use until the Comprehensive Plan has been approved. Representatives from a business that would like to locate on the property were present. They reported that their business is involved in the manufacture of wireless communication towers.

The Planning Commission discussed language in the zoning ordinance that would identify this type of business as an allowed use in the mining overlay district. No conclusion was reached. The possibility of amending the zoning ordinance to allow for this type of business was also discussed. Jane Kansier will look for possible options associated with this property, including the possibility of amending the zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission will keep this item up for discussion when more information is available in January.

It was reported that a public hearing has been scheduled for the November 19th Planning Commission Meeting to consider a request for expansion of the IUP at 20485 Chippendale Avenue.

Jane Kansier presented a draft agenda for the EFPAC meeting to take place on November 14th at Farmington City Hall and asked for suggestions if there is anything else that the Planning Commission would like to add.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.