

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

TRANSMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

AGENDA TITLE: SP201700027 – Keswick – Tier III Personal Wireless Service Facility	AGENDA DATE: April 4, 2018
SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: To install a 150 foot tall steel monopole, five arrays of platform-mounted antennas and associated ground-equipment in a 10,000 square foot fenced compound.	STAFF CONTACT(S): Mr. Blair, Mr. Fritz
	PRESENTER (S): Bill Fritz

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting on February 20, 2018 the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and voted 7:0 to recommend denial of SP201700027. The Commission also voted 7:0 to recommend denial of special exceptions for an increase in the number of arrays, and increased antenna projection. The Commission also voted 7:0 to recommend approval of a special exception to allow the buffer adjacent to the Rural Areas zoning district to be disturbed.

DISCUSSION:

This special use permit is for the construction of a new 150 foot tall tower with associated ground equipment. This tower is proposed as a replacement for an existing tower located approximately 850 feet to the west. The existing tower must be removed because of a provision in a conservation easement held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The County is not requiring the removal of the existing tower.

The Commission supported the staff recommendations and offered the following comments:

- No alternative sites have been investigated.
- The proposed tower is highly visible which is not consistent with the County's ordinance or policy
- The urgency to replace the existing tower should not be a factor in decision making. The need to replace the existing tower has been known for some time.
- The County has made the decision to have multiple less visible towers instead of a single multi-use tall tower.
- The tower does provide service in the area, including broadband service.
- The area has already been impacted. The proposed tower is not more visible than the existing tower.
- The proposed tower is a monopole, which is better than the existing lattice tower.
- The proposed antenna standoff is less than the standoff on the existing tower.
- This proposal does eliminate the need for multiple tree top towers.
- The existing tower is the backbone of the cellular system for the eastern part of the County and the proposed tower effectively replaces it.
- There is a significant expense associated with the removal of the existing tower and construction of a new tower.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors: 1) adopt the attached Resolution to deny SP201700027 (Attachment D); 2) adopt the attached Resolution to deny the special exceptions for an increase in the number of arrays and increased antenna projection (Attachment E); and 3) adopt the attached Resolution to approve the special exception to allow disturbance of the buffer (Attachment F).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Staff report for February 20, 2018 Planning Commission Public Hearing
Attachment A1 - Parcel and Location Maps

Attachment A2 - Architectural Review Board action letter
Attachment A3 - Comprehensive Plan information
Attachment A4 - Applicant's information packet
Attachment A5 - Photos from the balloon test & photo simulations
Attachment A6 - Visibility Map
Attachment A7 - Memo from Bill Fritz discussing FCC rules related to eligible support structures
Attachment A8 - Information submitted at the February 20, 2018 Planning Commission Public Hearing
Attachment B – Planning Commission Action Letter
Attachment C – Planning Commission Minutes
Attachment D – Resolution to deny SP201700027-Keswick-Tier III Personal Wireless Service Facility
Attachment E – Resolution to deny special exceptions for the number of arrays and antenna standoff
Attachment F – Resolution to approve special exception for buffer disturbance