

**CITY OF TAFT PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 18, 2015**

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 P.M.

The February 18, 2015, regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Taft, held in the City of Taft Council Chamber, 209 E. Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268, was opened by Chairman Ron Orrin at [6:08:53 PM](#). The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Orrin, and invocation was given by Rodney Wikoff, of the Nazarene Church.

PRESENT: Chairman Ron Orrin and Vice Chairman Robert Thompson;
Commissioners Shannon Jones and Bob Leikam and Jerry Livingston.
Planning and Community Development Director Mark Staples;
City Attorney Jason Epperson, City Clerk Yvette Mayfield.

- 1. OATH ADMINISTERED TO NEWLY APPOINTED PLANNING COMMISSIONER**
- 2. CITIZEN REQUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

- 3. MINUTES**
January 21, 2015 Regular

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Jones to approve Minutes as submitted.

AYES: Thompson, Jones, Leikam, Orrin
ABSTAINED: Livingston
PASSED: 4-0 with 1 abstention

- 4. PUBLIC HEARING – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2014-19**

Planning Director Staples read his staff report and recommendation.

Leslie Robidoux from Little Architects was present to answer any questions on behalf of the applicant.

Thompson asked what exterior materials were used on the kiosk and was told that it is a prefab box with pebble decoration.

Orrin asked if it would be visually distracting to drivers and was told there were no flashing or moving lights or anything that would cause distraction.

The Public Hearing was opened at [6:23:41 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents. Seeing none, the public hearing was closed.

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Leikam to Adopt Resolution 2015-01 approving Conditional Use Permit 2014-19 to install a new Bank of America ATM walk-up kiosk at an existing commercial parking lot, on the southeast corner of a 0.76 acre lot with an existing 4,448 square foot multi-tenant commercial building, within the General Commercial (GC) Zone District located at 900 Kern Street

AYES: Thompson, Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Orrin
PASSED: 5-0

5. PUBLIC HEARING – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2014-15

Planning Director Staples read the staff report and recommendation and also stated that he had spoke with the applicant since the preparation of the report and they are willing to move the enclosure away from the property line to provide more design flexibility.

Michelle Ellis with Complete Wireless Consulting was present representing Verizon Wireless, the applicant, along with Roger Miller the property owner and both confirmed the agreement to relocate the lease area. Ms. Ellis stated that the original oil derrick proposed was 84 feet but that the tree would be 92.5 feet because it has to have a top and she provided drawings and samples of the product that would be used for the tree. She also shared that the reason that the Taft Police Department and Airport area is being addressed is that they have identified them as the area with the heaviest usage of Verizon and least coverage stating that when there is high volume usage going on in those areas there is poor service and calls are more likely to be dropped and that is the reason for the proposed height. She also explained that they could drop the height of the tree by 4 feet per their Radio Frequency Engineer and still keep the coverage.

Commissioner Livingston stated it wasn't necessarily the location but how unattractive the base is that concerns him and asked about fencing options. Ms. Ellis addressed this and stated that there are several options for fencing and they could easily change what was proposed for fencing.

Commissioner Orrin specified that in looking at the coverage maps provided it does not appear to him that the additional 20 feet on the tree is providing that much more coverage area, that it would be out of the norm for the area it's being proposed in and he believed it would be the tallest structure in town.

Commissioner Leikam asked what the height of the tree approved at OT's and was told that it was 65 feet.

Director Staples stated that the tallest building in the area was the Best Western at approximately 42 feet.

Commissioner Jones asked if in order to get the additional coverage is this the only location that can meet this need or did they look at different areas. Ms. Ellis replied that they actually looked at 21 different parcels but ran in to different issues from either the landowners not wanting to work with them to not having the radio frequency coverage and narrowed it down to this being the best parcel available to them.

Commissioner Thompson asked if height is what is needed for coverage why are they not looking to go outside of town to the two highest points and place a tower there and Ms. Ellis answered that there are already towers located in those areas and providing coverage and a tower can only provide coverage so far out and coverage can be used up by users in that area.

The Public Hearing was opened at [6:46:48 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents.

Mike Long of 508 Center Street and President of the Downtown Taft Business Administration shared he felt compelled to say something due to the esthetics, although he understands the need for the tower he is concerned about the tree not looking like any of the trees downtown and being much taller than any other structure in the area stating that he is not saying that they are opposed to the tower only that they are concerned about the esthetics as they are trying to redevelop the downtown area.

