

**RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

April 8, 2013

The Richmond County Planning Commission held its regular scheduled meeting on April 8, 2013 in the Public Meeting Room, County Administrative Building, Warsaw.

The following members were present:

Glenn Bowen
Jesse Clark
Darnell Clayton
Rick Cox
Martha Hall
Cassandra Jackson
Clifton Jenkins
John Lewis
Joyce Pemberton

The following member was absent:

Joseph Gaines

Also present:

R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator
Denise Dunaway, Alternate Planning Commission Secretary
Stephen Gallagher, National Communications Towers, LLC
Elliott Harrington, National Communications Towers, LLC
T. Richard English, Code Compliance Officer
Tracie Brown
David Gallagher
Vanelia Gallagher
Bonnie E. Grindstaff
Harry Smith, NNEC

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rick Cox called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed all members and guests. The meeting began with a moment of prayer by Planning Commission member, Jesse Clark.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 11, 2013 MEETING

Chairman Cox asked if anyone would like to make corrections to the March 11, 2013 meeting minutes. Martha Hall made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Darnell Clayton seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

National Communications Towers, LLC, 5413 Patterson Ave., Suite 101, Richmond, Virginia 23120, has filed an application for a special exception in order to construct a 195' telecommunications tower (including associated equipment and shelters) to be enclosed with a 125'x125' fenced area. The property is owned by David Gallagher and is located on Richmond Hill Road. The property is further identified as Parcel 64 on Tax Map 25.

Morgan Quicke read the "Notice of Public Hearing" and pointed out that the application was included in each member's meeting packet and adjoining property owners were notified of the application as well. The County received several inquiries regarding the application and most were to determine the planned location of the tower and none have been negative to this date. Mr. Quicke pointed out several additional documents included in each member's meeting packet and informed everyone that all submission processes have been completed.

Stephen Gallagher, National Communications Towers, LLC, introduced himself and coworker, Elliott Harrington, also of NCT, and began their presentation regarding the possibility of the tower being constructed on Richmond Hill Road. A summary of the National Communications Towers, LLC's background was given. NCT is currently finalizing a lease agreement with Verizon Wireless for this specific prospective tower. The tower will not only facilitate wireless communication capabilities, but also public safety systems and high speed internet. The dimensions and location of the tower and its compound were described in further detail and pictures of what the tower and its compound will look like were shown. Possible traffic patterns around the tower were described. The "Tower Visibility Study" and site survey were presented along with a letter of intent and supporting documents from Verizon Wireless certifying this company's interest in leasing the tower and upload and download speed estimates from a

wireless broadband provider. Everyone was reminded that neither the tower nor its compounds will be lighted and space within the tower will be reserved for Richmond County to use, such as E911 services, on a rent-free basis.

Chairman Cox asked those in attendance if anyone would like to speak on the application- whether for or against.

Ms. Tracie Brown explained she lives in close proximity to the property where the tower would be housed and said she was not opposed to the tower's presence, but she has a concern and wants to ensure and verify that a new road will not be constructed and the current service road will be utilized. Mr. Gallagher, NCT, confirmed the access road is already in existence, a new road will not be constructed, and they will simply upgrade the current access/service road. Ms. Brown explained that her concerns originated from viewing orange flags on the road and trees in front of her property; she was worried the flags were put into place as a result of the tower being constructed. Mr. Gallagher, NCT, informed Ms. Brown that the flags were not posted on behalf of his company and may have been posted for future utility work.

Mr. Gallagher and Ms. Bonnie Grindstaff discussed the presence of a gate to control access to the tower.

Chairman Rick Cox asked if any of the Planning Commission members would like to present a question/comment.

Glenn Bowen asked if the NCT representatives could clarify the definition of a "RAD Center." Mr. Gallagher, NCT, explained the meaning of this term and Mr. Harrington, NCT, gave the full name for this term – Radiation Center.

The service area, signal, and antennas of the tower were discussed.

Chairman Cox questioned the construction time. Mr. Gallagher, NCT, stated that construction of the tower may consist of a two month period with the weather permitting.

