

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL SITE CONTROL COMMISSIONS, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017, SCHOOLHOUSE, TOWN CENTER, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Chair Gilbert called the Special Joint Meeting of the Planning and Architectural Site Control Commissions to order at 7:00 p.m. Planning Director Pedro called the roll.

Present: ASCC Commissioners Koch and Wilson, and Vice Chair Sill

Absent: ASCC Chair Ross, Commissioner Breen

Present: Planning Commissioners Goulden and Hasko, Chair Gilbert

Absent: Planning Commissioner Von Feldt, Vice Chair Targ

Staff Present: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director
Arly Cassidy, Associate Planner

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Wireless Communications Facilities Discussion

Planning Director Pedro introduced tonight's joint ASCC and Planning Commission meeting as an information and discussion item regarding wireless communications facilities in Portola Valley. She explained that the Town was recently approached by Verizon Wireless with a proposal to add a number of new wireless communication facilities in Town. She said Verizon is proposing approximately twelve new small cells placed on utility poles in the road right-of-ways. She said the purpose of today's meeting is to provide the Commissions information regarding the plans that Verizon and other cell phone companies have for Portola Valley and to present information on the latest small cell technology. She asked that the Commissions express any aesthetic or other general concerns. She said the meeting invitation was extended to Verizon, T-Mobile, AT&T, and Sprint. Except for Verizon, she said no other carrier has indicated any immediate plans to add cell sites in Portola Valley.

Planning Director Pedro's presentation explained macrocells, small cells, and distributed antenna system (DAS). She shared a map of communication facilities and the history of cell towers in Portola Valley. She said all of the major carriers' equipment in Town are currently on monopines and monopoles. She said there are also microcells on utility poles, mainly on Alpine Road and Portola Road.

Planning Director Pedro introduced the Verizon Team – the Program Director, a Real Estate Manager, Engineers, and Project Manager.

Rommel Angeles, Small Cell Deployment Manager, Verizon Wireless. Mr. Angeles began his presentation with a short video that provided a small cell overview. He described their project scope and objective, siting requirements for each location, recommended design configurations, and deployments completed or in progress in Northern California.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked if the 30 to 50 feet height included the existing telephone pole. Mr. Angeles said the 30 to 50 feet height is the top of the antenna. He said typically the PG&E utility

poles are between 30 to 40 feet, and there must be a certain clearance from the conductor of the pole to the antenna, resulting in the additional height, approximately 10 feet higher than the top of the pole.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill asked if the fiber connection was underground or strung like a telephone line. Mr. Angeles said the fiber provider will follow the same route in the Town's infrastructure. He said if the Town has mostly aerial deployment, the fiber will be aerial as well.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked, with regard to the emergency backup, if cell phones would be operational or if PG&E will need to be part of the emergency procedures to power back up. Mr. Angeles said if the cell site is operational, the devices that connect to their network will also be operational, but other devices not in the Verizon system will not be functional. Mr. Angeles said if PG&E power goes down, Verizon would be powered through the backup battery.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill asked regarding the size of the backup battery cabinets located on the ground. Mr. Angeles said they are approximately 3 feet high by 2 feet by 2-1/2 feet. He said they could be painted or covered with art wrap. Planning Director Pedro said the Town has discouraged ground equipment because both Portola Road and Alpine Road are scenic corridors with trails. She asked if the backup battery could be located on the next available pole. Mr. Angeles said it is possible if the distance between the poles is manageable. He said the connection between the two may involve ground trenching, but it cannot be too great of a distance.

ASCC Commissioner Wilson asked if the backup battery could be underground. Mr. Angeles said they could not be underground because of the potential of flooding.

Planning Commission Chair Gilbert asked what percentage of Portola Valley would have improved coverage after placement of all the nodes. Mr. Angeles shared a projected coverage map.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked if this placement would primarily pick up people in transit on Alpine Road, Sand Hill Road, and Portola Road. Mr. Angeles said that was correct for this particular deployment, as well as some of the nearby residences.

Planning Commission Chair Gilbert asked how the locations were chosen. Mr. Angeles introduced their RF Engineer, Melvin Baccay.

Mr. Baccay said when T-Mobile designed the nodes for Portola Valley, they used a tool that shows areas that need more service based on the number of calls and data usage. Chair Gilbert asked if the decision was more based on the need while traveling in a car and not at the residences. Mr. Baccay said it was both. Planning Commission Chair Gilbert asked if they ultimately hoped to get broader coverage or if it was subject to limitations because of the geography. Mr. Angeles said the challenge in Portola Valley is definitely terrain and topography. He said this is why the small cell solution is a good choice because the service can be localized. He said they will do the best they can to cover as much of the area as possible.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill said cell phone technology changes every six or seven years. He asked how long the proposed design would work. Mr. Angeles said he cannot predict the future, but said the technology in the past few years has evolved very quickly – getting better and smaller. He said if that trend continues, the equipment will get smaller. He said this is strictly a 4G system, and this will be the backbone of wireless data for quite a while, at least 10 or so years. He said analog cell phone service lasted for 20-plus years.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked if anything was happening to increase coverage for phones. Mr. Angeles said the demand is more for data. Planning Commissioner Goulden asked if the phone

antennas were being improved. Mr. Angeles said the processing power and battery power of the devices are getting stronger but the FCC regulates how much an antenna device can emit.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill asked if the ground-based cabinet housed only a battery. Mr. Angeles said the cabinet also housed the AC to DC power converter and the heat exchanger for air flow. He said if they use a ground-based cabinet, they also try to relocate equipment from the pole into the cabinet, i.e., meters and fiber interconnect units.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked regarding the pole-mounted antenna. Mr. Baccay said the projection off of the pole, the distance from the face of the pole to the outer edge of the radio, is approximately 36 to 39 inches in the scenario where the radios are back to back.