Bob Jordan of 303 E. San Emidio Street had a question regarding the other towers that were talked about being approved in 2013 and wanted to know if there would be towers shooting up all over town. Director Staples stated that the other two towers approved have not been installed as of yet and one of the approvals has already expired.

Ms. Ellis also shared that Verizon is always amiable to colocation meaning that if other carriers were interested in leasing and placing their equipment on their monopine tower that could be an option.

Commissioner Orrin asked about possible landscaping around the structure and Ms. Ellis stated that they would have to talk to the landowner about maintenance before being able to commit.

Commissioner Leikam asked the landowner if he had a preference on where the tower was located on the property and he specified that he was open to placing it wherever recommended for approval but preferred not to have it placed on the 10th Street side of the parcel.

The Public Hearing was closed at [7:03:43 PM](#).

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Leikam to Adopt Resolution 2015-02 approving Conditional Use Permit 2014-15 to construct an 84-foot stealth monopine wireless telecommunications facility, for Verizon Wireless, within a 1,250 square foot lease area, on a 0.96 acre lot, within the Downtown Commercial (DC) Zone District located at 800 Main Street and direct staff to work with applicant, property owner and PG&E for placement of the tower on the property and bring back to Commission at next meeting.

AYES: Thompson, Leikam, Jones
NOES: Livingston, Orrin
PASSED: 3-2-0

- After the vote Commissioner Jones asked to change her vote to “NO” changing the final vote tally to:

AYES: Thompson, Leikam
NOES: Jones, Livingston, Orrin
FAILED: 2-3-0

- A new motion was presented by Commissioner Livingston, in order to discuss decreasing the height of the tower to 64-feet.

Motion: Moved by Livingston, seconded by Jones to Adopt Resolution 2015-02 approving Conditional Use Permit 2014-15 to construct an 64-foot stealth monopine wireless telecommunications facility, for Verizon Wireless, within a 1,250 square foot lease area, on a 0.96 acre lot, within the Downtown Commercial (DC) Zone District located at 800 Main Street and direct staff to work with applicant, property owner and PG&E for placement of the tower on the property and bring back to Commission at next meeting.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he had no problem with the project whether 84 or 64 feet tall but was concerned that as a matter of economics that Verizon might not see it beneficial to move forward with the reduced height.

Commissioner Leikam commented that he didn't think that standing out at the street level that anyone would be able to look up and say that is a 64-foot versus an 84-foot tree.

Ms. Ellis shared renderings of the different tower styles with the commissioners so they could see the different options.

There were various discussions on the different style options and heights of various buildings and landmarks around town.

Ms. Ellis commented that she was given direction from Verizon that the taller tower was needed for coverage based off the information provided by their Radio Frequency Specialist and that she would have to go back to them if a shorter tower was requested and could not state that it is economically feasible for Verizon to pursue the shorter version. She also asked that the Commission please give her specifics for what additional information they would like for her to bring back to them so that she could request it of Verizon.

Chairman Orrin asked that Ms. Ellis bring back calculations for a 64-foot tower allowing them time to take the information to the Downtown Business Association and the Council before making a decision. He stated that he doesn't believe that any of the Commissioners are against the project but they need to see the coverage difference quantified.

Planning Director Staples was given direction to collect this information and bring this item back at the next meeting.

Commissioner Livingston withdrew his motion.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2015-02

The Public Hearing was opened at [8:15:09 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents. Seeing none the Public Hearing was closed.

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Leikam to Adopt Resolution 2015-03 approving Conditional Use Permit 2015-02 to upgrade the Taft Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) through maintenance-related measures to improve serviceability, reliability, and equipment performance, with no proposed changes in WWTP process or capacity, located on two properties totaling 42.46 acres approximately 800 feet southwest of the intersection of Airport Road and Ash Street

AYES: Thompson, Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Orrin
PASSED: 5-0

7. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 2015-01 – HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE 2013-2023

No update given. Director Staples stated that he would give update at next meeting.

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Staples introduced Brenda Johns, the new Office Assistant in the Planning Department.

9. CITY ATTORNEY STATEMENTS

There were none.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone who attended the Chamber Installation Dinner and shared that the annual State of the City Luncheon is coming up in April.

Chairman Orrin shared that he is bothered by the increase in vagrancy and believes that we have a serious situation with the Proposition 47 criminals.

11. IDENTIFICATION OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Commissioner Livingston was selected to be the representative to the City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct it was moved by Jones, seconded by Leikam and approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at [8:26:21 PM](#).

Yvette Mayfield, City Clerk

Ron Orrin, Chairman