John Lewis asked how long towers are leased to phone carriers. Towers are typically leased for twenty years with a series of five year options. Mr. Lewis also mentioned the possibility of satellite taking over in the years to come and questioned who would be responsible for the towers when cell phones become obsolete. Mr. Harrington, NCT, informed Mr. Lewis that his company would be responsible for the tower and he does not foresee satellite taking over, but if it does, NCT would be responsible for removing the tower.

Martha Hall made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the approval of National Communications Towers, LLC's application for a special exception in order to construct a 195' telecommunications tower.

John Lewis seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

STORMWATER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

T. Richard English gave an update on the Stormwater Management program adoption process. The Department of Conservation and Recreation informed Mr. English that the one year extension has been granted.

Joyce Pemberton and Mr. English discussed the administration of this program, specifically who would serve as the administrator, the qualifications for this position, and the possibility of a need to increase staff; the reporting of violations; and public outreach of the program.

Glenn Bowen, Morgan Quicke, and Mr. English discussed the need for communication between departments so when someone applies for some type of permit, officials can catch the need for a Stormwater permit. It was explained that this concern will be alleviated due to the current application and review process which takes place in one central location.

John Lewis and Mr. English discussed the possibility of fee exemptions for groups such as disabled persons, but Mr. English is not aware of any exemptions.

Mrs. Pemberton and Mr. English discussed Stormwater fines and the likelihood of mistakes occurring during construction that may elicit these fines.

Mr. Clifton Jenkins and Mr. English discussed this program's effect on silviculture practices and everyone was informed this type of construction will be exempt from the Stormwater fees.

Mr. Jesse Clark and Mr. English discussed the monitoring and inspecting of Stormwater implementations before, during, and after construction and required/additional costs to homeowners.

Cassandra Jackson and Mr. English discussed the Stormwater Regulations' affect on prefabricated homes- modulares, singlewides, and doublewides. Stormwater fees will be applied to any project over 2,500 square feet.

Chairman Cox and Mr. English discussed the criteria for an installation of a drainfield to be exempt from Stormwater fees.

Martha Hall, John Lewis, and Mr. English discussed the fact that the Stormwater regulation changes will affect residents and future homeowners of counties over the state and not just Richmond County and the fees have been set by the state, in which the local governments can only increase fees with adequate justification.

Chairman Cox and Mr. English discussed how the Stormwater Management program will be transferred from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), confirmed the portion of the fees that Richmond County will be able to keep, and clarified that the new Stormwater fees will not replace the Erosion and Sediment fees; they will be additional charges.

Clifton Jenkins and Mr. English discussed the qualifications for those willing to prepare the Stormwater Plan and the year storm analyzed for the plan.

Jesse Clark, Mr. English, and Mr. Quicke discussed the State's arrival for the need for the new Stormwater Ordinance to be enacted and the difference between Erosion and Sediment Control and the Stormwater regulations.

Chairman Cox read a list of questions/comments (attached at the end of minutes) he prepared pertaining to the draft Stormwater Management Ordinance and several members and Mr. Quicke commented on the points.

Jesse Clark and Mr. English discussed the definitions of the words "pollution" and "pollutant" as worded in the draft Stormwater Management Ordinance and the consequences of wanting to exempt single family dwellings from the ordinance.

Chairman Cox and several members discussed the possibility of establishing a committee to assist Mr. English in the process of adopting the new Stormwater Management program. The members were in favor of holding off on forming a committee and allowing Mr. English and Mr. Quicke to continue to work on the development of the program.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joyce Pemberton brought up the point of creating “Resolutions” for Bill Herbert and Bristow Balderson for their service on the Planning Commission. Mr. Quicke informed the Planning Commission that this has yet to be done, but it will be taken care of.

Jesse Clark suggested sending a “Get Well” card to Mr. Joseph Gaines and Mr. Quicke informed the members he would bring a card for all the members to sign to the next meeting. Chairman Cox pointed out that everyone was concerned about Mr. Gaines.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mercedes Pierce
Planning Commission Secretary