Caswell County Planning Board Meeting

May 25, 2021

**Members Present***:*

*Chairman*, Russell Johnston, Michael Poteat, Antonio Foster, Scott Oakley, Don Swann, Matthew Hoagland, *Planner*, Commissioner Oestreicher, Ashley Powell, *Administrative Assistant*, Amy Lyle, *Development Services Coordinator*.

**Members Absent**:

Ron Richmond, Jason Daniel.

**Called to Order**

Chairman Johnston called the May 25, 2021 Planning Board to order at 1:07 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Foster made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Oakley. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments submitted.

**Approval of April Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Oakley made a motion to approve the April 27, 2021 Planning Board minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Unfinished Business**

Administrative Assistant Ashley Powell administered the oath of office to the following board members: Scott Oakley, Michael Poteat, Antonio Foster, Don Swann.

**New Business**

1. **Wireless Communication Tower Public Hearing**

Mr. Oakley made a motion to go into Public Hearing to consider the proposed Wireless Communication Facility. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hoagland informed the Board that he received an application for a cell tower on Highway 158 West. The tower would be 300-foot-tall and sit on a property that is approximately 18.5 acres. The property is approximately one half mile west from the intersection of Highway 158 and Bethesda Church Road, and one mile from the intersection of Casville. Public hearing notices were mailed to the surrounding property owners, signs were posted prominently on the road by the property, and a public hearing notice ran twice in the Caswell Messenger. Mr. Hoagland also noted that the cell tower application when submitted was a violation of the UDO’s setback of 125% a tower height. But since the application was submitted, the county commission approved the Planning Board’s recommendation to reduce the setback to 100% the tower height, thus the application now meets the new standard.

Public comments were received from the following residents which Mr. Hoagland read aloud:

“GREAT all we need is another cell tower. Mucking up the skyline. Dont we have enough already in Caswell county. That and solar panel farms. Time was Caswell county was a beautiful County. But I know the all mighty $$$ will overcome any objection.  To the Caswell county Gov.  I object to this. Signed David Wall”

“Hi , I’m a resident on Highway 150 and the tower in our area (is) greatly NEEDED !! We have begged for years ( 15 to be exact since retiring from teaching ) AT&T, Centel for some services in our part of the county ... we seem to be the “forgotten corner “ of Caswell “. Those of us that have service have to pay very high prices for service ... some of my neighbors are only a matter of feet from the Centel cutoff line !! I have Hughes Net but still have to go to the McDonald’s parking lot to download articles ... I can only imagine what the poor schoolchildren are going through in our area with virtual learning ...
Also , it seems many corners of the county are seeing Dollar General and or Dollar Tree stores being built in their area .. we would love that luxury in our area also !! Please try and provide any services to us that is possible ! We would greatly Appreciate being considered for these services ... Thank you for your interest.”

“I’m a resident of Highway 150 and we are very appreciative of anything you can help provide for our area of the county .. we seem to be the forgotten corner - no internet- no Dollar General - no cell tower ... we are hoping this will change in the Near future ... Thank you for your interest in this project.
Gail Williams
10551 Hwy 150
Reidsville , NC 26320”

“As residents of the Locust Hill Community, we want to give our support for a cell tower in our area. It is certainly necessary. We live off of Ashland Rd., between highways 150 and 158 and service is terrible to non existent at times. We need help in this area.

Thank you. Wilson and Loraine Pruitt, 177 Joe Cobb Rd., Ruffin, NC 27326”

“Please get this tower. I live in the Locust Hill community on 150 E. between Ashland Road and Highway 158. AT&T has promised us Internet for many years and we still do not have it. We are in a forgotten community. I live 1/8th mile from the Century Link internet line and I am unable to get it because I am in AT&T’s district. Also, we have very poor cell phone signal with Verizon. Thank you, Catherine Reagan”

Mr. Hoagland also mentioned that a lady named Ashley Williams called his office on Wednesday, May 19 and left a voicemail supporting the tower.

Chairman Johnston then introduced applicant Doug Barker, a representative from HK Consulting and Vertical Bridge Development, who attended the meeting via the Zoom webinar platform. He presented information of the newly proposed tower. He stated that this tower should have a six to seven mile range of coverage. He also showed a coverage map of the county and explained how this tower would fill a gap that exists between current towers in the county and towers in eastern Rockingham County. Mr. Foster asked Mr. Barker how long would it take to finalize the new tower. Mr. Barker said around seventy-five days. Chairman Johnston asked if any of the guests in attendance would like to add a public comment as well but none did.

Mr. Oakley made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Oakley made a motion to approve the application for the new cell tower. The motion carried unanimously.

1. **Planning Board By-Laws Amendment**

Mr. Hoagland presented the board with a proposed amendment to the Planning Board By-Laws regarding their oath of office. Mr. Hoagland explained that since state law now requires the board members take an oath of office, he thought it might be best for that oath to be in writing where future board members could see it and it would be consistent in the future. Mr. Foster made a motion for the following amendment to be added to the Planning Board by-laws for oath of office:

VII. OATH OF OFFICE

Rule 18. Before entering their duties, all board members shall qualify by taking the following oath as required by NC G.S. 160D-309:

I, **\_\_\_\_**(insert name here)**\_\_\_\_\_\_**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge my duties as a member of the Caswell County Planning Board, so help me God.

The motion carried unanimously.

1. **H.I.D.O. Explosives Amendment Discussion**

Chairman Johnston noted that Mr. Oakley had requested time on the agenda to present an issue. Mr. Oakley gave a presentation on the nature of explosives at the property on Pagetown Road which had led to several complaints recently to county staff. Mr. Oakley’s recommendation would be to possibly amend the county’s High Impact Development Ordinance. Mr. Hoagland informed the board that the county commissioners had recently instructed the county manager, county attorney, and himself had been tasked with creating an ordinance to address the issue and that substantial work had been done on it. He suspected the ordinance would be presented to the commissioners soon. The Board took no action on this issue.

1. **Board Secretary Appointment**

Mr. Hoagland introduced the Board to Amy Lyle, the new Development Services Coordinator for the county’s Planning, Environmental Health, and Building Inspections departments. As such, part of her responsibilities will be to act as secretary to the Boards I report to, Mr. Hoagland said. Mr. Swann made a motion to assign Amy Lyle as the new Planning Board Secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning Department Updates**

Mr. Hoagland. Informed the Board that he received another application for a new cell tower in the Prospect Hill community. It is from the same developer who presented today and he expects the public hearing will take place during their next regular meeting in June.

Mr. Hoagland also noted that the county commissioners approved all of the 160D updates and other recommended changes to the UDO as presented by the Planning Board. He now plans to begin incorporating those changes into a final document so that they will be reflected on the website and he can make new binder copies for any Planning Board members who want them as well.

Finally, Mr. Hoagland shared the site plan of the proposed “The Station at Frogsboro” development at 5873 Ridgeville Road. Mr. Hoagland explained that the developers of the property had to obtain a S.N.I.A. Permit and it was his responsibility to share all S.N.I.A. Permits with the Watershed Review Board as an information item. The Planning Board served as the Watershed Review Board during the time that the permit was approved though that has now shifted to the Board of Adjustment.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Oakley made a motion to adjourn the May 25, 2021 Planning Board Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.