

NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETING

Project: Collindale Golf Course Wireless Telecommunications Facility

Date: November 3, 2014

Applicant: Becky Siskowski Consultant to Verizon Wireless

Planner: Noah Beals

Other City Staff: Bill Whirty, Helen Matson, Kayla Ballard and Ryan Mounce

City Development Review Process Overview:

The meeting began with an overview of the City's development review process, and where this development proposal is within the timeline of this process.

As of tonight, the applicant has completed up to and through a conceptual review with the City, sharing preliminary information about the proposal with several City departments. Their next step is to complete a neighborhood meeting to gather input and feedback from neighbors, which is occurring this evening.

This proposal, if it moves forward, will be a Type 1 project, meaning the decision maker is a hearing officer, and not the Planning & Zoning Board. Neighborhood meetings are typically not required for Type 1 projects, but in this case, the applicant is proposing to lease City-owned land, and the City has policies in place to hold neighborhood meetings for such occurrences.

Following tonight's neighborhood meeting, if the proposal moves forward, the applicant will submit a formal development application. Following this will be review of the development by staff and various departments and agencies. It is typical for projects to have multiple rounds of staff review to ensure the project complies with the Land Use Code and other City policies. Following staff review, a public hearing will be scheduled for the project. If you received a mailed notice about tonight's neighborhood meeting, you will also receive a mailed notice about the public hearing. The decision maker at the public hearing has up to 10 days to make a decision, and following the decision, there is a 14-day appeal period.

If there is no appeal, the applicant would submit Final Plans to get to 100% specifications and design and record the project. This final stage could take several months. Following approval of the project from the development review side, the applicant will also need to finalize a lease agreement with the City, which must be approved by and go before City Council.

Question (Citizen): Would any of our comments to you be passed along to other people in the City?

Response (City): We are taking notes of tonight's meeting, and these will be available online and the meeting notes are included in the public record and will be forwarded on to the decision maker for the project.

Applicant Presentation / Questions, Comments & Responses:

We are proposing to install a faux-tree at the Collindale Golf Course. On the tree, 12 antennae will be installed to increase coverage and capacity in the nearby area.

Question (Citizen): Are the antennas going on a real tree?

Response (Applicant): No, it's a fake tree.

Question (Citizen): Why do you call it a tree?

Response (Applicant): We call it a monopine.

If you look on your handouts, you can see the location where this is proposed. The leased area is 30' x 60' and it will be fenced area. The monopine will be about 75 feet tall. On the last sheet of the handout there are elevations of the proposed monopine. Several years ago there was a similar proposal for a wireless telecommunications facility, but that project did not move forward.

Question (Citizen): Why did you choose this location?

Response (Applicant): Verizon provides me with a search ring, or an area that pinpoints gaps in coverage or where additional capacity is needed. Within the search ring for this area of the City, there are really only residential neighborhoods, and that makes it difficult to find a place to install antennas on taller structures or to stealth the design. City requirements require stealth designs for new wireless facilities, and that means we needed to look at a monopine as an option to meet the stealth requirements in this area.

Question (Citizen): What about the middle of the golf course? Could it go there?

Response (Applicant): This location was chosen because of a previous application that also proposed this location as it is near the existing golf course maintenance facility, so all of the buildings are in one location rather than spread throughout the golf course.

Comment (Citizen): On the other side of the golf course (east side), there are also some existing buildings, and this would be clear across from what we would be seeing from our homes.

Response (Applicant): This is the location we were asked to consider.

Response (City): We're open to suggestions for locations.

Response (Applicant): There are four other sites near this location, one site at Foothills Mall, one near Harmony/287, one near Timberline, and one located further north. All of those cell sites have limited capacity, so we need to get another location where we can offload some of the traffic from these sites. In addition, this location was conducive because areas near Lemay Avenue we have weak coverage spots.

Question (Citizen): Are you concerned with golf balls damaging your equipment?

Response (Applicant): No, there are nets nearby. It's very far from the driving range.

Question (Citizen): The tower itself is 75' tall. The fence along Lemay is I believe 55'. The nearest tree (northeast), do you know how tall that tree is?

Response (Applicant): I don't know the height of that tree.

Response (Audience): If that's the cottonwood, it's pretty tall.

Response (Applicant): There are some measurements for trees on sheet LS1, for the two east of the metal building.

Question/Comment (Citizen): I'm one of the people most affected by this, because you'll see this when you walk out my front door. Why are we talking about the appropriateness of putting a 75' industrial structure in a residential/recreational neighborhood? I would respectfully request they move it across the golf course – why put it so close the residential homes that would affect their views and property values?

Comment (Citizen): I second that.

Comment (Citizen): This is an industrial use, so put it more to the east where it is more industrial.

Question (Citizen): Did we get a clear answer why this can't go to the east side of the golf course?

Response (Applicant): Placing this on the east side of the golf course would bring it much closer to another site, which can cause interference between the two sites and their antenna

Question (Citizen): What about an alternative option moving it to the park across the street near the reservoir?

