

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the November 13, 2024 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Commission members present: Acting Chairman Mark Pasquesi and Commissioners Barrett Davie, Jamie Moorhead, Louis Pickus, Lisa Nehring, and Paul Thomas

Commissioners absent: Chairman John Dixon

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development and Luis Prado, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff and review of meeting procedures.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi introduced the members of the Commission and reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission.

2. Consideration of the October 10, 2024 Plan Commission meeting minutes.

Consideration of the minutes of the October 10, 2024 meeting was postponed.

3. Continued Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of an amendment to Section 159.154, Personal Wireless Service Facilities Overlay District of the City Code for the purpose of improving wireless service in the community.

Presented by: City staff

Acting Chairman Pasquesi asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, he swore in all those planning to testify. He invited a presentation from staff.

Ms. Czerniak acknowledged that any discussion about adding telecommunications infrastructure is of great community interest. She stated that although many want good wireless service, the infrastructure needed to provide good coverage is not welcomed. She stated that the City Council directed the Plan Commission to consider amendments to the wireless infrastructure provisions currently in the Code in an effort to be proactive in planning for improvements to the quality and capacity of service particularly in the southwest quadrant of the City. She acknowledged that the City could wait for a wireless provider or tower building company to initiate the discussion and play a responsive, rather than a proactive role. She stated that the City Council initiated the discussion in response to increasing complaints from businesses, residents, schools, and public safety personnel about inadequate wireless service in the area of the Everett and Waukegan Road intersection. She added that the City has heard from wireless

providers that additional infrastructure is needed in this area to improve coverage. She stated that the City encouraged providers to consider all options for improving service without a tower including locating antennas on buildings in the area. She stated that the existing buildings were determined by the wireless companies to not be tall enough, without significant extensions, to provide the needed coverage and to justify the investment. She noted that with the increasing number of devices people have and increased usage, the existing towers in other parts of the community or outside the community do not provide sufficient service for the areas they were intended to cover and provide service to this area as well. She stated that as a result, the existing infrastructure is being overtaxed and the capacity and quality of service elsewhere in the community is being compromised. She stated that the lack of wireless infrastructure in the southwest quadrant of the City is negatively impacting service elsewhere in the community. She stated that today, wireless service is considered an essential service that requires adequate infrastructure like other essential services. She stated that although the City is not the provider of wireless service, the City can be proactive in providing parameters for how the buildout of wireless infrastructure occurs. She reviewed the various locations in the community where wireless infrastructure is in place: Lake Forest College, in the Central Business District, Woodlands Academy, the hospital, along Route 41, at the City's compost center, and at Lake Forest Academy. She acknowledged that various types of infrastructure throughout the community, such as utility poles, railroad tracks, and roads, have impacts on the surrounding areas visually and from noise and congestion. She reviewed the Code provisions for wireless infrastructure noting that the Code was first amended in 1997 to proactively identify sites for wireless infrastructure. She stated that the Code language was further amended in 1999 and again in 2018. She stated that no sites for wireless infrastructure are currently designated in the southwest quadrant of the community likely because in the past, there was no need due to the low density of the area and the size of the business district. She stated that today, there is a need for improved service in the area based on complaints received by the City. She stated that in addition to identifying permitted sites for wireless infrastructure, the Code places limitations on tower and antenna heights and establishes requirements for screening ground equipment at the base of a tower. She acknowledged that the Code directs that to the extent possible, wireless infrastructure be limited and requires co-location of antennas to avoid the proliferation of towers. She stated that in 2018, the Code was amended to streamline the process for allowing companies to buildout distributed antenna systems (DAS) by attaching small antennas to City utility and light poles. She stated however that in order for the smaller antennas to work, a tower is needed in the general area. She stated that telecommunications companies, like other companies, make investments that they believe will have long term benefits to their business. She presented a map of the existing overlay district which identifies sites where wireless infrastructure, towers and antennas, are currently permitted and a map where towers and antennas currently exist. She noted the proximity of some of the existing infrastructure to homes, businesses, and schools. She explained that the Council directed the Plan Commission to consider amendments to the Code with the goal of providing opportunities, with appropriate limitations, for the necessary infrastructure to be installed to improve wireless service in the southwest quadrant of the City. She reviewed the options presented for Commission