ASCC Commissioner Wilson asked if there was any health risk to having these nodes near homes. Mr. Angeles said they are governed by the FCC as to how much RF the antennas can emit. Mr. Angeles said the concern about health risk is for the line workers if they stand right in front of the antenna for an extended amount of time.

In response to Planning Commissioner Hasko's question, Mr. Angeles said any of the three configurations can be implemented as long as the minimum components are at the site.

With no further questions, the Commissions thanked Verizon for their presentation.

Planning Director Pedro asked the Commission to provide feedback regarding this type of facility. She said some general guidance would be helpful for Verizon before they finalize their plans.

Planning Commission Chair Gilbert invited the Commissioners to share their thoughts.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill said ground-based cabinets along Portola Road or Alpine Road will be difficult to approve based on the Town's General Plan.

Planning Commissioner Goulden said he did not see a lot of concerns from a Planning Commission perspective, and it seemed like the aesthetics seems to be the major issue and aesthetics are normally deferred to the ASCC.

Planning Commission Chair Gilbert said the Planning Commission has used their authority with respect to aesthetics to modify configurations on wireless facilities, particularly the artificial trees.

Planning Commission Chair Gilbert said she was disappointed about how small of an area was getting coverage around each of those cells, which did not appear to be an extraordinary difference.

ASCC Vice Chair Sill said most of the houses have coverage through their residential internet services.

Planning Commissioner Hasko asked if every cell company wanted to do this, how the Town would make a fair allocation because these poles could be locked in and dedicated to Verizon only. Planning Director Pedro said that is why they invited all of the carriers to talk about their future plans. She said Verizon is the only company with any plans to invest in Portola Valley at this time.

Planning Commissioner Goulden asked if the companies shared their equipment with each other. Mr. Angeles said no because of the structural limitations on the pole.

ADJOURNMENT OF SPECIAL JOINT MEETING [7:45 p.m.]

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, SEPTEMBER 20 2017, SCHOOLHOUSE, TOWN CENTER, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Chair Gilbert called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:46 p.m. Planning Director Pedro called the roll.

Present: Commissioners Goulden and Hasko; Chair Gilbert

Absent: Commissioner Von Feldt, Vice Chair Targ

Council Liaison: Councilmember Jeff Aalfs

Staff Present: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director
Arly Cassidy, Associate Planner

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Associate Planner Cassidy presented staff reports on two CUP applications. She said both sites had previous CUP approvals from 1999 that have expired and require renewal. The applicants are also proposing updates to the facilities on the poles.

1. Preliminary Review of a Proposal to Renew a Conditional Use Permit and Update on Existing Wireless Communication Facility, T-Mobile, 3530 Alpine Road, File #PLAN USE 00005-2017
2. Preliminary Review of a Proposal to Renew a Conditional Use Permit and Update on Existing Wireless Communication Facility, T-Mobile, 700 Portola Road, File #PLAN USE 00004-2017

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission convene the Wireless Facility Subcommittee for further review. The Subcommittee will be composed of the Planning Director, the Public Works Director, one ASCC Member, and a member of the Conservation and Trails Committee. Associate Planner Cassidy said they would also like to invite a representative from T-Mobile to attend that meeting. She said revisions or resubmittals of the plan may be required if there are recommendations for changes to the plans. She said the Subcommittee will then make recommendations and return the items to the Planning Commission for a final vote.

In response to Chair Gilbert's question, Planning Director Pedro confirmed that the Subcommittee is part of a process the Town has established to streamline approvals for wireless communications facilities, and these items will not be brought before the ASCC for hearings; however, an ASCC member will be part of the Subcommittee.

Chair Gilbert asked what input from the Planning Commission is required at this point. Planning Director Pedro said they are requesting that the Planning Commission agree to form the Subcommittee and provide any preliminary comments.

Chair Gilbert invited the applicant to comment. Anne Welsh, Black & Veatch, representing T-Mobile explained that Black & Veatch is an engineering firm contracted by T-Mobile. She said that she prepared a PowerPoint presentation, but it was not necessary to present it because staff's presentation already covered the same information.

Associate Planner Cassidy said she researched General Order 95, which relates to regulations for overhead electric line construction, but determined an expert was needed to interpret those regulations.

Commissioner Hasko asked regarding the operational improvement that will be achieved with the proposed changes to the facilities. Ms. Welsh said the updated equipment will improve coverage and capacity, as shown in the coverage maps.

Chair Gilbert said the coverage maps should show the difference between the existing installations and the updated installations to get a more accurate picture of the coverage improvements that are expected due to the updates. Ms. Welsh confirmed she will get that information.

Chair Gilbert asked if the existing antennas were the originals that were installed in 1999 or if they had been updated during a prior CUP renewal. Planning Director Pedro said it could have been updated at some point, but the Town has no record of it. Ms. Welsh said she would imagine they have been upgraded, but she will try to get an answer to that. Associate Planner Cassidy said the 1999 permit was for Pacific Bell, which was then acquired by T-Mobile. She believes there was an antenna update at that point.

Chair Gilbert said there was apparently an RF issue for the Alpine Road installation for the pole workers, but there was no mention of issue for the Portola Road installation. Planning Director Pedro said warning signs are now required. Associate Planner Cassidy said there is signage in the plans for both poles. Chair Gilbert asked the applicant to address that question at some point in the process.

The Commission was in general support of updates, making them as aesthetically pleasing as possible.

Commissioner Goulden moved to form a Subcommittee as proposed. Chair Hasko seconded; the motion carried 3-0.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT [8:06 p.m.]