Response (Applicant): I believe we looked at that and the golf course was the preferred location.

Question (Citizen): Who was that most beneficial or preferred to?

Response (Applicant): To the City.

Question (Citizen): The microwaves that are emitted from the towers, how does that impact the health of people?

Response (Applicant): The FCC has stated the transmission of these frequencies does not adversely affect the health of individuals.

Comment (Citizen): I know the jury is still out, but there is a lot of information that these microwaves can cause damage to the human body.

Response (Applicant): These will not be microwave transmissions. We are transmitting in about the 700 mhz frequency, it's a very low frequency.

Question (Citizen): What was the issue in not being able to locate it in the middle, where it could be hidden amongst more trees?

Response (City): What we're hearing is that the east side there may be interference issues and interference with golfing operations in the middle of the golf course.

Response (Applicant): Part of this is the tower, and there's also an equipment shelter. The fire authority also needs access to this structure. Locating this near the existing buildings means there is an existing maintenance/access drive in place, rather than having to construct a road through the golf course.

Question (Citizen): Is that the same monopole that you're proposing, the same as the Vine and Shields location?

Response (Applicant): There are different tree species that can be designed. We can change this to suit the types of trees and specific area.

Comment (Citizen): I want to reiterate that the decision is a City decision that is already in place. This has been decided by our government, by our City of Fort Collins. I'm also interested in coverage, and a tower that works and gives us better coverage. I am interested in this also being put in a place that is not as intrusive. I realize intrusive is a subjective element based on how close one may be to this and where you live. We're balancing our need for coverage and cell phone use versus somebody and their

need for an environment around them. I do appreciate looking at the golf course, and especially that location, and it seems that would operate best for the people around this neighborhood.

Comment (Citizen): I'm also interested in maintaining home values. I live very close to where the tower is proposed, so I'm very concerned about home values, and if you put it there, I assume our property taxes and valuation will go down. If the City is going to tamper with that location, then our home value will go down.

Response (Audience): Not necessarily, I think people are getting used to looking at these.

Response (Audience): I don't buy that.

Comment (Citizen): I am also here to represent three other people on my street. One is a Verizon customer, whose signal is bad at Harmony and Timberline and feels you need coverage over there.

Response (Applicant): We are looking at other sites throughout the City as well.

Question (Citizen): Why can't you move it across the street?

Response (City): We don't know if it is or is not possible to move the site across the street, we are discussing the specific proposal before us tonight.

Response (Applicant): The park across the street, and keeping in mind the City's ordinance to keep this unobtrusive and stealthed, with a large lease area, it would probably stand out more in the park than behind a maintenance facility at the golf course.

Response (Applicant): We have some photosims available tonight, looking at view 2, from the far away, it does look more like a natural tree. If we changed the design a little, you probably wouldn't even know it was a facility unless you came to this meeting tonight.

Question (Citizen): How much is Verizon paying the City to do this?

Response (Applicant): We have not done a lease with the City of Fort Collins yet. So, that has not been finalized.

Response (City): The process is they go through the development review process first before they can request a lease agreement before City Council.

Question (Citizen): What are they making for the other site (Vine & Shields location)?

Response (City): That is located on private property.

Question (Citizen): Are there any existing City sites?

Response (City): There are some sites at City Park, with antenna on the ball field lights. Those facilities have been there over 10 years now.

Comment (Citizen): These pictures and photosims make it look like there's a harmony. There's only 1 tree, but it's nowhere near the proposal; it's next to the driving range photos. It's trick photography. If you have just the right angle and just the right photo, you can make it look like whatever you want.

Comment (Audience): I believe the upper and lower photos are identical, except for the lower photo they have superimposed the proposed monopine.

Question (Citizen): What's the process for this? For those that live there and are affected, what do we get to say about what might happen to our properties and the appearance of our neighborhood?

Response (City): The next step is for the applicant to submit the project and staff review to ensure City codes are followed. After this there will be a public hearing for the project, and the hearing officer will hear public testimony for the project. As this project is also on City-owned land, the lease agreement will also go to City Council, another public hearing where comments and testimony can be provided.

Question (Citizen): Why is this being proposed? What is the benefit for the City?

Response (City): Verizon approached the City, the City did not approach Verizon.

Response (Applicant): Most of the cell sites nearby have limited capacity and there are some low coverage spots in the area.

Question (Citizen): If there is a negative impact on the residential properties, is there anything you provide?

Response (Applicant): We try to address issues of coverage and customers, with the need to be responsible neighbors with things like stealth designs. It's a balance to mitigate all these factors.

Question (Citizen): Do you share the facility with other phone companies?

Response (Applicant): Yes, it is made to be co-locatable, which means other carriers can locate on the monopine to reduce the need for other towers/poles.

Question (Citizen): What's the problem to moving it across the street in the other park, where the ducks and birds are?

Response (City): We haven't reviewed that, we don't know if there is a problem to moving it to that location. There are some of these areas across where there aren't as many trees and it's more open space.