consideration. She commented on the sites considered noting that there are already antennas located on the water tower at the City's compost center adding that there may be the potential for a stand alone tower on that site, however, although that location could offer some improvement in service, it would not adequately provide coverage for the gap that exists. She stated that in talking with wireless service providers, the area within a quarter to half a mile of the Telegraph Road train station was identified as the area where wireless infrastructure is needed. She stated that private properties including St. Mary's School campus, and the Sunset Corners property were considered but determined to be located closer to homes and a school than the train station and would be subject to the property owners' willingness to enter into a lease agreement with the service providers. She stated that the Forest Preserves District does not permit development of any type on their properties including at the dog park on Waukegan Road so that property is not available for a tower site. She stated that the train station parking lot is presented for consideration because it is within the area identified by the providers, is located some distance from homes, and is on property owned by the City that is not needed for another purpose. She stated that to minimize visual impacts, the proposed amendment requires a flagpole type installation, with antennas concealed inside the pole, without exterior antenna arrays. She stated that because the pole would be lower than 200', no lights are required. She stated that the pole would support multiple service providers as required by the Code. She reviewed options for Plan Commission action including recommending approval of the amendment as proposed, recommending approval of a modified amendment, or recommending to the City Council that the Code remain as is, without a site for wireless infrastructure identified in the southwest quadrant of the City.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Davie stated an interest in hearing from the public on this matter. For the record, he reiterated that the Commission cannot consider health or environmental issues related to the tower.

In response to questions from Commissioner Davie, Ms. Czerniak reviewed that the opinion provided by the City Attorney, which was provided to the Commission and made available to the public, confirms that municipalities are pre-empted from basing a decision on health or environmental issues because those issues have been addressed and are regulated by the Federal government. She stated that if a wireless provider applies to the City to locate wireless infrastructure on a site that is not designated for that use in the Code, a request for a Code amendment would be presented to the Commission for consideration at a public hearing. She stated that the City Council directed the Commission to proactively consider a Code amendment in an effort to get ahead of such a request. She stated that wireless companies have indicated a preference for understanding what is desired by a community before coming forward so they can try to comply with parameters that have been put in place if feasible.

In response to questions from Acting Chairman Pasquesi, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the written testimony that challenged the City's interpretation about what the City can consider in making a decision about wireless infrastructure was reviewed by the City Attorney. She stated that the attorney's opinion remains as detailed in the opinion letter provided to the Commission.

In response to Commissioner Davie, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the City can regulate location, height, screening, and other aspects of wireless infrastructure through the Code. She stated that as with any provision of the Code, a variance could be requested and would need to be considered at a public hearing. She stated that the City cannot prohibit the buildout of wireless infrastructure but can establish parameters for how and where it occurs.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that a number of wireless providers and tower building companies have contacted the City expressing interest in adding infrastructure in the vicinity of the Everett and Waukegan Roads area however, no petition or formal request has been submitted to the City. She stated that various providers are continuously upgrading antennas and ground equipment at existing locations throughout the community. She stated that the impetus for bringing a Code amendment to the Commission for consideration is to be proactive in providing improved wireless service in the community. She stated that the City has not entered into an agreement with any outside company regarding the proposed site. She confirmed that the Comprehensive Plan does not speak to wireless infrastructure sites, but the City Code does through the overlay district. She stated that studies have not been completed to demonstrate how visible the proposed tower would be from various points. She noted that other towers in the community are visible from various locations off of the site. She confirmed that infrastructure can be located on either public or private property on sites designated as permitted locations in the Code. She stated that there are limited opportunities on private properties in the area where the current need exists. She stated that a ground area is required adding that as currently proposed the ground lease area is configured as 150' by 30' to accommodate equipment for at least three wireless providers and access. She confirmed that the Code can limit the height of a tower in a specific location. She noted however that shorter towers may require exterior antenna arrays and may only be able to accommodate one or two carriers which could drive the need for more towers. She stated that the coverage maps were submitted as public testimony and were not provided by the City. She stated that if a company applied for approval to build a tower or erect antennas, detailed coverage maps, existing and proposed, and confirmation from committed carriers would be required. She acknowledged that towers have not been constructed in all of the approved areas adding that those areas are opportunities that wireless companies could pursue if a need exists and there is not adequate coverage in the area.

In response to questions from Commissioner Pickus, Ms. Czerniak stated that an independent consultant has not been engaged by the City. She stated that the City has encouraged the wireless companies to explore opportunities to co-locate on

buildings in the Everett and Waukegan area. She stated that highlighting in the Code that a tower is desired in this area without identifying one or more potential sites would not advance the discussion.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Ms. Czerniak acknowledged that looking at opportunities to use existing wireless infrastructure sites first makes sense. She stated that her understanding is that providers look for the most economical and expeditious way to proceed and if approved sites can be used, that is the preference. She acknowledged that technology is changing and noted that the Code already requires that if towers or antennas are no longer needed, the companies must remove the infrastructure and restore the site.

