

MINUTES

CITY OF CARSON REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

*Helen Kawagoe City Council Chambers, 2ND Floor
701 East Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745*

July 14, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Diaz called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Salute to the Flag was led by Commissioner Mitoma.
3. **ROLL CALL**

Planning Commissioners Present: Andrews, Diaz, Faletoago, Guidry, Mitoma, Post, Schaefer, *Alt. Thomas, Alt. Cinco

*(Commissioner Thomas arrived at 6:35 P.M. following roll call.)

Planning Commissioners Absent: Madrigal (excused)

Planning Staff Present: Planning Manager Naaseh, Assistant City Attorney Gerli, Assistant Planner Castillo, Recording Secretary Bothe
4. **AGENDA POSTING CERTIFICATION** Recording Secretary Bothe indicated that all posting requirements had been met.
5. **AGENDA APPROVAL** Commissioner Faletoago moved, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the Agenda as submitted. Motion carried, 9-0 (absent Madrigal).
6. **INSTRUCTIONS TO WITNESSES** Chairman Diaz requested that all persons wishing to provide testimony stand for the oath, complete the general information card at the podium, and submit it to the secretary for recordation.
7. **SWEARING OF WITNESSES** Assistant City Attorney Gerli
8. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

For items **NOT** on the agenda. Speakers are limited to three minutes.

Regina Ramirez, resident, stated she is also speaking on behalf of several

residents who are disappointed with Henry's Market closing and a dollar store taking its place; and advised that a community meeting will take place to address this issue on Monday, July 20th, 6:30 P.M., Room 111 at the Community Center.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) June 9, 2015 Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Faletogo moved, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the June 9, 2015, Minutes as presented. Motion carried, 9-0 (absent Madrigal).

10. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING None

11. PUBLIC HEARING

**A) Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1564-15 and
Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 970-15**

Applicant's Request:

The applicant, Tectonic Engineering and Surveying, Inc., for Verizon Wireless, is requesting to construct a 65-foot high unmanned telecommunications facility disguised/designed as a pine tree ('monopine') located in the MU-CS (Mixed-Use – Carson Street) zone. The subject property is located at 164 W. Carson Street.

Staff Recommendation:

Assistant Planner Castillo presented staff report and the recommendation to APPROVE the Categorical Exemption; APPROVE Design Overlay No. 1564-15 and Conditional Use Permit No. 970-15, subject to conditions of approval attached as Exhibit "B" to the Resolution; and WAIVE further reading and ADOPT Resolution No. 15-2549, entitled, "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the city of Carson approving Design Overlay Review No. 1564-15 and Conditional Use Permit No. 970-15 to construct a 45-foot high unmanned wireless telecommunication facility designed as a pine tree ('monopine') at 164 W. Carson Street."

Planning Manager Naaseh advised that the City's zoning code allows for a maximum height of 45 feet in this zone. He noted for Commissioner Mitoma that once approved, the applicant will have to go through the engineering, building and safety process.

Chairman Diaz opened the public hearing.

Ryan Birdseye, applicant, stated that he has been going through this process since January but only recently became aware that staff was not supporting their request for a 65-foot high facility; and stated that he does not think he had adequate time to provide the level of detail needed to justify the 65-foot height. He noted for Commissioner Guidry that the green on the map indicates very good coverage areas, the yellow indicates marginal coverage areas, and the red indicates poor coverage areas. He stated that with a higher facility, they would be able to maximize coverage and limit the

number of towers needed; and he stated that the request for 65 feet also meets Verizon's objectives for improving the signals in this area. He added that the height of the Albertson's grocery store clips part of the signal to the north, limiting the broad coverage area; and that they need the additional 10 feet to achieve the desired tree top taper.

Chairman Diaz asked if the applicant has additional justifications to put forth.

Mr. Birdseye indicated no.

Commissioner Schaefer asked the applicant if they knew there was a 45-foot height limit prior to their application submittal.

Mr. Birdseye indicated yes, but stated it is typical to discuss and negotiate the growing needs of these facilities; and he added that it was difficult to provide detailed justification in the short timespan given for this meeting.

Commissioner Post noted her concern with the requested height and the impact it will have on the nearby neighbors; and expressed her belief the applicant should have met with the residents to gather their input.

Commissioner Mitoma asked for the locations of their nearby towers.

Robert McCormick, applicant's representative, stated that there are three in the area: a 45-foot high facility on top of the roof at the Civic Center, a 50-foot high facility on 223rd Street, and a 45-foot high facility on Normandie Avenue in Gardena.

Planning Manager Saied noted for Commissioner Guidry that the Planning Commission has the discretion to allow the applicant an increase in height of 30 percent over what is allowed by code, noting that increase would take this facility to approximately 58.5 feet high.

Commissioner Faleto go asked if there are taller towers in Carson and questioned whether there are any interference issues with any of the towers.

Planning Manager Saied indicated yes, there are taller towers especially in the industrial areas. He added that staff offered to continue this matter to another date to give the applicant more time to provide additional information, but that the applicant asked that it be placed on this agenda.

Commissioner Guidry highlighted the large red area on the map indicating poor coverage, questioning whether it would be better to allow the additional height to obtain adequate coverage thereby cutting down the need to erect more cell towers.

Commissioner Mitoma asked the applicant if they would be amenable to a 55-foot high facility.

Mr. Birdseye indicated yes.

Planning Manager Naaseh invited Mr. Cramer, an FCC radio frequency engineer with an extensive background in this field, to the podium to provide some input on this industry.

Jonathan Cramer, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed radio frequency engineer, explained that a carrier must find the least intrusive means to close a significant gap in coverage, believing that what the applicant is requesting does not

result in a large gain in coverage for this project. He highlighted the applicant's justification for a taller site, noting that they improperly use the justification that the Albertson's building blocks part of their signals; and explained that is not a proper justification for additional height because they entered into an agreement for this site knowing the existing Albertson's building was in place. He stated that their Normandie Avenue tower in Gardena is 35 feet high; and explained that the City's adopted zoning regulations are important and that it is not good policy to set precedence in granting additional height allowances for these facilities when applicants' justifications fall short of providing adequate evidence. He expressed his opinion that the applicant has not shown this is the least intrusive way to close the gap in coverage; he advised that signal capacity is the most important issue for these carriers; and that they will continue to erect more cell sites, noting these businesses won't live with marginal site coverage. He noted for Commissioner Faletogo that interference issues are solely handled between the FCC and carriers, not local jurisdictions.

There being no further input, Chairman Diaz closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Decision:

Commissioner Faletogo moved, seconded by Commissioner Mitoma, to approve the applicant's request, allowing the applicant to construct a "45-foot" high unmanned wireless telecommunication facility, thus adopting Resolution No. 15-2549. Motion carried, 9-0 (absent Madrigal).

12. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS None

13. MANAGER'S REPORT

Planning Manager Naaseh announced that Senior Planner John Signo has accepted a job offer from Chino as their Principal Planner; and that Richard Rojas has been promoted as Planning's new Senior Planner.

14. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

The Commission noted its support of going dark on August 25th.

Commissioner Guidry expressed her gratitude in being appointed to this Commission.

Chairman Diaz welcomed the new Commissioners; and he invited the elected officials and the Commissioners and their families to the Dominguez Area Property Owners Association barbeque on August 29th, from noon to 4:00 P.M., at the Lincoln Dominguez Community Hall, 21156 S. Santa Fe Avenue.

15. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:30 P.M., the meeting was formally adjourned to Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 6:30 P.M., Helen Kawagoe City Council Chambers.

Chairman

Attest By:

Secretary