Response (Audience): The point was made it would stand out because there aren't other trees to blend into.

Comment (Citizen): I respectfully request that it would be beneficial to present multiple locations.

Response (Applicant): We have sites all around this and to move them closer to one of these, it would defeat the purpose of trying to increase coverage/capacity in this specific location. If you try to be closer to them, it defeats the purpose as it can cause interference.

Question (Citizen): What is the time frame going forward from tonight's meeting?

Response (City): The applicant can submit two weeks after the meeting, and will probably require multiple rounds of review, each several weeks. To get to the public hearing stage, it's a several month process, and after the public hearing, another couple months to complete Final Plans. Following that, they would still need to complete a lease agreement which goes before City Council. So it's likely next year before anything could be constructed.

Comment (Citizen): When it comes to sharing the tower with other providers – does that mean they would also add additional antennas?

Response (City): Yes, additional antennas would be needed.

Response (Applicant): It is built to accommodate a certain amount of antennas, and carriers won't want to be too much lower as they need height for adequate coverage, so there may only be space for a few additional antennas; the entire structure would not be loaded up with them.

Comment (Citizen): The park across the street – the appearance question seems to me to negate Verizon's engineering department saying it wouldn't work there. I'd say give that location a shot.

Response (Applicant): I find usually at public parks its tougher with family and children and families enjoying the park versus a golf course location.

Response (Citizen): They don't live there; they're only there a few hours a day.

Question (Citizen): I'd like to see what the proposal looks like, and if it's approved by City Council, and other carriers want to use this with additional antennas, at the end what is this whole thing going to look like?

Question (City): Could you produce another photosim or elevations showing other antennas at the site and on the monopine?

Response (Applicant): Yes, we could put those on the elevations.

Question (Citizen): Are you saying this building at the bottom, the equipment shelter, you're trying to say this won't affect our property values, and we're going to accept that?

Response (Response): We could bring the cedar fencing up to the top of the shelter; make it taller.

Response (Audience): Is it going to look any worse than the golf course buildings.

Question (Citizen): Before Verizon made this proposal, and came up with this idea, did they try to find other locations away from other million dollar homes? Something more sensitive to the sensibility to the design of the neighborhood?

Response (Applicant): I drove the area of the coverage gap to see if there were other colocation spaces available; that is where we would have gone first. The rest of the area is residential. The golf course is a public land facility, so it made the next best sense to go there.

Question (Citizen): Since the only beneficiary to this would be the golf course, from the lease, and the neighborhood doesn't benefit, why not move it away from the neighborhood?

Response (Audience): Location-wise, with the other towers, this is the best spot to address their coverage and capacity gaps.

Response (Applicant): Another factor for carriers is that if coverage and capacity gaps aren't addressed with one structure, additional towers may be needed.

Question (Citizen): Could you build antennas on the power lines, like at the Harmony/Timberline/Railroad location?

Response (Applicant): I believe the power company no longer allows leases on the power lines/poles.

Question (Citizen): Has the City been provided a map of the coverage and capacity needs? I don't believe this is the absolute best spot.

Response (City): No, I don't think the City has seen a map of their coverage.

Response (Citizen): From a technical point of view, has there been a coverage area presented – what is the framework of that potential location to maintain coverage?

Response (Audience): In other words, if you put it on the east side of the golf course, what would that do to your coverage versus on the west side?

Question (Citizen): What is the typical distance between towers?

Response (Applicant): It depends on the area covered and the facilities built. For an area and density of Fort Collins, it is typically 2 to 3 miles.

Question (Citizen): Is it reasonable to ask Verizon to look at another location?

Response (Applicant): When we look at sites, we have to take many factors into account such as City regulations, access, trees nearby, neighborhood concerns, etc. This site already has an easement and accessway to the maintenance facility without interfering with the golf course' daily routine; it's off the main side road.

Response (Citizen): I've been involved in many processes, but it seems like it's a strong arm thing.

Response (Audience): I think you picked a good location, assuming what you claim with coverage is correct.

Question (Citizen): Have you considered moving it closer to Horsetooth?

Response (Applicant): The golf course and its' main building is closer to Horsetooth, and we couldn't take up a couple parking spaces.

Response (Citizen): It doesn't work for us as property owners either.

Response (Audience): Wherever they go, there are going to be property owners. There will be objections regardless of where they go.

Comment (Citizen): When I look across the street, there is plenty of room to put a tree.

Question (Citizen): Has anybody considered, where the parking lot is for the golf course, and then there's the little house that sits there, and right behind is an additional parking lot where hardly anybody ever parks. That parking lot is hardly ever full and its golf course property – has anybody considered that, it's right at the corner of Horsetooth and Lemay?

Response (City): That does get used for golf course tournaments. It even gets used for overflow parking during busy periods.

Comment (Citizen): We're only talking about 30' x 60'; it would only take up a dozen vehicle spaces.

Response (Audience): I think that's a good point.

Response (Audience): It would be a beautiful tree there, and no one would notice it.