In response to questions from Commissioner Thomas, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that individual homeowners and businesses are free to add their own boosters. She stated that the concept of installing a larger scale booster for an entire area is not one that has been offered by any of the companies that have contacted the City. She stated that if there is a technology that allows service to be enhanced without investing in a tower, a company will likely come forward with a proposal to do so. She acknowledged that there may be a benefit to looking at the larger wireless system in the community since the southwest quadrant of the City is relying on the existing infrastructure and perhaps diminishing service elsewhere.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Acting Chairman Pasquesi invited public comment. He swore in all those intending to speak on the matter.

Julia Saran Flannery, 1094 Arcady Drive, stated that she takes pride in the community and is deeply concerned about the potential for construction of a 150' tower near her home. She questioned why health concerns cannot be considered when the tower is proposed near homes, schools, and parks. She stated that emerging studies identify many unknowns about exposure of vulnerable populations to electro-magnetic fields resulting from cell towers. She stated that she is not willing to take that risk. She stated that a tower is a large, industrial structure that will loom over the community and questioned why the community would sacrifice its values for improved cell service. She stated that thoughtful planning and community well being should take priority. She encouraged the Commission to focus on health, safety, and quality of life and to allow residents' opinions to guide decisions.

Chris Hensley, 1390 W. Everett Road, stated that he has been a Lake Forest resident since 2005 and before that, was a student at Lake Forest College. He stated opposition to an amendment to permit a new cell tower noting that the amendment does not align with the City Code which requires that the total number of towers in the community be minimized. He stated that the proposed tower is unnecessary because opportunities exist to locate antennas on existing towers or on buildings. He stated that the existing infrastructure should be leveraged to reduce the proliferation of single use towers. He stated that the proposed tower will have a significant detrimental impact on the nearby residential areas. He stated that the negative visual impact of a tower

should not be underestimated. He noted that the Code requires that towers are located to minimize adverse impacts on neighborhoods, visibility, and the quality of life. He stated that the images presented do not appear to accurately reflect the scale of the proposed tower in relation to surrounding trees. He stated that five trees would need to be stacked on top of each other to provide an accurate representative of the proposed height of the tower. He stated that the Waukegan and Everett Roads area is already impacted by heavy commuter traffic, vehicles on Waukegan Road, and the numerous trains that travel through the area on a daily basis. He stated that the commuters traveling through the area will siphon off the wireless service leaving little capacity for improvements for residents and businesses in the area.

Jim Opsitnik, 971 Verda Lane, stated that he is a 40 year resident of the community and is a member of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation. He stated that radio frequency waves are line of sight. He questioned why antennas on existing towers cannot be upgraded noting that the water tower is close to the area. He stated that if a new tower is needed, it could be located elsewhere and aimed at the area where service is needed.

Natalie Torcolese, 271 W. Everett Road, questioned how many residents and businesses will benefit from the proposed tower and which cell phone companies need enhanced service in the area. She stated that she understands that the FCC set health and environmental standards in 1996 which have not been updated since that time. She stated that she believes that the standards are outdated and not based on current evidence. She referenced ongoing litigation which requires the FCC to justify the 26 year old standards adding that the issue will likely be decided in the Courts. She noted that the new administration in Washington is focusing on health issues, and the standards may change. She encouraged the City to consult with the City attorney about the ongoing litigation.

Ray Bushmann, 977 Kirkhill Lane, stated that he is speaking on behalf of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation and Jennifer McGregor, the Executive Director of the Foundation. He stated that the Foundation has existed for four decades and works to preserve and enhance the visual character of Lake Forest and to assure that developments throughout the community are sensitive and compatible. He stated that the Foundation submitted two pages of comments to the Commission. He noted that the City Code currently requires that cell towers be located to minimize adverse visual impacts on the community. He stated that a petitioner must demonstrate that a tower is needed to satisfy the service requirements of the system adding that no petitioner has come forward. He stated that as with any petition, the City would question any evidence submitted. He stated that the City should engage an independent authority to give the community comfort and answer the questions raised. He stated serious concerns that a modern monopole at the proposed location can satisfy the Zoning Code requirement to minimize visual impact. He stated that much time and resources went into planning and developing the Settler's Square area in a compatible manner with careful thought to building heights, scale, and style. He stated that the train station acts as a center piece in the area. He stated that siting a 160 foot monopole near the

train station will not minimize the adverse impact of a tower adding that it will be an unwelcome focal point of the westside Business District.

