



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 19-365, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 7/3/2019

TITLE:

Peters Mountain ECC Tower Modernization

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Authorize the Board of Supervisors chair to sign a letter of support to the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the ECC modernization of the Peters Mountain Emergency Communications tower

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Bessette, Elias, Bowman

PRESENTER (S): Gabe Elias

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The existing tower at Peters Mountain was approved in 2002. More modern communications equipment has been developed since then, requiring an upgrade, but a Memorandum of Agreement from that time (Attachment A) with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Federal Communications Commission prohibits any physical changes to the tower without SHPO approval.

In 2002, there was some concern regarding the original building of the tower on the grounds that its construction would disturb the viewshed of the Southwest Mountains Rural Historic District. The simulation attachments (B and C) illustrate the change to the tower's visual impact that the proposed modernization would cause.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Operational Capacity: Ensure County government's ability to provide high quality service that achieve community priorities.

DISCUSSION: The regional (County, City, University) 800 MHz public safety radio capital infrastructure project involves addition to and replacement of major technological components of the 800 MHz radio system. This includes replacement of electronic components at all tower sites, including the tower at Peters Mountain, to improve radio coverage.

Twenty vertical feet would be added to the Peter's Mountain tower to host three new 800 MHz antennas and one additional microwave dish antenna. Three guy wires would be attached to the tower to safely support the extension and equipment. The guy wires would extend 60 feet out from the base of the tower but remain within the property lines. Additionally, Albemarle County Public Schools intends to install one set of broadband data antennas and equipment, which would provide critical on-scene incident data to public safety, after the existing 800 MHz equipment is decommissioned in April 2022.

Attachment D is a letter from ECS, Ltd., the ECC's consultant, that provides additional information regarding

the proposed tower improvements, and Attachment E is the plan depicting the proposed improvements. Attachments F and G are the existing special use permit for the existing tower, and an email from Bill Fritz, Chief of Current Development, opining that no new special use permit is necessary. Attachment H is a letter that the County Attorney's Office prepared for the Board chair to send to the SHPO on behalf of the Board. Staff believes that a letter of support from the Board would likely increase the chance of SHPO approval.

Funding for the 800 MHz infrastructure capital project was approved in FY2016 and is scheduled to be operational at the end of calendar year 2021. Final system acceptance is contractually scheduled for April 2022.

Partners, including the City of Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport Authority, the Albemarle County Service Authority, and the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, share expenses proportionately per Addendum #2 to the 1984 Joint Dispatch Center (ECC) Agreement.

BUDGET IMPACT: The cost to all entities of the Peters Mountain modernization portion of the 800 Mhz project is \$906,148.09. County appropriation occurred in FY2016; no further appropriation is needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

The ECC and staff recommend that the Board authorize the chair to sign and send the attached letter (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attach. A - Current 2002 Memorandum of Agreement
Attach. B - Simulation of tower visibility from Malin Ridge Lane
Attach. C - Simulation of tower visibility from Strawberry Hill Farm
Attach. D - Letter from ECS, Ltd with additional information
Attach. E - Plans depicting proposed improvements
Attach. F - Existing special use permit
Attach. G - Email from Bill Fritz indicating that no new special use permit is necessary
Attach. H - Draft proposed letter to the State Historic Preservation Office