

# Alachua County Local Planning Agency/ Planning Commission

## Meeting Minutes: January 16, 2020

The Alachua County Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Jack Durrance Auditorium, Room 209 of the Alachua County Administration Building in Gainesville, Florida.

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Tim Rockwell, Chair  
James Ingle  
Ishmael Rentz  
Jason Teisinger  
Kristen Young

Absent: Kali Blount  
Keith Hazouri  
Robert Hyatt (School Board)

### STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Hays, Principal Planner, Development Services, Growth Management  
Mehdi Benkhatar, Planner, Development Services, Growth Management  
Corbin Hanson, Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney  
Patricia McAllister, Staff Assistant, Growth Management  
Chris Monzingo, RF Consultant, Omni Com Consulting Group, Inc., for Alachua County

#### Meeting Called to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Rockwell at 6:01 p.m.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Motion** was made by *Commissioner Teisinger* to approve the agenda.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Rentz*.

**Vote:** The **agenda** was approved with a vote of 4-0.

#### 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Minutes of November 20, 2019

Motion was made by *Commissioner Teisinger* to approve the minutes of November 20, 2019

Motion was seconded by *Commissioner Ingle*.

**Action:** The **minutes** of the November 20, 2019 Planning Commission meeting were **approved** as submitted with a vote of (4-0)

#### 3. EXPARTE COMMUNICATION (Corbin Hanson) None declared.

#### 4. SWEARING IN (Patricia McAllister)

#### 5. DECLARATION OF PARTIES (Corbin Hanson read statement regarding parties)

Public that wishes to be recognized as a party are:

- 1)Melissa Montgomery
- 2)Lewis Stallings
- 3)Delores Beck
- 4)Caroline Jamerson

6. **QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM: ZOS-01-20 (Vertex Personal Wireless Service Facility Special Use Permit)**

A request by Vertex Development, LLC, agents, for Bird & Minzenberg, owners, for a special use permit for a personal wireless service facility (PWSF). The site is in the "A" (Agricultural) zoning district and has a future land use designation of Rural/Agriculture (1 dwelling unit/5 acres). The site is on a 0.229 acre portion of the southern portion of parcel 18442-002-000 accompanied by an easement road located on parcel 18442-000-000 off of NE 194<sup>th</sup> Place.

*Commissioner Young arrived at 6:22 p.m.*

**Staff Presentation:**

*Mehdi Benkhatar* presented this application. Staff recommends approval of this application with the bases and conditions as noted in the staff report. Mr. Benkhatar stated this tower is a 199 ft monopole that will not require lights or guyed wires.

*Chris Monzingo*, Omnicom Consulting Group, Inc., RF Consultant for Alachua County, was present and available for questions

**Commissioner Questions:**

Commissioner Young asked about the environmental survey and if any animals would need to be re-located from the tower site, she also questioned the notification timeline

Discussion with staff, planning commissioners and applicants responding to public comment and questions asked regarding buffering, the access easement and condition of the road before, during and after construction of this tower, being able to see the tower from adjoining properties, how close this tower could be built to the wetland area, and the design of this proposed monopole.

**Applicant's Presentation:**

*Mary Solik*, Attorney for Vertex Development, LLC made a brief presentation and was available for questions. Ms. Solik stated that Vertex tries to absorb as much of the impact of the tower on the parent tract using the existing natural vegetation as buffering and screening from the offsite views, and also to take out only the trees necessary to locate and build the tower (saving as many trees as possible).

*Alan Ruiz*, Manager of Vertex Development, LLC, was present and available for questions.

*Amit Ruat*, Verizon RF Engineer, was present and available for questions.

*Jaime Cruz*, Verizon RF Engineer, was present and available for questions.

**Public Comment: (provided by parties)**

- 1) ***Melissa Montgomery***—stated there is an easement to this property that is maintained by property owners (she proposed that Vertex get a separate easement), was concerned with the visual impact of the tower especially if the timber in the area is harvested, she wanted to know where the tower would be located in relation to the wetland (closest point), she is proposing a buffer, she stated there are four other towers already in the area and she was concerned that her property values would go down due to this tower. Ms. Montgomery further stated that numerous letters have been sent opposing this tower and this area has a lot of older type homes that would be impacted by the tower.
- 2) ***Delores Beck*** stated that nobody in Earleton knows about this tower unless they drive by the posted signs, she stated she has health concerns related to this tower, drainage problems on the access road, she does not feel this tower needs to be in this location, and what would physically happen to the road especially the easement.
- 3) ***Caroline Jamerson*** stated that her family has physically maintained this road for years, she was concerned with destroying the natural habitat of the local animals, and she wants the tower

to be re-located to the other side of the railroad tracks. She also stated that the property values would go down and properties in the vicinity of the tower would be rendered worthless.

- 4) **Melissa Montgomery** spoke again regarding conservation and preservation of the rural areas.
- 5) **James Whittington** was concerned with the wetland delineation and the tower encroaching into the wetlands.
- 6) **Lou Stallings** spoke about re-locating the tower to another site.

Applicant's Response:

Staff Response:

*Jeff Hays* responded to the notification timeline for the neighborhood workshop meeting, the Planning Commission notification and the Board of County Commission meeting notification by stating that all three meetings would be notified 15 days prior to each meeting, posted notice and newspaper notification. *Mehdi Benkhatar* explained there is a current easement for the property owners that must travel this road to access their properties and the applicant would be required to maintain the easement to the tower location but would only be required to maintain the portion of the easement where the adjoining property owners connect to this easement. *Mr. Benkhatar* stated that moving this tower to a different location on this property would require a new application as the current application is for only the portion of the parcel indicated.

**Motion** was made by *Commissioner Teisineger* to approve ZOS-01-20 with the bases and amended condition # 1 by removing the last sentence regarding substantial change as noted in the staff report. Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Young*.

Action: ZOS-01-20 was approved with a unanimous vote of 5-0.

7. **ANNUAL REPORT:**

Annual report was reviewed and with no changes signed by Chair Rockwell.

8. **ATTENDANCE REPORT:** Distributed in packets. No attendance issues.

9. **PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:** None

**Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.**