Connie Wiggins, 1930 Oak Knoll Drive, stated that she is passionate about the safety and health concerns associated with a new tower. She stated that although currently the City cannot take health impacts into consideration, the Trump administration's focus on health may change that.

Hayley Cropper, 1035 Sir William Lane, stated that since the last meeting she has been trying to understand the process and why the City would remove the safeguards that protect residents from cell tower companies. She stated that in the past, the City has fought to preserve the character of the community and questioned why that is changing. She noted that the Code speaks to minimizing visual blight adding that if a new tower is needed, it should be located near utilities and not in a primary view corridor. She stated that companies will always request a taller tower than is needed. She noted that in the past, a tower was proposed on the Private Bank property on Waukegan Road but did not move forward after the Plan Commission encouraged consideration of alternate sites. She asked that the Commission preserve the character of the community. She stated that the proposed tower will benefit those passing through Lake Forest on Waukegan Road or on the train with only marginal benefit to residents in the area. She asked that smaller antennas be considered until it is proven that they are not workable.

Susan Dempf, 1240 W. Cascade Court, noted that the current Code requires cell towers to be hidden from view. She stated that the cell tower on the Woodlands Academy Campus is on a 41 acre parcel. She stated that the proposed tower will be visible year round. She stated that she purchased her home in early 2022 adding that during her home search she used her cell phone to search for properties in the area from her car with no service problems. She stated that west Lake Forest is not exclusively a business district but instead an area of many established residential neighborhoods that draws professionals who want to live in the community. She stated that she would not want a cell tower near her property and noted that the residents in the area are overwhelmingly opposed to the tower. She questioned whether a similar tower would be considered in the parking lot of the east Lake Forest train station.

Katie May, 1230 Conway Road, stated that the Commission should not blindly trust information provided but should dig deeper. She stated that a Court ordered the FCC to update its guidelines after determining that adequate information on health issues was not considered. She stated that the standards have not been updated for 30 years. She stated that the new Starlink system will be efficient and will significantly improve connectivity. She stated that 911 calls can connect through any system. She stated appreciation that additional options were considered for a tower since the last meeting and noted that the residents strongly oppose the train station location. She stated that there are valid health and visibility concerns as evidenced by the fact that to date, 700 people have signed a petition opposing the tower. She asked that the

Commission honor the will of the people. She stated that cell towers will soon be obsolete adding that within a year, service will be provided through satellites.

Viktor Brisku, 1275 W. Cascade Court South, stated that people want improved cell service but are not supportive of a tower at the train station. He stated that residents should be surveyed adding that since the first meeting, more residents have stated their opposition to the proposed tower. He reiterated that the community does not want a tower at the train station. He stated that based on the material provided, only a small number of homes would benefit from the service enhancement. He stated that there are new technologies available that do not require a tower and a large windowless building on the ground. He stated that previous Commissions rejected a tower in this area. He stated that the storefronts in the area are full adding that if banks close, those spaces could be filled with additional store fronts. He asked that the Commission preserve the area as a desirable place to live and shop. He asked that the Commission vote no on the proposed amendment.

Lexee Rascia, 1345 Kimmer Court, stated that she is on the Everett School Board and is active in the community. She expressed disappointment that the City initiated the discussion about a new tower. She stated that it is the responsibility of the telecommunications companies to bring a proposal forward and the City to decide whether to allow the company into the beautiful community. She stated that by initiating the discussion, the City has given away its power to regulate the companies. She stated that she spoke at length with an attorney and learned that by initiating the discussion, the City will be vulnerable. She questioned why the City is responding to complaints from some businesses who are trying to meet the needs of shoppers from outside the community. She stated that the Code should not be changed. She stated concern about the impact one or more cell towers will have on her children. She stated that she understands that the City is not supposed to consider health impacts but questioned why the City is bending to the interests of the telecommunication companies. She stated that the area of the train station should not be characterized as a business district but instead, a residential district. She asked that the Commission consider the residents. She stated that residents did not come to Lake Forest for good cell service. She stated that the tower will threaten the special character of the area.

