



Minutes

RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

November 5, 2015

The Randolph County Planning Board met at 6:30 p.m., on Thursday, November 5, 2015, in the 2nd Floor Meeting Room, Randolph County Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **Chairman Reid Pell** called to order the Randolph County Planning Board meeting at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Jay Dale**, Planning Director, called roll of the members: **Reid Pell**, Chairman, present; **Wayne Joyce**, Vice Chairman, present; **Chris McLeod**, present; **Phil Ridge**, present; **Jim Rains**, present; **Kemp Davis**, present; and **Larry Brown**, present. County Attorney **Ben Morgan** was also present.
3. **Davis** made the motion, seconded by **Rains**, to approve the Minutes of the October 6, 2015 Randolph County Planning Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **REQUESTS FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT:**

Swearing in of the Witnesses - "Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God."

VERIZON WIRELESS, Charlotte, North Carolina, is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow a 250 ft. self-supporting lattice telecommunications tower (as per site plan) on 33.50 acres located at 5536 Julian Airport Road, Liberty Township, Sandy Creek Watershed, Secondary Growth Area, Zoning District RA, Tax ID# 8707990472. Property Owner - Alfred Crutchfield.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Jon Megerian**, Attorney representing Verizon, took the Oath.

Megerian said Verizon's objective in requesting this Special Use Permit is to provide coverage along Hwy 421. There are many "dead zones" in this area. This is an area of high daily use, by both the residents of the area and the traveling public, trying to use data, call 911, etc. Megerian provided a package of maps that provided information of

where those dead zone areas are located. Megerian said there is good coverage in the Old Red Cross and Liberty communities, but this area lacks coverage. Megerian provided a map of coverage of current level and future coverage (if the permit is approved). This tower would provide adequate coverage for the area. Megerian explained that cell towers sites don't have unlimited capacity and this proposed tower site would provide needed coverage for the current residences and travelers. The proposed tower site would also be necessary for the new mega-site after development. Megerian said we are possibly months or even years from DOT telling us where the proposed inter-change would be constructed. He said the applicants are willing to move the site as much as 200 ft. from the proposed site if the proposed site would interfere with DOT plans for the inter-change. He said the DOT proposed maps are not engineered drawings, but the applicants would be able to move the tower to accommodate what DOT may have in mind. He said that now a days towers are not just a matter of convenience but more a necessity. Megerian said there are folks that are here in favor of this tower. Megerian provided a document that addressed each requirement the Unified Development Ordinance requires in order for the Board to issue a Special Use Permit. Dale asked Megerian if the County was sent notification, as a tower owner within one mile of this site, of this request. Megerian said that at the time the application was submitted the tower was owned by Vaughn and he was notified. Megerian, provided a copy of the deed where the tower property was transferred from Vaughn to Randolph County. Megerian said it was his opinion that all requirements have been met. He said we may have reached the point that cell towers are a public necessity. He said he has seen no evidence that it would be of danger to the value of adjoining properties, but rather by providing full coverage it may increase property values. He said they have adjoining property owners that are here in favor of this request that feel this would increase their property values. He said the buffers and fences that are required would also protect adjoining property owners. He said there are no policies in the Growth Management Plan that would speak negatively about this type of development.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Ashetosh Pandry**, Design Engineer for Verizon, took the Oath.

Ashetosh Pandry, Design Engineer for Verizon, said they used experts to find the location and design of the tower. He has 12 years experience and has been involved in more that 150 cell tower sites. He said it would not pose and health or safety issues. He said it has been designed appropriately to meet all requirements of the County and FCC regulations.

Rains asked if the existing tower was included on the coverage charts provided. The engineer answered no. He added that the existing tower is 218 ft. in height and the proposed tower would be 250 ft.

McLeod asked how far the current tower is from the proposed site, and he answered .7 mile.

Pell asked if the other tower would come down. He answered Verizon would come off of the existing tower.

Davis asked if the existing tower could be altered to obtain the necessary coverage. He answered it could be done but the tower would be approximately 300 ft. in height.

Brown asked why did you not go with a monopole design. He said that would be a question of construction not design.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Guy Troy**, 3507 Troy Estate Road, took the Oath.

