

# ***MINUTES OF THE SOLANO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION***

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## **Meeting of May 7, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Solano County Planning Commission was held via WebEx in the Solano County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors' Chambers (1<sup>st</sup> floor), 675 Texas Street, Fairfield, California.

PRESENT: Commissioners Rhoads-Poston, Cayler, Hollingsworth, and Chairwoman Bauer

EXCUSED: Johnny Walker resigned as of May 1, 2020

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Laughlin, Deputy County Counsel  
Jim Leland, Principal Planner  
Mathew Walsh, Principal Planner  
Nedzlene Ferrario, Senior Planner  
Jamielynn Harrison, Planning Commission Clerk

Chairwoman Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present via WebEx.

### Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved with no additions or deletions.

### Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the regular meeting of February 20, 2020 were approved as prepared.

### Items from the Public

There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

### Regular Calendar

Item No. 1

**PUBLIC HEARING** to consider Use Permit Application No. U-19-01 of **AT&T Mobility** for a new wireless communications facility which includes an 81' ft. tall cellular tower designed as an agricultural water tank with 12 panel antennas inside the tank which is not visible to the public. The communications facility will be located on the east side of Pitt School Rd. approximately 0.17 miles north of Interstate 80 in unincorporated Dixon in an "A-40" Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District, APN: 0108-110-020, 08. Staff Recommendation: Approval

Mathew Walsh, Principal Planner, provided an overview of staff's written report. Previously, this item was continued from January 16, 2020 as staff and the applicant were finalizing the project description and determining the appropriate level, the environmental review and CEQA analysis. Staff is recommending a Class II category which allows for an exemption for replacement or reconstruction of facilities and the applicant concurs with the recommendation.

The facility is located on the east side of Pitt School Road. The parcel is 12 acres in size. The location and height were a source of discussion among the staff and the applicant. It is within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile set back of a scenic corridor. Highway 80 is a scenic corridor in the General Plan. Within that buffer zone, our telecommunications ordinance provides that the tower height is not to exceed the height limit in the underlying zoning district. The zoning district is an A-40 which allows for residential buildings of up to 35 ft. This is an infrastructure and communications tower and the ordinance is silent on the height. The telecommunication ordinance does allow for the Planning Commission to permit additional height on a facility on a case-by-case basis through approval through a conditional use permit.

The applicant is asking for the additional height and he is proposing 81 ft. The county does have precedent of approving additional height on cellular facilities close to scenic corridors. There are two that are also located near Highway 80 that are in the 70 to 80 ft range. There is one near Green Valley Road, outside Fairfield, that is approximately 85 ft. We typically tell the applicants that we will consider the additional height limit in the scenic corridor if there is an attempt to stealth the project with a pine tree design. The applicant is proposing a faux water tank which has an agricultural feel to it. Staff believes, at this location, an agricultural style water tank design is better than an 81 ft. pine tree in a grove of almond trees.

The proposal is located on the far west portion of the parcel, farthest away from the highway. However, it is close to Pitt School Road but meets the minimum set-back requirements. Because it is replacing an existing facility, the equipment compound is already in place. There are existing driveways on Pitt School Road. It was decided that it was more appropriate to keep the existing location rather than move closer to Highway 80 and have to remove orchard trees to accommodate the facility.

The planner read correspondence from the community which was received by Resource Management.

- Jim Louie – sent an email supporting the project;
- Kathy Ernest – sent an email support the project as long as the design is appropriate She was agreeable to the water tank design; and
- Dean Bell – Sent correspondence and does not support the project. He has concerns of potential health risks associated with the new 5G technology. He submitted documentation to support his opposition.

The planner indicated from his understanding, there is no scientific proof to show that there is any ill effect on people. When talking with County Counsel, the potential health issues associated with telecommunication facilities is not a reason to decide either way on a proposal.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston indicated that the water tower is a good alternative. Commissioner Kayler stated that she drove by the facility and said that it fits in with the Ag community. It's a great location and much better than the pine tree.

Chairwoman Bauer said that she liked the facility. She also asked if the county is responsible for the removal of equipment as mentioned in #7 of the general comments in the resolution. The planner indicated that the applicant is responsible for removing all equipment.

The applicant called to say thank you to the commission and the county staff. "AT&T greatly appreciates the relationship with Solano County with all the sites and networks to establish state-of-the-art communication services."

Commissioner Hollingsworth was able to connect to the meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kayler and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads-Poston to approve the Use Permit No. U-19-01 based on the findings and subject to the recommended conditions of approval. The motion passed all in favor.

After some technical difficulties and providing alternate means of connecting, there were still technical difficulties with WebEx. Some other participants were unable to connect to the link and others did not have a clear connection. With that said, it was a concern that the community was unable to connect or call into the meeting. After consulting County Counsel, it was determined that this meeting would be re-noticed and continued to the next available hearing date.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston made a motion and Commissioner Cayler seconded to rescind the approved motion for Use Permit No. U-19-01 and motioned to continue the meeting.

Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was adjourned.