Gabriela Caetano, 1331 Wild Rose Lane, stated that in 2021 she moved to Lake Forest so her daughter could attend Everett Elementary school, go to the park, and so she could shop at the local stores and be active in the community. She stated that the City is supposed to protect the kids but instead, is pushing for a cell tower. She stated that none of the residents want the cell tower. She urged the Commission to protect the community. She stated concerns about aesthetics, noise, and radiation from the tower. She asked the Commission to do the right thing.

Tom Bohac, 1311 Fiore Drive, stated that there are legal questions that need to be answered. He stated that it is a unique situation because the petitioner is not a wireless company. He stated that the proposed amendment is not adding any additional protections for the community but instead, is relaxing the current requirements. He

suggested that the Commission approve an amendment only for the compost center site and reject the rest of the proposal. He stated that the compost center appears to provide for adequate coverage without opening up the flood gates by locating a tower in a residential area. He asked the Commission to consider the weight of the opposition adding that the tower will impact the desirability of living in west Lake Forest and will negatively impact property values. He stated that people rely on the current Code language that allows towers only in specified areas and protects other areas from this nuisance.

Emily Bohac, 1311 Fiore Drive, stated opposition to the proposed amendment and disappointment in the City for the way this proposal was brought forward. She stated that the existing Code should be followed and commented that she speaks for others who may want to move to Lake Forest. She stated that the residents relied on the existing zoning when they purchased homes.

Diane Casuto, 1200 Wild Rose Lane, stated that the single site proposal appears to be the cheapest route for the companies to improve service. She expressed concern that the City is being coerced by telecommunication companies who are focused on their bottom line. She stated that the City Code is designed to protect from this type of overreach and asked that the Code not be ignored.

Andrew Bartolotta, 1056 Sir William Lane, stated that he cares deeply about his home and community. He questioned how installing a cell tower could ever be considered a win with so many people opposed to it. He asked the Commission to consider the views of the people who will live closest to the tower and see it every day out of their windows. He asked the Commission to find a solution that works for residents in the area. He stated that a tower would not be considered for the east train station and asked the Commission not to solve one group's complaints at the expense of others.

Jennifer Lawson, 955 Pine Croft Lane, stated that she does not know if a 150' tower is the answer, but noted that she is an attorney and works from home. She stated that when she does not have service, she cannot do her job. She stated that she has family that live on Lakewood Drive, and they also have issues with wireless service. She stated that she does not know if the amendment as proposed is the answer but stated that a solution is needed.

Antoinette Dalcamo, 740 Jennifer Court, questioned the image presented noting that the image does not appear to accurately represent the height proposed. She asked for information on the size of the ground equipment area and the diameter of the pole at the base stating that the pole will look like a monstrosity. She stated that common sense should be used in proposing a location for a monopole and suggested the location should be outside of the business district and away from residential neighborhoods. She stated that the Code has proactively been amended to allow distributed antenna systems to protect the character of the community. She stated that the City has avoided installing towers on the east side of the community and asked that the west

side be afforded the same consideration. She stated that service providers cannot force the City to change the Code.

Pat Weiland, 884 Gloucester Crossing, stated that the tower will be unsightly. She stated that she appreciates the need to improve cell service acknowledging that it is intermittent and unreliable but stated that she has installed a cell phone booster in her home. She stated appreciation for all of the comments and asked about plans for future meetings on the topic.

Daniel Kalina, Vertical Bridge, stated that his company is prepared to install a tower at the train station if the site is approved. He stated that AT&T and Verizon have committed to locating on the tower, T-Mobile has expressed interest, and there may be a fourth carrier as well. He stated that Vertical Bridge has not made a specific proposal to the City adding that he attended the meeting to listen. He stated that Vertical Bridge is the largest tower company and as such has more flexibility on the type of tower that can be constructed than other companies. He stated that health and safety issues are regulated solely by the FCC. He suggested that safety should be considered in a broader context noting the benefit to having cell service available for those on the train. He stated that if desired, he will provide photo simulations of a tower from various viewpoints. He stated that the images are accurate, not misleading. He stated that a tower could be proposed on private property with a willing property owner. He stated that the wireless service carriers have identified the need for a tower within a quarter mile of the train station to fill a gap in service. He stated that the tower needs to be in the right location to attract carriers. He stated that locating towers in commercial, rather than residential, areas is most common adding that there is a commercial area across the railroad tracks from where the tower is proposed. He confirmed that multiple carriers can locate on a single tower adding that the systems will be built out at different speeds to avoid conflicts. He stated that the antennas on the tower will act as a booster for the area allowing lower level systems to be built out as needed to provide further enhancements to coverage. He stated that if a location that is determined to be worth the investment is not approved, the carriers will focus on improvements in coverage in other communities.

