



Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2022 6:00 PM

City Council Chambers

This meeting was held in a hybrid format.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Brunner, Breznikar, Eddinger, Gerlach, Hunt, Luks, McKay

Commissioners absent: None

City Staff present: Community Development Director Scott Duiven, Assistant Planner Jeff Fisher, City Attorney's Office Denise Bazzano

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

A. On a motion by Commissioner Luks, seconded by Commissioner Brunner, the Commission voted 7-0 to approve the April 12, 2022 agenda.

B. On a motion by Commissioner Brunner, seconded by Commissioner Breznikar, the Commission voted 7-0 to approve the February 23, 2022 minutes.

C. Acceptance of Communications and Correspondence

- Growth Management Allocation Annual Report
- General Plan Annual Report
- Housing Element Annual Progress Report
- Communications from Trac, Wilson, and Drexler regarding item 4A.

D. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest: None

E. Disclosures of Ex Parte Communications: None

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Item

Description: CUP 2016-07; CUP 2021-08; DR 2016-06; V 2017-01 - Verizon Telecommunications Facility

Project

Description: Major Conditional Use Permit, Minor Conditional Use Permit; Major Design Review and Major Variance applications for a new unmanned telecommunications facility on a city-owned parcel, adjacent to Tayman Park and the Healdsburg Golf Club. The project consists of a 76-foot-tall monopole tower supporting 9 wireless antenna panels, one microwave dish, and related equipment. The monopole would be designed to resemble a faux broadleaf tree, with 8-foot to 14-foot-long faux branches and leaf socks covering the antenna panels and dish. The pole would be painted brown.

Location: 923 S. Fitch Mountain Road, Healdsburg, CA APN: 002-361-003

Applicant: GTE Mobilnet dba as Verizon Wireless c/o Complete Wireless Consulting

Environmental

Determination: The project is categorically exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15303(c) New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; and Section 15300.2 Exceptions. The Notice of Exemption can be viewed upon request of the City Planning Department at 431-3346.

Assistant Planner Jeff Fisher presented the staff report followed by an applicant presentation provided by Maria Kim.

Director Duiven confirmed for Commissioner Luks that CTC the third party reviewer was available via Zoom to answer questions.

Commissioner Luks asked about the differences in radiation levels between the 50- and 60-foot heights.

The consultant clarified that the lower the antenna is the greater the exposure. He did not provide analysis for the 50-foot height because the application is for the 60 foot height with the possibility of an as yet to be proposed co-location at 50 feet. He further clarified that in order to provide for a second carrier the 60-foot primary location was recommended to allow a safe co-location at 50 feet.

Commissioner McKay asked how the provision of 5 wireless bands would affect the quality of service throughout the City since it was noted in the report that the inability to provide 5 bands precluded using small cell sites.

Pablo Sanchez the applicant's RF consultant explained that it would actually take 17 small cell sites to provide the same coverage as the proposed macro site. He further explained that existing small cell sites were not adequate for Verizon co-location.

Paul Albritton outside council for Verizon, explained the progression of Verizon's frequency technology. He stated that the amount of equipment required would not be supported on a telephone or light pole.

Chair Eddinger opened the public input portion of the hearing.

Maryanne Berry spoke in favor of the tower stating that when the Verizon tower in Santa Rosa was inoperable during the fires she and her family did not have coverage in Healdsburg. She stated that the additional tower is vital to her family and work.

David Jones asked to have cooperation in protecting the beauty of Healdsburg. He opined that due diligence was not given in investigating alternatives. He asked for more due diligence regarding the safety of the installation.

Brad Drexler expressed his appreciation for the process. He presented pictures of a tower and stated that they are a sore thumb. He opined that the report was not a 3rd party independent review, but rather a peer review. He stated that this should be a shorter installation opining that that is supported by the review and that a water tower would be more pleasing.

Camille Jones opined that there are other options. She gave AT&T coverage as an example. She decried the process saying that it wasn't fair or transparent.

Michiko Conklin stated that she has Verizon service. She opined that the applicant and staff has done a good job. She described poor communication during emergency conditions. She described the coverage issues as critical and asked that the Commission approve the installation.

Renu Agerwal stated that this process has gone on for a long time and described issues with poor Verizon service in Healdsburg. She stated that residents and visitors need to be provided a safe environment in Healdsburg. She encouraged approval.