Troy said he doesn't use a cell phone, but I am a land owner of 92 years. Troy said that he has a passion for land and how it is used. Troy said he was on this Planning Board for 10 to 15 years a few years ago. Troy said he respects and thanks this Board for their efforts. Looking at the land from a landowners' point of view, the American dream is to own land. Land becomes more valuable over years. Alfred should be able to use his land as he wishes. Troy said he donated his land rights to the Piedmont Land Conservancy. And that was his choice. Alfred should also be able to do what he wants on his land for the benefit of his family and the community.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Joel Hargus**, 211 Commerce Street, Nashville TN. Planner for Verizon, took the Oath.

Hargus said that he was a city planner for 20 years and now works with Verizon. He said that he could move the tower approximately 200 ft. and still meet the coverage level Verizon needs. He said that the other tower could be torn down with the possibility of the meg-site and they wanted to plan for that possibility. There are currently 4 antennas on that tower and it needs to be relieved. The time frame for completion of construction (environmental study needed, etc.) would be generally a year.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Chris Hubert**, 5274 Lana Lane, Liberty, took the Oath.

Hubert said that currently 75% or more phone calls made today are made on cell phones.

He said local governments are responsible for insuring public safety and cell phone coverage is necessary for public safety. To enhance these facilities would make this county more safe and secure. He said 85% of the public use their cell phones for data access and there are 9.1 million subscriptions in North Carolina. He said with the current and projected cell phone growth, cellular companies must install new facilities to provide coverage for all the information transmitted in this way. Verizon's proposed tower should be approved to provide the necessity of this technology to this community.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Renee Summerlin** 2239 NC Hwy 62E, Julian, took the Oath.

Renee Summerlin said she lives 1/4 mile from this proposed site. She said she has problems with data being transferred reliably in this area. Summerlin said they had a 911 call (for chest pains) that was not routed correctly because of the system problems. She asked the Board to allow this tower because access to data is necessary for their home office and also the business community traveling along Hwy 421.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Jim Meredith**, 5326 Ramseur Julian Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Meredith said their current cellular service is not very good and very unreliable. He said he is on-call from his employment and has had to install a "hot spot" in his house to have service in his home. The service is still unreliable outdoors.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Jimmy Shelton**, 4948 Shelton Country Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Shelton said he operates a cattle farm and cell phones and computers are very important in their business. They live 2 miles from the existing tower and have 2 stars out of 5 stars with their service. Shelton said agriculture is the #1 industry in Randolph County and is also #1 in accidents. He said cell phone service is very important and good cell service could be the difference in life and death.

Rains asked if the proposed tower meets the requirements to allow for antenna space and equipment as required by Randolph County. **Megerian** answered yes.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Rebecca Carr**, Ramseur Julian Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Carr said that she works for Volvo Trucks and she is a benefits leader for the company. She said she must be available 24/7 for the company. Carr said she has had her calls dropped when she works from home. She said it is important for her to have cell phone coverage at her home. She said there was a shooting in their community recently and this type of coverage is necessary for 911 services.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Camilla Crutchfield**, 5536 Julian Airport Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Crutchfield said since they built their house there has been an increase in traffic along Hwy 421 including commercial truck traffic. She said that most of these truckers do not live in this area and depend upon cell phone coverage. She said the mega-site will increase this traffic also. These people also need coverage in this area. She said she lives right near the existing tower and she has had dropped calls often. She said she wants to be sure that her children and grandchildren have coverage on this road. Especially if their vehicles breakdown or have trouble.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Alfred Crutchfield**, 5536 Julian Airport Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Crutchfield said that he is bothered by the proposed interchange road coming through this location. He asked where the maps for the proposed road changes come from. He asked if this was guess work. **Dale** answered that these maps were provided to the County by the consultants for the proposed mega-site. **Crutchfield** said someone is going to have to buy my property. He said he was contacted by Verizon for the tower and no one has contacted him about this proposed road interchange. **Pell** asked if the tower would be in the wetlands. **Crutchfield** said no. **Crutchfield** said it can be moved anywhere on his property, that the County just doesn't want the tower.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Dennis Layton**, 7750 Old 421 Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Layton said that he has been a member of Julian Fire Dept since 1971 and fire service equipment and communications has changed. Layton said that 421 is very crooked in this area and the house numbers (address ranges) in Randolph are very different from those in Guilford County. For this reason communications for 911 calls are very important. He said the fire department can't give good service if they don't have good communications.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Alfred Crutchfield**, 5616 Julian Airport Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Crutchfield said he is a homeowner and business owner in this area. Crutchfield said that he uses a cell phone a lot in his business and the service is poor in this area.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Carol Yow**, 4798 Ferguson Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Yow said that they have lived here for 39 years. Yow said at that time there was no one there using 421 and now the traffic is 4 times greater. She said she has worked in the cellular phone industry and that land line services are trying to get out of the communications service and for this reason this tower is very necessary for their community.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Bonnie Renfrow**, Executive Director, Randolph Economic Development Corporation, 5918 Pineview Road, Asheboro, took the Oath.