Erin Wilson, 1090 Windhaven Court, stated that she moved here three years ago for the schools and community. She stated that the Code should not be amended and should continue to protect residents and minimize adverse impacts. She expressed concern about impacts on the value of her property because the tower will be visible from her kitchen window.

Judy Gavoor, 1030 Sir William Lane, stated that she moved back to Lake Forest to be in the community she grew up in. She asked that the rules limiting cell towers not be changed. She stated that it would be inappropriate to install an eyesore for everyone to see. She asked that the character of the community be preserved.

David Rose, 1455 White Oak Road, stated that he has lived in the 4th Ward since 2013. He described his experiences with dropped calls and said he switched cell phone

providers in an effort to get better service. He stated that he has to have cable to have reliable service at this home. He stated that if the train station is not the right location, another solution should be figured out to improve service.

Alex Parmacek, 1279 Kajer Lane, stated that he has lived in his home for a couple years and likes the beauty and culture of Lake Forest. He stated that there are many reasons for not moving forward with changes to the Code but acknowledged that there are pros and cons. He stated that most people agree that cell service in the area is problematic but noted that people did not move to the area for cell service. He stated there is more at stake and encouraged the parties to work toward an acceptable solution. He stated that there could be long term health impacts for those that are exposed to the tower.

Greg Fahrenbach, 1220 Lawrence Avenue, stated that he has lived on the west side of Lake Forest for 22 years. He stated that the tower will likely require a light at the top which will rise above the tree tops. He stated that further study is needed and encouraged the City to hire an independent consultant to study the issue and develop options that preserve the ambience of Lake Forest.

Rod Johnson, 1250 Kajer Lane, stated that he moved to the community in 1990. He stated that he cannot support any change to the zoning in the area. He stated that the focus should be on finding a site a mile and a half away to serve the area. He said that from an environmental perspective, it does not make sense to locate a tower at the train station. He stated that if another tower is needed, it should be located at the compost center.

Al Palmer, 1077 Coventry Drive, stated that he will be in direct line of the tower. He stated that there are alternatives to constructing a tower. He stated that the consideration of a tower at the train station should be halted.

David Hulata, 740 Jennifer Court, stated that he does not want a tower near his home.

Tyler Lisenby, 1565 N. Sheridan Road, stated that he lives in the first Ward. He questioned why Vertical Bridge, or another company is not the petitioner. He encouraged consideration of other options.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Acting Chairman Pasquesi closed the public hearing and announced a brief recess.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi reconvened the meeting and invited final questions or comments from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Thomas, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that City staff does not have expertise in wireless technology. She stated that the proposed amendment was drafted based on three years of discussions with various telecommunication providers, tower building companies, and business owners and

residents in the area. She confirmed that when individual applications for installation of infrastructure are submitted by telecommunications companies, depending on the situation, an independent consultant is brought in to review the materials and provide expertise. She stated that the consultants in those cases are brought in at the petitioner's expense. She stated that a consultant has not been engaged to do an overall study.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Ms. Czerniak stated that telecommunications companies regularly upgrade, replace, or add antennas to existing sites. She stated that a Code amendment to identify permitted locations and limitations gives the City more control at the front end of the process. She stated that in her conversations with providers, they prefer to present proposals that align with what is permitted by the City Code rather than engage in a lengthy discussion about a potential Code amendment. She stated that providers may prefer different locations but there seems to be consensus around a need in the area identified. She stated that any proposed site, not identified in the Code as a permitted site, would require review by the City at a public hearing.

In response to questions from Commissioner Pickus, Ms. Czerniak spoke to a City owned property that was referenced on the south side of Everett Road, adjacent to the Tollway. She stated that the site was considered but eliminated because it duplicates coverage provided by towers on the west side of the Tollway. She stated that a tower in that location would not satisfactorily address the gap area in Lake Forest. She stated that the site identified at the City's compost center is adjacent to School District 115 property. She stated that the District has expressed an interest in working with the City if that area is targeted for a tower. She stated that the Code could include specific language that requires a petitioner to demonstrate to the City's satisfaction that the compost center site would not provide adequate coverage prior to moving forward at a site near the train station.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak stated that she has not heard that additional towers would be needed in the 4th Ward if a tower of sufficient height is constructed, in a workable location. She acknowledged however that it is unknown what future needs might be. She stated that any additional towers proposed at locations not identified in the Code, would require review through a public process. She stated that the City cannot prohibit the buildout of wireless systems if a need is demonstrated. She stated that companies will likely invest in sites that they determine will offer significant benefit to their customers. She confirmed that wireless companies regularly update and add antennas to existing sites to address quality and capacity issues. She noted that the Code already requires efforts to minimize the number of towers, requiring wireless providers to demonstrate that existing locations do not adequately address the coverage and quality needs is already part of the process.

