Caswell County Planning Board Meeting

July 27, 2021

**Members Present***:*

*Chairman*, Russell Johnston, Michael Poteat, Antonio Foster, Scott Oakley, Jason Daniel, Steven Harris, Ron Richmond, Matthew Hoagland, *Planner*, Commissioner Oestreicher, *Administrative Assistant*, Amy Lyle, *Development Services Coordinator*.

**Members Absent**: Don Swann.

**Called to Order**

Chairman Johnston called the July 27, 2021 Planning Board to order at 1:01 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Harris made a motion to approve the July 27th Planning Board meeting agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Landon Woods of Purley, NC made a public statement regarding the zoning laws that are being considered for Caswell County. He stated he was concerned that zoning will affect his business & slow economic growth is the future.

**Approval of May Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Oakley made a motion to approve the June 22nd, 2021 Planning Board minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Unfinished Business**

**New Business**

1. **Wireless Communication Tower Public Hearing**

Mr. Harris 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 Mise Road. The tower would be 300-foot-tall and sit on a property that is approximately 25 acres owned by Bobby Carter. The property is approximately 700 feet from the nearest resident. It will be surrounded by a wooden fence and have no wires or lines. The tower will sit on one-fourth of an acre out of the 25 acres. 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

Public comments were received from the following residents which Mr. Hoagland read aloud:   
  
“We would like to say we are in favor of the construction of a new wireless communication tower on the property at 206 Mise Road, Yanceyville, NC, 27379. We feel this will benefit the service for many people in our area. We cannot get any service in places such as Highway 86 South just past South Elementary school and other places we get very little service. This would definitely help the Corbett Ridge Road residents as well as many other people in this area. Thank you very much.” Earl & Charlotte Smith, 954 Corbett Ridge Rd, Mebane, NC, 27302.

“I live on Hwy 86 South about 3 miles from Mise Road. I have Verizon as my cell phone carrier and I am well pleased. I think a cell tower in our community is a great idea and I am excited that it is coming to Caswell County. Our county needs better internet, cell phone, and phone service. Hopefully we will see more interest in these types of service.” Jeanette Woodson

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 would sit on one-fourth of an acre. It would be a silent tower. Chairman Johnston asked if any of the guests in attendance would like to add a public comment. The comments are as follows:

Janie Cobb from Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated that she does not like the tower being placed so close. She’s concerned about residents being subject to tumors, headaches, or birth defects from exposure to the tower. She stated she had health conditions and did not want to risk herself or the health of others. .

Mike Cobb from Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated he was concerned with the tower being placed within one-fourth of a mile of residents. He is concerned for possible health risks & defects associated with exposure to the tower. He wants reconsideration of the site plan.

Pam Bradsher of Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated that this tower will be in her back yard. She currently doesn’t have any cell service issues. She has concerns for the environmental state and the impact of underground lines on the wildlife and livestock. She stated she has read studies from MIT and these studies showed that prolonged exposures can cause medical issues. She wants to know if routine inspections will be done if the tower is built. She wants to be assured that the tower will not be a blythe on the landscape, and wants to know if residents near the tower can be compensated for property value issues and/or medical issues if they arise. She also asked if a yearly evaluation of resident properties could be done.

Christopher Bradsher of Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated “I object.”

Gary Scarlett from Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated that he moved here to get away from towers. He said he was a cancer survivor and he was concerned for his other neighbors.

Harry Carter from Highway 158 East, Yanceyville, stated that he looked up information and that the American Cancer Society reports no strong evidence supporting health effects from tower radiation waves. He also stated that cell phone radiation waves are just as dangerous, and times change and the needs of the community change.

Bobby Carter, Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated that he was the land owner that the tower was going to be built on, and he consulted with his father, and his sister who is a radiologist. He stated he would not consider placing the tower if he thought it was a health risk. His wife has had cancer, and he would not risk exposing anyone.

Connie Carter, Mise Road, Yanceyville, stated that she agreed to the tower, but wants to know if the soil & environment will be evaluated.

Mr. Doug Barker stated that the homes in question are over the requirement of one-fourth of a mile away from the tower. He also stated that other properties were looked at and considered, but not chosen because of proximity. He also stated that when towers are built a full environmental study has to be completed before it can be built. He also stated that the FTC regulates radiation frequency waves, and he will forward the information to Mr. Hoagland.

Mr. Hoagland stated that he had received the application for the tower on June 23rd. It will be 250 feet tall, and have a 10 foot lightening rod. It will have landscaping and a fence surrounding it. All requirements were met, and there was nothing out of the ordinary at the spot the tower is being placed. He also stated that there are no requirements listed at the local and state levels regarding radiation waves.

Mr. Daniel asked Mr. Barker if towers of different sizes put off different levels of frequency or power. Mr. Barker responded that it depended on power and mileage.

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

Mr. Hoagland stated that he had just received the email from Mr. Barker with a study that was completed in Wilson, NC by a company called DBM Engineering. The study was for a school that is near a tower, and they evaluated radio-frequency exposure. Mr. Hoagland read aloud the summary of the report. A copy of the study is attached.

Mr. Foster made a motion to approve the tower application. The motion carried unanimously.

1. **Southeast Caswell Zoning Plan Review**

Mr. Oestreicher gave a presentation on the Southeast Caswell zoning plan review, citing how the zoning proposal would work and some of the results from the 2020 ballot referendum.

Mr. Hoagland then gave a presentation detailing a scenario in which the conditional rezoning process would be applied.

After a lengthy discussion by the board, Mr. Johnston suggested four specific items be addressed by the county planner in preparation for the August meeting. They were:

1. to incorporate the county attorney’s Article 5 text change recommendations
2. to add protections for home-based businesses like small engine repair shops
3. to create a list of all properties to be zoned as Light Industrial and shade them in blue on the zoning map, and
4. to discuss ways to gather more citizen input.

Mr. Johnston told all planning board members that if they’d like to propose any changes between now and the next meeting to get the changes to Mr. Hoagland and he will incorporate them into the document to be reviewed at the August meeting.

**Planning Department Updates**

**Adjournment**

Mr. Harris made a motion to adjourn the July 27, 2021 Planning Board Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.