

**GREATER BEMIDJI AREA  
REGULAR JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**Thursday, June 25, 2020  
6:00 P.M.**

**Cisco Webex Video Conferencing  
(For log in information <https://www.jpbgba.org/planning-actions>)**

**AGENDA**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>➤ Call to Order/Roll Call</b>                | <b>Chair</b> |
| <b>➤ Pledge of Allegiance</b>                   |              |
| <b>➤ Approve Agenda</b>                         |              |
| <b>➤ Approve Minutes</b>                        |              |
| • <b>Thursday, May 28, 2020 Regular Meeting</b> |              |

**NEW BUSINESS**

- |                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Visitors</b> | <b>Chair</b> |
|--------------------|--------------|

**Public Hearings**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. <u>Northern Township</u> - IUP-20-31.02144.00 – Verizon Wireless</b> | <b>CM</b> |
|--|-----------|

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>1. Director's Report</b> |                             |
| <b>2. Upcoming Meetings</b> | <b>Chair</b>                |
| • July 8, 2020              | 6:00 pm JPB Regular Meeting |
| • July 23, 2020             | 6:00 pm JPC Regular Meeting |
| • August 12, 2020           | 6:00 pm JPB Regular Meeting |
| • August 27, 2020           | 6:00 pm JPC Regular Meeting |
| <b>3. Adjourn</b>           | <b>Chair</b>                |

**MINUTES  
GREATER BEMIDJI AREA  
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**June 25, 2020  
6:00 p.m.**

**Cisco Webex  
Video Conference**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Don Heinonen called the regular meeting of the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m., roll call was taken and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Berg, Faver, Steffen, David, Heinonen, Lemmer, Miller, Smith, Granlund

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Casey Mai, Jamin Carlson, Terri Ball

**OTHERS:** Rick Adams

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Miller, second by David, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Lemmer, second by Smith, to approve minutes from the May 28, 2020, Greater Bemidji Area Regular Joint Planning Commission as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**VISITORS:**

**Public Hearing:**

**Mai presented the first case:**

**PLANNING CASE – IUP-20-31.02144.00 – Verizon Wireless**

Verizon Wireless is requesting approval of an interim use permit (IUP) for a 165 foot tall tower to increase the capacity of wireless data transmission in the area; located at 785 Louise Lane NW and on parcel 31.02144.00 within Northern Township.

**BACKGROUND**

Verizon Wireless recently reached out to JPB staff in regards to installing a new network tower that would provide additional capacity to the Verizon Network currently operating within Beltrami County. Verizon Wireless has a lease agreement in place with Northtown Storage LLC, home of Northdale Oil of Bemidji to construct the tower within the lessor's property. As part of the lease agreement, a twenty (20) foot access and utilities rights of ways was included to enter the property.

Verizon Wireless is not only looking to improve their own network coverage for reliable voice and data services such as wireless internet, mobile email, weather radar and video, but to also enhance services that will also benefit many local and state public safety emergency service providers who rely on the network every day to ensure safety within the community. This new tower will not only increase the capacity of the network, but should provide faster data speeds as well. The proposed site at Birchmont is an example of Verizon Wireless' efforts to increase capacity, coverage and ensure that their network remains reliable for existing and future customers.

Below are two (2) maps that were provided by Verizon that demonstrates the change in network coverage anticipated with the proposed tower Verizon utilizes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs include Reference Signal Received Power RSRP-LTE. The coverage maps utilize analysis based on Reference Signal Received Power (RSRP), which is a prediction of the difference between the power being transmitted from the cell sites in the area and the power received by the devices. It is measured in dBm, and the higher the RSRP (blue colors), the poorer the connection between the device and the cell site. Verizon standards require 115 dBm or less of RSRP to establish and maintain a connection to the network, thus areas with 115 dBm or less of RSRP are considered low-coverage areas.

This location of the tower is outside of the Airport Zoning Overlay established in the Greater Bemidji Area Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance, refer to hereafter as ("Ordinance").

### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Per Sections 302 and 1022 of the Ordinance, towers and/or antennas exceeding seventy-five (75) feet in height require an IUP as well as a building or land use permit. All towers shall conform to a minimum setback requirement from all property lines at a horizontal distance of the total tower height, plus ten (10) feet from any property line. Setback requirements are required even with engineering collapse analysis.

Towers shall not be illuminated by artificial means and shall not display strobe lights unless such lighting is specifically required by the Federal Aviation Administration or other federal or state authority for a particular tower. When incorporated into the approved design of the tower for camouflage purposes, light fixtures used to illuminate ball fields, parking lots, or similar areas may be attached to the tower.

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**

The FAA conducted an aeronautical study under the provisions of 49 U.S.C., Section 44718 and on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018, revealed that the proposed tower structure does not exceed obstruction standards and would not be a hazard to air navigation. Based on this assessment, marking and lighting are not necessary for aviation safety; however, if marking and/or lighting are accomplished on a voluntary basis, it is recommended it be installed in accordance with the FAA Advisory circular 70/7460-1 L Change 1.

An FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration shall be submitted to the FAA, Southwest Regional Office within five (5) days after construction reaches its greatest height.

### **Development Team: (Fire Department)**

The Fire Department had no concerns regarding the proposed interim use permit request.

### **Neighboring Property Input**

At the time of writing report, no neighborhood input was obtained.

### **Comprehensive Plan References**

The newly adopted Greater Bemidji Area Comprehensive Plan as well as the Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance stated the following about towers and antennas as well as the importance and enhancement of expanding services:

*In order to accommodate the communication and sustainable energy needs of residents and businesses while protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community, the JPB finds that these regulations are necessary to:*

- 1. Maximize the use of existing and approved towers and buildings to accommodate new antennas and towers in a manner which reduces the number of new towers necessary to serve the community.*
- 2. Ensure antennas and towers are designed, located, and constructed in accordance with all applicable code requirements to avoid potential damage to adjacent properties from failure of the antenna and tower through structural standards and setback requirements.*
- 3. Encourage wind energy conversion systems to be located on properties in a manner which minimizes potential negative impacts upon adjacent properties.*
- 4. Maintain community aesthetics by minimizing adverse visual effects of antennas and towers.*

**Objective 7.1: Preserve and Enhance our Public Services and Private Utilities**

*Cooperation is important when planning for public or private expansion of services, encouraging private and public entities to work together on major improvements and promote reasonable expansion projects while supporting the maintenance of existing facilities.*

- 4. Encourage cooperation connecting governmental agencies and utility companies to continue expansion and maintenance of all utility infrastructure.** *When making infrastructure or land use decisions, encourage cooperation between all entities, including private and public services, to reduce the social and environmental impact on utility projects.*

**Objective 7.3: Enhance Public Safety Response Time**

*Land use planning can improve public safety response time. Sprawl development or development that negatively impacts the transportation system can reduce response times.*

**Utilize land use planning to preserve and enhance life safety response time.** *Land use decisions will involve emergency personnel to ensure adequate space for emergency vehicles and access for emergencies.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends approval of an interim use permit (IUP) for the installation of a 165 foot tall tower to increase the capacity of wireless data transmission in the area; located at 785 Louise Lane NW and on parcel 31.02144.00.

Approval is recommended with the following findings of fact and conditions:

1. A land use permit shall be obtained from JPB Staff prior to the installation or construction of the tower.
2. Any additional antennas or alterations in antennas that will increase the height shall require approval of an IUP amendment from the JPB.

3. An FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration shall be submitted to the FAA, Southwest Regional Office within five (5) days after construction reaches its greatest height.
4. Any markings and/or lightings installed on the tower shall be in accordance with the FAA Advisory circular 70./7460-1 L Change 1.

**Public Hearing opened at 6:19 p.m.**

Verizon representative Rick Adams described his years of experience working in northern Minnesota, and the preference of locating towers within Beltrami County because restrictions are fewer than in the JPB area. This particular site was selected because of the hole in coverage illustrated on the report diagram. More coverage is needed and Verizon is working on developing more sites in Bemidji. Adams stated that the FCC heavily regulates towers for safety and emissions, then explained that newer devices emit lower frequency exposure than older devices, and the higher the tower height also results in lower exposure. Adams further described the design of the tower construction and how only the top of the tower could fall over, hinged but still attached, and would not entirely collapse. Commissioner Miller asked if Verizon will rent space at this site to other providers, and Adams explained it was designed for multi-tenant use. Commissioner Smith sought confirmation that no propane handling activities are occurring on this site. Adams affirmed this and stated he had met with the landowner and toured the site. Smith stated that he supports this IUP. Commissioner Steffen stated that he has no problem with the tower height, but questions if it will be problematic for small plane traffic, and asked if the 5G system will interfere with radio communications. Adam explained that this is a 4G tower and that the FCC is aware of the proposed frequency and tower height. Steffen stated his support for this IUP.

**Public Hearing closed at 6:34 p.m.**

Motion by Steffen, second by Smith to recommend approval of an interim use permit (IUP) for the installation of a 165 foot tall tower to increase the capacity of wireless data transmission in the area; located at 785 Louise Lane NW and on parcel 31.02144.00.

Approval is recommended with the following findings of fact and conditions:

1. A land use permit shall be obtained from JPB Staff prior to the installation or construction of the tower.
2. Any additional antennas or alterations in antennas that will increase the height shall require approval of an IUP amendment from the JPB.
3. An FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration shall be submitted to the FAA, Southwest Regional Office within five (5) days after construction reaches its greatest height.
4. Any markings and/or lightings installed on the tower shall be in accordance with the FAA Advisory circular 70./7460-1 L Change 1.

**Findings of Fact**

1. **Whether the proposed use adversely affects the public safety, health, morals, convenience and general welfare of the occupants of the surrounding land.**  
No. The proposed use is not anticipated to adversely affect, nor create an unreasonable

level of disruption or interference upon the surrounding area. The Verizon cell tower will provide better service in the area for residents and businesses.

**2. Whether the proposed use adversely affects traffic conditions and parking on adjacent streets and land.**

No. The use of a tower with antennas will not generate any additional traffic in the general area. No impacts are anticipated with the air traffic from the Bemidji Regional Airport as well.

**3. Whether the proposed use adversely affects property in the surrounding area.**

No. The proposed use is not anticipated to adversely affect, nor create an unreasonable level of disruption or interference upon the surrounding area. The tower and antennas will provide for a better network coverage, performance, as well as reliability surrounding the Bemidji area.

**4. Whether the proposed use is in conformance with the community's Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Ordinance.**

Yes. The proposed use is consistent with the goals and policies of the Greater Bemidji Area Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance as well as the Comprehensive Plan. Per Section 302 and 1022 of the Ordinance, towers over seventy-five (75) feet in height are allowed with an approved interim use permit and the issuance of land use permit or building permit.

**5. Whether adequate utility, drainage and other such necessary facilities have been or can be provided.**

Yes. The adequate facilities can be provided; however, these services are not applicable to this use.

Ayes: Granlund, Smith, Miller, Lemmer, Heinonen, David, Steffen, Faver, Berg

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion carried unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**DIRECTOR REPORT**

Mai provided updates on last month's planning cases as well as proposed cases, year to date activities, and development project progress. Mai also anticipates that the July JPC meeting will be held in person in the Council Chambers. He also announced the staff resignation of Terri Ball, effective July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**UPCOMING MEETING DATES:**

July 8, 2020	6:00 pm	JPB Regular Meeting
July 23, 2020	6:00 pm	JPC Regular Meeting
August 12, 2020	6:00 pm	JBP Regular Meeting
August 27, 2020	6:00 pm	JPC Regular Meeting

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, motion by Steffen, second by Smith, to adjourn the Regular Planning Commission meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Ball  
Planning Administrative Assistant

Approved and attested by:



Joint Planning Commission Representative