Commissioner Davie stated appreciation for all of the comments and work done to this point on this matter. He stated that the public hearing process is intended to engage the public in discussions before any decisions are made. He encouraged all parties to

avoid personalizing the discussion and instead, participate in a productive discussion. He stated that the Commission and the City overall are obligated to abide by laws that exist whether or not they agree with all aspects of those laws. He noted in particular that the City is pre-empted from considering health and environmental issues in making decisions regarding telecommunications infrastructure. He stated that the Commission respects the opinion and direction of the City Attorney. He stated that even though this matter was brought forward for discussion at the direction of the City Council, the applicable laws and limitations must be abided by. He stated that he is aware that there is an issue with the quality and capacity of wireless service not only in the 4th Ward, but elsewhere in the community. He stated that the goal is to limit the number of towers overall and control for aesthetics.

In response to questions from Commissioner Davie, Ms. Czerniak stated that adding antennas or a third provider to the City's water tower is not possible without compromising the water tower. She stated that the proposed amendment would allow for a stand along tower, a new tower, on the compost center site. She stated that if the Code is amended to add one or more tower sites, a due diligence process is still required before a permit is issued to allow construction of the tower noting that the due diligence process includes: demonstration of need, demonstration that previously approved sites cannot provide the needed coverage, engineering issues, access, and consideration of wetlands/flood plain. She confirmed that the antennas on the water tower were recently upgraded.

In response to questions from Acting Chairman Pasquesi, Ms. Czerniak clarified that the proposed amendment does not allow construction of a tower but allows a proposal to be submitted for the site as approved in the Code. She noted that further evaluation of the proposal would occur as previously described before permits can be issued. She stated that the Code does not permit towers to be constructed on a speculative basis, there must be committed providers for the tower.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Ms. Czerniak stated that the City has not received requests for new towers in other parts of the community in recent years. She reiterated that the City frequently issues permits for additional antennas and antenna upgrades at existing telecommunications sites. She confirmed that new sites proposed for telecommunications infrastructure that are not already designated in the Code, would require consideration of a Code amendment.

In response to questions from Commissioner Thomas, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that existing sites are frequently updated. She stated that although the City can and has amended the Code to encourage the buildout of distributed antenna systems, smaller antennas on light and utility poles, the City cannot mandate the technology that is used. She stated that addressing the coverage in the 4th Ward may lead to improvements to service in other parts of the community.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Acting Chairman Pasquesi invited comments and deliberation by the Commission.

Commissioner Moorhead stated that in his opinion, more analysis is needed to document the need for enhanced wireless service and the available technologies including 5G. He suggested making a recommendation to the City Council that a comprehensive study of wireless service throughout the community be conducted.

In response to question from Commissioner Davies, Ms. Czerniak stated that any consultant engaged to do a study will need to have expertise in telecommunications and be independent from wireless providers and tower building companies.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi thanked all parties for the input provided. He stated that as a Commission, decisions must be based on an objective determination of what is best for the overall community for the long term. He reviewed that the Commission heard from about 30 members of the public and received numerous letters all of which provided good input. He summarized that the overwhelming concerns about designating the Telegraph Road train station for a cell tower were related to health, safety, and environmental issues. He stated that the Commission cannot take those issues into consideration. He stated that concerns were also raised about impact on property values and noted that although a cell tower is not likely to increase the value of a property, in his opinion, it would not negatively impact values as much as proximity to railroad tracks. He stated that the visual impact is a difficult issue. He stated that there are six cell towers in Lake Forest and as each one was discussed, there was opposition to it. He stated that telecommunications infrastructure is a necessary part of everyday life. He stated that the City is trying to identify the best location for additional infrastructure. He stated that he is able to support the proposed amendment with the recommendation that the City Council direct that a study of wireless service throughout the community be undertaken. He stated that it is important that the Commission focus on the petition as presented.

Commissioner Nehring questioned whether a tower is needed and suggested that businesses and property owners will likely be more than willing to have antennas installed on their roofs. She suggested that approach to the problem should be pursued first. She stated that as proposed, the flagpole cell tower at the train station would be very large and would be an eyesore. She stated that perhaps a tower 50 feet tall could be acceptable. She stated that in her opinion, the City should proceed slowly. She stated that all other locations should be evaluated before proceeding with a tower at the train station.

