

TO: Redwood County Planning Commission
FROM: Jeanette Pidde *JP*
Land Use and Zoning Supervisor
Redwood County Environmental Office
DATE: November 13, 2024
RE: Planning Commission Hearing on November 26, 2024



A meeting of the Redwood County Planning Commission has been scheduled for Tuesday, the 26th day of November, 2024, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Redwood County Government Center, 403 South Mill Street, Redwood Falls, MN 56283.

The meeting will involve one (1) public hearings. A brief summary of the subject matter of the hearings is set forth below.

1. Public Hearing on Application for Conditional Use Permit (11-24) submitted by Blair Ransom of Buell Consulting, Inc., as agent for Verizon Wireless, o/b/o landowner James DuBois

Verizon Wireless is proposing to construct a 250-foot self-supporting telecommunications tower and equipment platform in the N1/2 of the NE1/4 of Section 16, Vesta Township. The tower will include a lightning rod, adding another 9 feet to the total height. The tower will be built on land leased from Jim DuBois, located east of Highway 19, just north of the City of Vesta. The tower will include a Verizon antenna to accommodate increased wireless data and streaming usage. The tower will also have the capacity to house antennas from up to two additional providers.

The proposed tower area is located in an “A” Agricultural District. Cellular telecommunications towers are a Conditional Use in said district.

The tower site will include a gravel driveway and parking area and perimeter fence. The tower will be built within a 43' x 50' fenced gravel compound within a 100' x 100' lease area. The scope of the work includes a new 12' driveway onto Highway 19, which will be permitted through MNDOT.

The proposed communications tower is located in the Agricultural District. Redwood County Code of Ordinances Section 153.142 states that “Cellular Telecommunications Towers” are a conditional use in the Agricultural District.

In accordance with the application requirements stipulated in Section 153.381 of the Ordinance, Blair Ransom of Buell Consulting, Inc., acting on behalf of Verizon, submitted the following documents and information:

1. CUP application, project summary, and evidence of compliance with ordinance requirements
2. Site plan
3. Review of alternative structures

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4. Engineer's statement
5. Colocation letter of intent
6. FAA determination of no hazard
7. Removal bond



In addition to the above requirements, Section 153.386 of the Ordinance lists the following performance standards for telecommunications towers:

1. A tower shall be located on a parcel of land so as to have the least impact on adjoining properties and any negative impact of the tower shall be confined as much as possible to the property on which the tower is located.
2. Generally, only one communication tower is permitted on a parcel of land. If, in the opinion of the Redwood County Planning Commission, a particular parcel is well suited for more than one communications tower, the additional tower may be allowed following the issuance of a conditional use permit. All other standards contained in the Ordinance must be met.
3. Towers are prohibited on any property whose principle use includes the storage, distribution, or sale of volatile, flammable, or hazardous materials such as LP gas, propane, gasoline, natural gas, and corrosive or dangerous chemicals.
4. Structural design, mounting and installation of the antenna and tower shall be in compliance with manufacturer specifications. The plan shall be approved and certified by a registered professional engineer.
5. In general, self-supporting towers (i.e. those without the use of wires, cables, beams or other means) are preferred.
6. All towers shall be reasonably protected against unauthorized climbing. The bottom of the tower from ground level to 12 feet above ground shall be designed in a manner to preclude unauthorized climbing or shall be enclosed by a six-foot high chain link fence with a locked gate.
7. Permanent platforms or structures, exclusive of antennas, other than that necessary for safety purposes or tower maintenance are prohibited.
8. All Communications towers and their antennas shall be adequately insured for injury and property damage caused by collapse of the tower. A "certificate of insurance" shall be filed with the Redwood County Environmental Office prior to commencing operation of the facility.
9. No temporary mobile sites are permitted except in the case of equipment failure, equipment testing, or in case of emergency situation as authorized by the County Zoning Administrator. Use of temporary mobile cell sites for testing purpose shall be limited to twenty-four (24) hours; use of temporary mobile cell sites for equipment failure or in the case of emergency situations shall be limited to a term of thirty (30) days. The Redwood County Zoning Administrator can extend these limits.
10. Construction of an approved tower, including all accessory structures, including footings and foundation, must be completed within one (1) year following the date of the permit.
11. The tower will need to be lighted as required by the FAA. If no light is required, the tower will be lit with a red strobe light.
12. Colored guide guard sleeves will be placed on the anchors to make them visible or each wire guide shall be surrounded by at least a six (6) foot high fence.

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In addition to the performance standards, Section 153.388 contains the following aesthetic requirements:

1. Metal towers shall be constructed of, or treated with, corrosive resistant material.
2. Towers and antennae, including support cables and structures, and fencing shall be designed to blend into the surrounding environment to the maximum extent possible through the use of color. Communication towers not requiring FAA/FCC painting/markings shall have either a galvanized finish or be painted a non-contrasting color consistent with the surrounding area.



Furthermore, Section 153.390 requires ongoing maintenance as follows:

1. Tower owners shall at all times employ ordinary and reasonable care and shall install and maintain and use nothing less than commonly accepted methods and devices for preventing failures and accidents which are likely to cause damage, injuries, or nuisances to the public.
2. Tower owners shall install and maintain towers, telecommunication facilities, wires, cables, fixtures, and other equipment in substantial compliance with the requirements of the National Electric Safety Code and all FCC, state, and local regulations, and in such manner that will not interfere with the use of other property.
3. All towers, telecommunication facilities and antenna support structures shall at all times be kept and maintained in good condition, order, and repair so that the same shall not menace or endanger the life or property of any person.
4. Licensed maintenance and construction personnel shall perform all maintenance or construction on a tower, telecommunication facilities or antenna support structure.
5. All towers shall maintain compliance with current radio frequency emissions standards of the FCC.
6. Antenna and tower owners shall be required to conduct an annual inspection of their facilities to insure continuing compliance with this Ordinance. A copy of the annual inspection report shall be provided to the zoning administrator.

There are no county ditches located near the site. The nearest county tile line is located more than 700 feet from the proposed tower location. The nearest residences are located over 1,000 feet from the tower site in the City of Vesta. Section 153.384 of the Ordinance requires that communications towers be set back at least the height of the tower plus 100 feet from the following structures and features: Neighboring residences; property lines and public street right-of-way lines; and all structures not belonging to the applicant

However, the ordinance allows the set back from a property line to be reduced if the tower is "designed and engineered to collapse progressively within the distance between the tower and the property line." The proposed tower is designed to collapse within a radius of 83' 6", as described in an engineer's statement provided by the tower manufacturer.

A copy of the Conditional Use Permit application, maps, plans, and proposed permit conditions are enclosed.

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