Renfrow expressed their concerns. She said they have been working for 3 years to develop a mega-site location in this area. More than 10 million dollars has been spent to develop this site that would bring thousands of jobs to our area. Earlier this year she found out about this proposal and sent a letter in July of this year to Jay Dale, Planning Director, with her concerns of this being planned next to this proposed mega-site. She said the plan shown to the Board was produced, at their request, by NCDOT. Renfrow said the proposed mega-site project is on the Rural Planning (RPO) list at this location. She explained that the RPO ranks projects for NCDOT. She said they are working on the transportation planning for this project which will include a traffic study, environmental study, interchange proposal, etc. She said they anticipate that planning to be complete by May 2016 and therefore requested that this application be denied until that process can be completed. She said this would be best for the the County, the community and the cellular industry. Renfrow provided the board with a map.

Davis asked if the Crutchfield property was within the area proposed for the mega-site, and **Renfrow** answered yes.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Paxton Arthurs**, County Public Works Director, 1102 McDowell Road,

Asheboro, took the Oath.

Arthurs said there are no plans for the existing tower to be moved. The elevation of the tower is 230' ft. He said the County's tower would be 25' taller than the proposed tower. He said the maps presented by Verizon raise more questions than they answer. He asked the Board to postpone their decision until the question of why the existing tower is not adequate could be answered.

Megerian said that the map Renfrow presented says it is a preliminary plan (written on map) and is not an engineered drawing. He said Renfrow thinks the interchange will occur in a general vicinity. He said he thought the plan is to fluent and it would be optimistic (at best) to think that a formal plan would be available in May. Megerian said Verizon can't be expected to put off their plans for 8 months. He said EDC is going to plan and study and provide to their findings to NCDOT. He said the new tower for Verizon can't be put off for 8 months. He said the idea that if the cell tower goes here theres not goinng to be a mega-site, is just preposterous. Megerian said he felt Verizon has met all the County's requirements, and he didn't feel the mega-site is not relavent. **Rains** said that this map is exactly what engineers would use to begin to start their process. **Megerian** said that what he is trying to say is this Board is being asked to consider something that is purely speculative. **Rains** said it was in the same category as Verizon's maps for their coverage maps. **Megerian** said no site research has been done for the coverage maps.

Renfrow said that they have a contract that would require the work be completed by May 2016 and that is when it will be completed.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Allen Ferguson**, 4794 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Ferguson said that he has known of the mega-site project since 2012 and this site has been delayed many, many times. Over and over again. He said now the Board is being asked to participate in this delay once more. He said the people in this area are supporting this tower and have very little coverage from Verizon in this area. The people in this area want this tower. He said this would be a free public utility to this area. He said there is no reason not to approve this request.

Ben Morgan, County Attorney, administered the Oath to the witness, *Do you swear or affirm that the information you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* **Eugene Layton**, 5626 Trails End Road, Liberty, took the Oath.

Layton asked the Board if the property of Crutchfield would be taken by innement

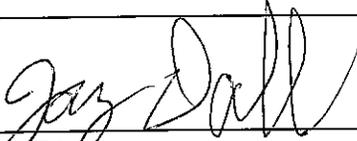
Modlin said that the diamond would be the outer edge of the proposed road. **Rains** said that there may be some underground things determined that could require the diamond to expand.

Davis said that he had a problem with holding the property owners' rights in limbo.

McLeod made the motion to **table** this request for 30 days to ask for additional information from both NCDOT and the County. **Brown** seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jay Dale announced that meeting would be December 8.

6. The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m. There were 35 citizens present for this meeting.

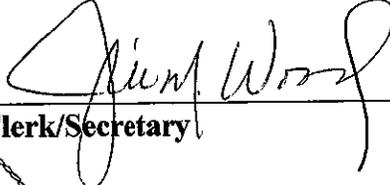


Planning Director

11-17-15

Date

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**



Clerk/Secretary

