

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE TRANSMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

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| AGENDA TITLE: ZTA202300002 Personal Wireless Service Facilities | AGENDA DATE: July 17, 2024 |
| SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Proposal to amend regulations for Personal Wireless Service Facilities | STAFF CONTACT(S): Bill Fritz |
| SCHOOL DISTRICTS: None | PRESENTER (S): Chris Musso (Berkley Group), Susan Rabold (CityScape), Bill Fritz |

BACKGROUND:

On February 27, 2024, the Planning Commission (PC) held a public hearing and recommended approval of this zoning text amendment (5-1), Mr. Murray dissenting. (Ms. Firehock was absent from the vote).

DISCUSSION:

The PC acknowledged that the ordinance had not kept pace with technological advancements. The PC commented on the retention of historic areas as avoidance areas. The PC noted that historic areas were rural in nature and though fiber may bring internet, it would not address the need for modern farm equipment that relied on cellular connections. The current requirement for a special use permit in historic areas allows for a determination of impacts to historic resources. The PC noted that if the updated Comprehensive Plan provided clarification of how historic resources may be impacted, the ordinance may be amended in the future to remove historic areas as avoidance areas. Comment was also made about considering an acceptable palette of colors for equipment for towers and equipment. Comment was offered that there should be a designation of biodiversity areas, or other environmentally sensitive areas, where towers should not be permitted. The need for increased setbacks from property lines and residences was discussed. The PC noted that it was working to find a balance in the regulations.

The PC requested that staff provide clarification of the term “ridge area.” This term currently refers to “a ridge area map approved by the board of supervisors.” Staff has consistently interpreted this language to refer to the mountain resource areas contained in the (Board-approved) Comprehensive Plan, and is not proposing any changes in wording or practice.

After the PC public hearing, staff made suggested changes to the ordinance to provide clarity, correct grammatical errors, and provide consistency in language and structure with other sections of the ordinance. No substantive changes were made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed ordinance (Attachment E).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Staff report for the February 27, 2024 Planning Commission Hearing
Attachment B – Action Letter for the February 27, 2024 Planning Commission Hearing
Attachment C – Minutes for the February 27, 2024 Planning Commission Hearing
Attachment D – Additional public comment from the February 27, 2024 Planning Commission Hearing
Attachment E – Proposed ordinance for adoption