

CITY OF PRINEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING BRIEF
Tuesday, August 4th, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.
The complete minutes are available by digital recording

City Commission Members Present: Marty Bailey, Seth Crawford, Linda Chadwick, Don Wood, Al Baensch

Commission Members Not Present: Deb Harper

Staff Present: Scott Edelman, Josh Smith, Ricky Sites

Provided Testimony: Don Larson, Roy Willy

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Marty Bailey called the Commission to order.

Public Hearing:

A. Cu-2009-103 Cell Tower proposed south west of the hospital and City water tanks.

Staff: Staff gave a brief presentation of the proposal including photographs depicting the potential visual impact of the proposed tower from several viewpoints. The staff presentation also included an aerial image visualizing the additional restrictions the tower would create for the approach to the hospital's helipad.

Applicant: The applicant discussed the proposal, explaining the rationale for the proposed location and 120' height. The applicant then fielded questions and comments from the Commission, summarized as follows:

- A Commissioner suggested smaller towers on the rimrock slopes around town and wanted to see more options. The applicant expressed concern that the visual impact would be worse on the slope and that other sites throughout town would run into the same kinds of questions. Further, the applicant asserted that the towers would still have to be of significant height in order to achieve the necessary line-of-sight over hospital hill. The applicant also expressed the problem of the unknown issues that would arise at each new site, and at what point would they stop analyzing other sites.
- Safety of the helipad at the hospital was discussed with commissioners concerned about making a decision affecting the hospital's air transport. The applicant noted that no representative of the hospital attended the meeting to defend their letter of opposition, but suggested a condition to mitigate the situation should the FAA require additional safety measures (such as a light) or if Airlink services would be affected by the tower.
- Lighting was an issue as several commissioners stated that they did not want any lights on the tower. The applicant noted that the Oregon Department of Aviation did not require it, though FAA is the final decision maker. The applicant noted that lights are not on the water tanks and that he felt it was very unlikely that a light would be required by the FAA. One Commissioner mentioned that there is a red light on the antennas located on the west side of hospital hill.
- The Commission asked about the height above the existing tanks and co-location possibilities. The applicant stated that the tower would be approximately 23 feet taller than the existing tanks as they had to be higher than the antennas on the water tanks due to issues related to frequency. The applicant stated that other carriers utilizing lower frequencies would be able to co-locate lower on the tower.

Commission & Staff Discussion:

A commissioner wanted to see more options before moving forward with this proposal, suggesting multiple sites around the City and possibly on the lower portion of the rimrock slope. Other commissioners preferred to see a tower at the proposed location where others exist rather than spread them around town. A commissioner mentioned that from many parts of town the skyline is already obscured by other facilities such as telephone and power poles. The Commissioners considered the trade-off of visual impact versus quality of service for the Citizens of Prineville. The Commissioners discussed how the safety issue with the hospital's helipad could be managed within a condition.

Seth Crawford made a motion to deny the application and Linda Chadwick seconded the motion; the motion failed 2 to 3.

Decision:

Don Wood then made a motion in favor of the application with added conditions. Al Baensch seconded the motion; the motion passed 3 to 2.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A. None

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. None

Planning Commission Matters:

- A. The vacant Planning Commission seat was discussed.
- B. The progress with the Natural Features Overlay District (NFOD) was discussed.

Meeting Adjourned: