

TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

JULY 28, 2015

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chairman Vicki Bridenstine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Commissioners present were: Jeff Drozd, Jeff Evans, Charles McHenry, Steve Whitten, and Chair Vickie Bridenstine.

Town of Yucca Valley Staff present were:

Deputy Town Manager Shane Stueckle, Project Engineer Alex Qishta, Planning Technician Diane Olsen, and Planning Secretary Allison Brucker.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Bridenstine

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Steven Whitten, Vice Chairman
SECONDER: Charles McHenry, Commissioner
AYES: Bridenstine, Whitten, Drozd, Evans, McHenry

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the Planning Commission Minutes of June 9, 2015 and June 23, 2015

A request that the Planning Commission approves as submitted the minutes of the meetings held on June 09, 2015 and June 23, 2015.

MOTION

That the Planning Commission approve the Consent Agenda.

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Steven Whitten, Vice Chairman
SECONDER: Jeff Evans, Commissioner
AYES: Bridenstine, Whitten, Drozd, Evans, McHenry

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Environmental Assessment, 02-14; Conditional Use Permit, CUP 01-14; Variance, V 01-15; Spectrum Verizon

Proposal to construct a 55' cellular tower to be disguised as a pine tree, to include a

generator inside a 900 square foot, 8' high block wall enclosure for equipment. The variance request is to exceed the maximum height limit of 40' in the Mixed Use zoning district by 15', at a total height of 55'

RECOMMENDATION:

Alternative 1:

Environmental Assessment, EA 02-14: That the Planning Commission finds the project to be exempt from CEQA under Section 15332, class 32, Infill Development;

Conditional Use Permit, CUP 01-14 and Variance, V-01-15: That the Planning Commission approves CUP 01-14 based upon the information contained within the staff report, the required findings and the recommended conditions of approval.

Variance, V-01-15

The Variance request is no longer necessary based upon the allowable 50% height increase.

STAFF REPORT

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle provided the staff report. This item had previously appeared before the Planning Commission at its meeting of June 23, 2015. Staff stated that at the June 23rd meeting the Planning Commission had requested that the applicant provide additional material including: a color photo simulation of the site as viewed from the highway, revised elevation showing the correct scale for the landscape trees height proposed for the project, a revised site plan identifying all native plants, and technical details on the noise levels of the generator. The applicant provided all of the requested materials and noise level of the generator was found to fall within the noise level standards for that district.

Staff said that there had been a few revisions to the recommended Conditions of Approval since the writing of the staff report.

- Condition G23 was modified at the applicants request to designate the landowner as the party responsible for maintaining the undeveloped sections of the site.
- Condition P5 was modified at the applicants request to remove the requirement to paint the block wall due to the type of decorative split face block that was being used.
- Condition E2 was modified to require in-lieu fees for street improvements on Primrose Drive. Staff recommended this change due to the project's location in Phase I of the HDWD sewer project.
- Condition E36 was modified to add "Should wastewater be generated at this site in the future," before the language addressing septic systems.

- Mike Hayes, representative for the applicant, spoke in support of project. He said that material for the block wall, was decorative split face block with anti-graffiti treatment, and it would be a shame to paint it. He said that the applicant was agreeable to the Conditions of Approval.
- Russ Kelly, Riverside, spoke in support of the project and in support of the species of pine to be used for screening.
- Clint Edwards, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of project. He said that in his research cell towers did not negatively affect the value of surrounding commercial property.
- Marsha Canterbury, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of the project. She said that it was a much needed addition to the community.
- Terry Canterbury, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of the project.
- David Scott, Palm Springs, spoke in support of the project. He said that he owns a restaurant in Palm Springs and it has benefited from the construction of nearby cell towers.
- Joseph La Porta, Palm Springs, spoke in support of the project. He said he owns a business in Palm Springs which has benefited from a nearby cell tower.
- Beny Kirokiro, spoke in support of the project. He said better cell service was needed.
- Theresa Judd, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of project. She said that faster internet was needed.
- Ann Powell, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of the project. She brought updated colored drawing showing the taller trees. She also submitted a petition in support of the project
- Ronald Trimm, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of the project. He said better cell service was needed.
- Ricky Currier said that he was generally in favor of the project, but wanted to know how Joshua trees on the site would be treated.

Two other registered their support of the project but declined to speak.

END PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner McHenry had no questions for applicant. He said he was glad the septic requirement was removed from the Conditions of Approval. He said that the additional materials had alleviated his concerns, and he didn't see a reason not to approve the project.

Commissioner Drozd asked if the landowner would be responsible for the maintenance of the screening trees. The applicant said that language in the lease said that it was the responsibility of the landowner. The applicant also said that the Joshua Trees would not be disturbed. Commissioner Drozd said that he hopes Town will check on maintenance of trees until they are established.

Commissioner Evans asked staff for clarification on how the Town would address a failure to properly maintain the trees. He also thanked Verizon for providing the additional materials, and thanked the community for their concern and participation.

He said that the community needed infrastructure. He said that his concern was not the tower itself, but its effect on the beautification of the area. He said that current design was better for aesthetics.

Commissioner Whitten said that appreciated the color boards that Ms. Powell brought, and he thanked the applicant for providing the additional materials. He said that he has concerns about maintenance, but that is true with all properties. He said that he thinks it is an important project, and that improved cell coverage helps public safety.

Commissioner Whitten expressed concern about the differing interpretations of the code. Staff said it was the Town Attorney office’s interpretation. Staff said that the original intent of the code was not to have 55 foot towers in the commercial corridor, and that the Town Council will be discussing that issue on their meeting of August 4, 2015. Commissioner Whitten thanked the attendees for their participation.

Chair Bridenstine said that she appreciates the applicant’s response to their concerns. She said she was in support of the project.

MOTION

That the Planning Commission finds the project to be exempt from CEQA under Section 15332, class 32, Infill Development, and that it approves CUP 01-14 based upon the information contained within the staff report, the required findings and the recommended conditions of approval, and that it find that the Variance request is no longer necessary based upon the allowable 50% height increase.

- RESULT:** **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
- MOVER:** Steven Whitten, Vice Chairman
- SECONDER:** Charles McHenry, Commissioner
- AYES:** Bridenstine, Whitten, Drozd, Evans, McHenry

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Gudrum Mecham, Yucca Valley, said that she was disappointed in the delay in reviewing the Hope Academy project.

STAFF REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle provided an overview of the status of current and upcoming projects. Staff said that Hope academy was advertised for the August 11, 2015.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Drozd asked staff about the empty former Wal-mart location.

Commissioner Evans had no comments or questions

Commissioner McHenry asked about old rib company location.

Vice Chair Whitten asked about a restaurant location. He also expressed concern about the intersection of Warren Visa & Yucca Trail. Staff said that at their meeting of August 4, 2015, the Town Council would be considering a contract for a study which would include look at what needs to be done for that intersection as well as others.

Chair Bridenstine thanked staff and the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regular meeting of the Yucca Valley Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed at

Respectfully Submitted,



Allison Brucker

Planning Secretary