Yen Trac stated that she understands the need for good cell service. She stated that that is not the issue. The issue is that the visual impacts are not being addressed. She expressed confusion with the discussion of the different heights reviewed. She stated that if there is a technically feasible alternative that has nothing to do with whether or not the property owner is willing to provide the location.

David Jones asked how is it that Verizon has the most towers in Healdsburg. Where are they and is this just a move to acquire the most lease spaces in town.

Chair Eddinger asked the applicant if they wished to respond to any of the statements and questions that were asked.

Paul Albritton Verizon counsel expressed appreciation for the Commission's time and the three meetings that have occurred so far. He stated that while it seems simple to say go find another location, Verizon has been working on this for 8 years and this is the result. He pointed out that the property line is between the water tank property and the golf course. He stated that in regards to the variance required, to move the site farther away from the property line would result in a greater environmental impact requiring extensive grading and tree removal. He noted that the tower would be most visible from the Greens drive location shown in the photo simulations. He stated that it is impossible to make the installation invisible but by using a faux tree the impact is mitigated. With respect to small cells as alternatives, they also create conflicts. He noted that the Brandt location presents structural issues and power supply issues.

Commissioner Breznikar asked if it is true that the 76-foot height is not really necessary except for providing co-location.

Paul Albritton stated that each carrier has a different requirement. He noted that co-location would be a separate application that would come before the Commission. Their designer has determined the need for a 60-foot centered location. The top of the pole is the result of the aesthetics provided by a more conical treetop.

Commissioner Breznikar noted that Verizon would make money from any co-location and that was the reason that they wanted a higher tower.

Chair Eddinger closed the public input portion of the hearing.

Commissioner Brunner recognized the work that has been done and verified. He stated that his main concern is for public safety. He stated that he sees this as a benefit to the community.

Commissioner Gerlach expressed his appreciation for the work done on this application. He stated that as a new commissioner he did review the previous meetings for background. He stated that he feels the standards have been met.

Commissioner Luks noted that this is the 3rd hearing on this item and it is the first time that the necessity of the height has been discussed. This the first time that the issue of whether 60 feet is necessary. He stated that the independent report says that 50 feet would be adequate. He stated that he does feel that it is necessary for Verizon to provide coverage in town but feels that it could be done at 50 feet.

Commissioner Breznikar stated that there is no question that we need coverage for safety. Her problem is with the height of the tower, and she agrees that 50 feet would work. She does not feel that the project makes the findings of visibility and distance from a public facility. She stated that she feels a 40 to 50-foot tower would be an acceptable compromise.

Commissioner Hunt expressed her appreciation for the additional review and information that has been given. She opined that safety and time is of the essence. She stated that the application has been reviewed and discussed in great detail and it meets the requirements of the City and the Design Guidelines. She stated that she does not think that the visual impact is negative or concerning enough to delay or put our community at

risk. The tower needs to be installed and functioning as soon as possible for everyone's benefit in this area.

Commissioner McKay stated that he agrees with a lot of things that have been said. Yet looking at the CTC maps he does not see a significant difference in quality and scope between 40 and 60 feet. He does not necessarily see the need to provide height for co-location and therefore it should be a 40-50 foot tower.

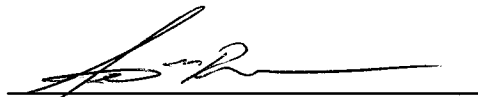
Chair Eddinger stated that he does not have an issue with the height and in fact feels that the Commission would be remiss in not approving the full height. He is fully in favor of approving the 76-foot height. He asked for a motion.

With no motion being offered from the floor, Chair Eddinger made the motion.

On a motion by Chair Eddinger, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, the Commission voted 4-3 (Luks, McKay, Breznikar against) to approve CUP 2016-07; CUP 2021-08; DR 2016-06; V 2017-01 - Verizon Telecommunications Facility at 923 S. Fitch Mountain Road.

5. **COMMISSIONER AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:** Commissioner McKay reported that he attended a Planning Commissioner's academy in San Ramon and recommended that all commissioners consider attending one.
6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Director Duiven provided information regarding the upcoming April 26th Planning Commission meeting which is anticipated to include amendments to the Mill District Master Conditional Use Permit, and a discussion on the progress of the Housing Element Update.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.



Scott M. Duiven, Secretary



Jerry Eddinger, Chair