



City of Colorado Springs

City Hall
107 N. Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO
80903

Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

Thursday, February 15, 2018

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

**6.B. CPC CM1
17-00141**

A Conditional Use for a Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) installation of a 55-foot freestanding stealth tower telecommunications facility with associated supporting ground equipment located at 1225 North Circle Drive.

(Quasi-Judicial)

Presenter:

Rachel Teixeira, Planner II, Planning and Community Development

Staff presentation:

Rachel Teixeira, Planner II, gave a PowerPoint presentation for the intent and scope of the project.

Applicant Presentation:

Richard Gato with Selective Site Consultants gave a PowerPoint presentation

Questions:

Commissioner Markewich stated the codes allow use to review visual impact, height and type of cellular facility. The location chosen is as close to the neighborhood as possible. For the least amount of impact he would put it further south in the parking lot to get it away from the neighborhood and ask for 65-ft. Why this site selection? Mr. Gato stated the site selection was because there is a slope where the grade changes dramatically and to have it where Commissioner Markewich suggested it would have to be an extremely tall tower, close to 100-ft. to get it above the ridge to address coverage concerns. Therefore it was more logical to use a monopine tower that blends in with the surrounding and addresses the issues of coverage. They've tried to identify the best opportunity. The site is away from the street and they went back as far as possible.

Commissioner Walkowski asked if the coverage map was AT&T. Mr. Gato said yes. Commissioner Walkowski asked if it was co-locatable. Mr. Gato said it was. Commissioner Walkowski stated the visual impact is good but not at other times of the year. Mr. Gato said they've tried to blend it the best they can.

Commissioner Walkowski asked if they'd looked at any other sites because the topography to the north goes uphill. You're halfway down a hill with a placement of the cell tower. Mr. Gato said they had and this was the most suitable location to address the coverage and the issues they're experiencing. Commissioner Walkowski stated he wanted to make sure you've looked at

other locations that would be less impactful to the neighborhood. Mr. Gate said they did and each one had unique issues of their own and they felt this was the best opportunity

Supporters:

None

Opponents:

Robert Saft was representing the people in the neighborhoods and stated there is a hill to the north of the proposed site that's more dramatic in height. The proposed antenna doesn't look as if it uses tropo-scattering. There could be ongoing health concerns related to this. The visual issues are not a concern of the neighborhood, it's the health risks.

Lori Neives stated her concerns are also health concerns. She gave the commission a copy of their petition against this tower. The type of cell tower proposed is like a large microwave which will bombard the neighbors with EMF's coming from the tower. The number from the FCC about the EMF's is old data, approximately 20yrs old. AT&T said they'd have to build a higher tower to go over their homes and that would actually be better in their mind than have that 45-ft tower going directly through their homes. Signatures in the petition included a former AT&T worker and teachers and staff at Mark Twain Elementary. They didn't think this will help coverage since they have to go higher up hills in their neighborhoods.

Questions of Staff:

None

Rebuttal:

Mr. Gato stated the amount of power they'll be using is 1/10th of the power allowed by FCC. Those at the hearing do not represent the entire view of the neighborhood. At the neighborhood meeting he explained in detail to aesthetically address some of their potential concerns. Aesthetic concerns were not raised as an issue what they were concerned about was it being a health hazard. The project is evaluated by whether or not it meets city code which it does. He'd like the Commission to review it based on those codes.

Commissioner Markewich stated they have no ability to control the amount of microwaves, the power, or the health impacts. Are decision is based on visual impacts, location, height and type of facility. Can you address the issue of this being a directional tower and not a refracting one? Mr. Gato stated he can't education them on RF signals. RF signals go up. They need to get up and go over the houses to make the signals viable. The idea the signals go right into the houses would be self-defeating on their part for the purpose of the cell tower

Commissioner Markewich stated visual problems are not the issue. If they could make something like a slick stick pole and put it away from the neighborhood, in the parking lot and make it taller it would make more sense. So is it purely cost difference from using what you have instead of putting what I mention in the parking lot and make it higher.

Mr. Gato stated the location was chosen for a number of reasons and it's not for cost. They don't want to come back in 6 months asking for another location down the road because we don't have enough coverage. We want to put in one tower in this location and solve the long-term coverage issues. We're trying to put in a tower that makes the most sense. They are trying to take advantage of the best location of what the needs are.

Commissioner Markewich stated if they moved the tower 100-ft. southeast and made the tower taller he didn't understand how that wouldn't meet the same objective to not have to continually come back. Having it move 100-ft away and have it be higher wouldn't that accomplish what they want? Mr. Gato stated this was the best opportunity for them.

Motion by Vice Chair Smith, seconded by Graham, to Approve the conditional use for the CMRS at 1225 North Circle Drive Conditional Use Development Plan based upon the findings that the CMRS conditional use development plan meets the review criteria for granting a conditional use as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.704, and the CMRS location and design criteria as set forth in City Code Sections 7.4.607 and 7.4.608. The motion passed by a vote of 5:1:0

Aye: 5 - Graham, Smith, Chairperson McDonald, Walkowski and Fletcher

No: 1 - Markewich

Absent: 3 - Henninger, Satchell-Smith and Raughton