Commissioner Davie reiterated that the Commission cannot consider health and safety issues and stated that he is not swayed by the property value argument. He agreed that the impact on the visual character of the community is a concern. He stated that he has questions about the process if the Code amendment is approved and the studies that would need to be completed in order to allow construction of a tower at the site. He stated that it will be essential to clearly articulate the limitations and requirements before installation could proceed.

Commissioner Thomas stated that in his opinion, if the amendment is approved, the groundwork will be in place for a tower to be built at the train station.

Commissioner Pickus stated that in his view, if the amendment is approved, a tower at the train station is approved. He stated that he does not support a 150 foot tower at the Telegraph Road train station. He stated that allowing the opportunity for a tower at the compost center is the most logical option but acknowledged that it might not solve the problem. He stated however that it could be an interim step until a comprehensive study is conducted to look at the community more wholistically.

Commissioner Moorhead agreed with the comments offered by Commissioner Pickus and stated that the goal should be to achieve the most suitable coverage in the least intrusive manner. He stated that the coverage maps provided do not demonstrate that a tower at the Telegraph Road train station will provide coverage for the entire 4th Ward. He added that there does not appear to be advantages to locating a tower on City owned land adding that eight of the existing telecommunication infrastructure sites are on private property. He encouraged consideration of other locations for a tower and for antennas that will provide suitable coverage in west Lake Forest. He stated that consideration should be given to both public and privately owned properties. He stated support for a comprehensive study of the wireless service issue.

Commissioner Thomas stated that he does not support a tower at the Telegraph Road train station. He stated that if he had to pick a location for a tower, it would be the compost center. He stated however that in his opinion, sufficient due diligence has not yet been done and noted that City staff does not have expertise in cell phone technology. He stated that talking to vendors may not be providing a full understanding of the issue. He stated that he believes there is another solution that could be better than building a tower.

Commissioner Nehring stated support for a designating a tower site at the compost center. She stated that she does not support a tower at the train station.

Commissioner Barrett questioned the benefit of approving a location, the compost center, that does not solve the problem. He stated that the Commission was charged with trying to solve an issue.

In response to questions from Acting Chairman Pasquesi, Ms. Czerniak stated that wireless providers have expressed interest in a tower at both the compost center and the train station, not one or the other.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi observed that from the map of existing wireless infrastructure, there is clearly a lack of infrastructure in the 4th Ward. He stated that it makes sense that the Everett and Waukegan Roads area is the focus of interest. He stated that the Fire Station on Everett Road is a logical location for a tower but acknowledged that the tower would be closer to homes than a tower at the train station. He stated that moving the tower away from the area fails to address the problem.

Commissioner Moorhead encouraged setting a maximum height for towers City-wide noting that the tower at Woodlands Academy is visible just above the trees at 110'. He stated that a 150' tower will dominate the skyline. He acknowledged that limiting the height of towers City-wide may result in the need for more towers overall. He encouraged the City to consider how other municipalities have addressed wireless service needs. He commented that he anticipates that in the coming years, wireless capacity will be an issue noting that more data is being used all the time.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi reviewed the options for action stating that the Commission can do nothing, make no recommendation, or forward a recommendation for one or more amendments to the City Council.

Commissioner Thomas suggested that a third option would be to continue the matter to allow further study to be done. He also stated that the Commission could recommend an amendment relating only to the compost center site.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi noted that the Commission has had two full meetings on this matter and stated that he is inclined to move the petition forward, back to the City Council, to allow the Council to determine next steps. He acknowledged that on the broader issue, there is more due diligence that should be done. He commented that he drove around to the six existing cell towers in the community and had to seek them out because he had not noticed them in the past. He stated that telecommunications infrastructure provides an essential service. He stated that in his opinion, the train station meets all of the criteria for a tower. He made a motion to recommend approval of the amendments as presented by staff.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

Acting Chairman Pasquesi invited a motion for members of the Commission.

Commissioner Nehring made a motion to recommend an amendment to the Code to designate a small area at the compost center for a cell tower.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moorhead and approved by the Commission by a 4 to 2 vote with Acting Chairman Pasquesi and Commissioner Pickus voting nay.

The Commission recommended that the City engage an independent consultant to conduct a review of telecommunications issues in the community.

4. Additional public comment on non-agenda items

There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

5. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development