

# CITY OF GILLETTE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers ~ City Hall  
March 8, 2016 ~ 7:00 p.m.

## PRESENT

Commission Members Present: Chairman Clark Sanders, Jennifer Thomas, Jim Nielsen, Cindy Reardon, Adrienne Hahn, and Bill Ellingson

Commission Members Absent: Holly Pierce

Staff Present: Michael Cole, Planning Manager; Brent Albrecht, Planner; and Carol Best, Administrative Assistant

## CALL TO ORDER

A motion was made by Adrienne Hahn and seconded by Jim Nielsen to call the meeting to order. Motion carried 6/0. Chairman Clark Sanders called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Adrienne Hahn, and seconded by Jim Nielsen to approve the Pre-Meeting Workshop and Regular Meeting Minutes of the City Planning Commission Meeting of February 23, 2016. Motion carried 6/0.

## 16.010T– TOWER APPLICATION – 67 Foot High “MonoPine” Cell Tower on Lot 1B in the Resubdivision of Lot 1 Central Square Subdivision

Brent Albrecht presented Case No. 16.010T. The applicant is seeking approval to construct a 67 foot high “monopine” cell tower on leased space within the north portion of Lot 1B in the Resubdivision of Lot 1, Central Square Subdivision. According to the applicant, the tower is essential for improving cellular coverage in the surrounding area.

Daniel Thurgood, representative for Technology Associates, Agent/Applicant for the case was present. Chairman Saunders asked if there were any questions for Mr. Thurgood, and the following were presented:

Mr. Nielsen inquired about the falling away from existing buildings aspect as mentioned in the Case Background, even though there aren't any in this instance, and if it is difficult to design into a tower plan. Mr. Thurgood responded that a fall zone is included in the tower design. In this instance, the fall zone is 70' and all current buildings in the area are outside that fall zone radius. Future development to the east could be a possibility, so the owner would need to be made aware of the 70' fall zone if they were to construct in the future as it would be difficult to set a fall zone direction. Chairman Sanders asked if the fall zone takes into account the parking areas to the west. Mr. Thurgood responded that it does not, so in the very unlikely event the tower were to fall, there could be a potential hazard to cars.

Ms. Reardon asked if there is something buried underground to keep the tower more solid. Mr. Thurgood responded that the tower foundation ranges from 20-45' in depth and is determined during the engineering phase for the construction drawings so wind loads, ice, and other weather factors are taken into consideration. It is highly unlikely the tower would fall.

Ms. Reardon asked if anything was known about the quality of the soil in that area, to which Mr. Thurgood responded that a soil test had not been performed yet, but would be completed during the engineering process.

Chairman Sanders then asked how long it will take from planning commission approval to construction completion for the tower. Mr. Thurgood stated that the design process and construction each take about two months--it depends on when Verizon can fit this into their building schedule. They do not have a construction date yet, but are hoping to complete this project in the next year once the regulatory process is completed.

Chairman Sanders asked if there are future plans for other towers. Mr. Thurgood responded that there are two that he is aware--one is to the north of the rail yard just west of the county fire training center, and the second is between the Sage Valley middle and elementary schools. The proposed site near the schools includes city property and the applicant is hoping to place the tower on that property which would benefit the city financially through lease revenues. Ms. Hahn asked if the two locations be a similar design as the one being proposed in this case. Mr. Thurgood stated that the one by the schools will be similar, a monopine with the same height, and the one by the rail yard is a water tank design that they have used in the past in other cities that has been very successful. It would blend in better with that area since there aren't any trees there. The Planning staff has a copy of that photo if anyone would like to look at it.

Ms. Reardon asked if the height of the towers are ever changed. Mr. Thurgood stated the height of the monopine tower is not changed as the entire tower would need to be re-designed. However, the tower is designed to accommodate other carriers, which is called co-location. It is part of the city ordinance that the towers be designed to hold other carriers, and with this design, they could put two more carriers on the tower.

Mr. Nielsen asked approximately how much more it costs to make the design like a pine tree versus the traditional towers. Mr. Thurgood responded that the cost for a stealth design such as the monopine is an additional 'couple' hundred thousand more.

Mr. Thurgood then showed the planning commission members a sample of the 'bark' that covers the pole and the 'branches' that are attached to the pole. The branches come in several different shades, which are matched to the surrounding trees in the area. The materials are maintained and repaired on an on-going basis. Mike Cole stated that the City requires the lessee (cell company) to post a bond for future operating and maintenance of this facility. That is a requirement as part of the tower application. Also, \$500,000 insurance coverage is required, proof of which is required annually.

Adrienne Hahn made a motion to approve said case. Jennifer Thomas seconded the motion. Motion carried 6/0.

*[Tower Applications are approved by the Planning Commission and do not go before City Council.]*

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

There will not be a meeting on March 22, 2016. The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2016. Mike Cole reported that two cases will be discussed at that meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Adrienne Hahn and seconded by Cindy Reardon to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 6/0. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes taken and prepared by Carol Best, Administrative Assistant.