

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Telecommunications Tower TWR-2016-01 (New Construction)

DATE OF MEETING: August 9th 2016

BUDGET IMPACT:

FUNDING SOURCE:

Annual SPLOST Capital N/A

Regular Meeting (x)
Work Session (x)
Recommendation (x)
Policy/Discussion ()
Report ()

ACTION REQUESTED ON: TWR-2016-01 Verizon Wireless, 4278 Lakeland Highway,
0210-002, E-A, New ~100' Tower

HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES:

This case represents an attempt by the applicant to construct a new ~100' monopole telecommunications tower¹. The location of the proposed tower is a 100'x100' lease area accessed by a 30' easement from Knights Academy Rd. The subject property is currently zoned Estate Agriculture (E-A). E-A zoning permits the construction of a new telecommunications tower with GLPC review and LCBOC approval. Additionally, if the proposed tower is determined to likely interfere with the use of aircraft traffic operations around the Valdosta Regional Airport (VLD) or Moody Air Force Base (MAFB) the application can be required to receive a letter of clearance from the aforementioned bodies. In this case, because of the towers height and location in proximity to MAFB and the MAZ boundaries communications regarding this case did take place with MAFB. Communications officially commenced this year in early April and resulted in an agreement to pursue the current 100' tower height instead of the originally proposed 160' tower height. At this point, Moody AFB clearance has been confirmed through their encroachment contact in Virginia (Attached), feedback received during the July GLPC meeting, and through a follow-up memo (Attached).

The primary motivation for a new tower on the subject property is a gap in the existing coverage area (Please See Attached Coverage Maps). The subject property is in the Rural Service Area and depicted as Agricultural/Forestry on the Future Development Map. While the character areas comment generally on the preservation of rural areas, Goal 10 of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan cites the support of technological infrastructure. The conflict between preservation and upgrading the technological infrastructure yields a potential hurdle in the interruption of the rural skyline. For historical reference, and seemingly due to the gaps in cellular coverage, this area has previously received requests for new tower construction. The most serious request to date was in 2008. TWR-2008-11 ultimately resulted in a withdrawal of a 280' tower request near Delmar road. TWR-2008-11 was withdrawn from consideration due to opposition from Moody AFB and staff related to the base's range located off of Lakeland Highway.

Concerning the rural skyline, as long as the burden of proof for a new tower has been satisfied Planning believes that the rural skyline is outweighed by the justification for the infrastructure. Planning finds this request overall consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the TRC recommended approval of this request. Following TRC review the GLPC heard this case at their July regular meeting. Ultimately, the GLPC recommended for its approval with 1 condition by a 7-0 vote. During the public hearing portion

¹ More accurate tower specifications are a 95' tower with a 5' antenna.

of the request, the applicant's agent and a representative from Moody AFB spoke in favor of the request and one citizen spoke in opposition to it. The comments and discussion from those speaking in favor of the request concerned history, specifications, justification, and addressing concerns about height and lighting from Moody AFB. The comments from the citizen who spoke in opposition to it focused on potential concerns related to lighting the tower.

GLPC Recommended Condition #1 That the tower be lighted in conjunction with standards put forth by Moody AFB and the FAA.

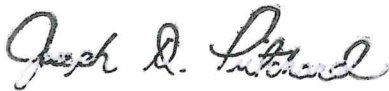
OPTIONS:

- 1. Approve 2. Approve with Conditions 3. Table 4. Deny

RECOMMENDED ACTION: GLPC Option #2
TRC Option #1

DIVISION: Planning

County Planner: Jason Davenport *JD*



County Manager

Action by the Board: _____