Highland Township Planning Commission Record of the 1394th Meeting December 1, 2022

Roll Call:

Scott Green, Chairperson Eugene H. Beach, Jr Grant Charlick Kevin Curtis Chris Heyn Beth Lewis Roscoe Smith Scott Temple - absent Russ Tierney - absent

Also Present:

Elizabeth J Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 14

Chairman Scott Green called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Hearing

Agenda Item #1:

Parcel # 11-24-176-004

Zoning: ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential

Address: Duck Lake Pines Park—1241 N. Duck Lake Rd

File#: URSA 22-02

Request: Use Requiring Special Use Approval for Wireless Communication Facility

Applicant: C&W Consultants on behalf of Verizon Wireless

Owner: Charter Township of Highland

Mr. Green invited the applicant to provide a brief overview of the project. Mr. Colton Curtis and Mr. Jon Crane of C&W Consultants were present. Mr. Colton Curtis explained that the project would include a 197 foot high monopole in a fenced enclosure within a 100 foot by 100 foot ground lease area in the southeast quadrant of the park. The fenced area will have a gravel surface. The access to the lease area is primarily along a paved path, which would be widened as necessary with aggregate to provide a suitable surface for construction equipment. The location was selected with input of the Township Supervisor to minimize disruption to park users.

Mr. Green noted that the Planning Commission was charged with reviewing the land use only. The Board will be reviewing the terms of the lease agreement that revenues from the lease would be specifically dedicated to the maintenance and approval of this park. Mr. Green opened the public hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Melissa and Steven Dasevich; 2558 Pinery Circle. Mr. and Mrs. Dasevich noted first that they understood that there is demonstrated need to improve cellular service in this area of the M-59 corridor, and that they could appreciate that the tower will generate a revenue stream for the support of the park. But they also described their concerns that the proposed location of the cell tower was an undue burden to the residents along the south and west property lines, and that promises had been made when the park was first

developed, that all development activity would be directed to the north quadrants the park, adjacent to the commercial zoned areas. Mrs. Dasevich supplied a map outlining some alternative locations nearer the parking lot that would be less visually intrusive to the neighborhood.

Mr. Dasevich also asked about the footprint of the cell tower enclosure, since other facilities seem to have a smaller footprint, and asked why it is all gravel surfaced.

Mr. Crane explained that the while the lease area is 100 foot by 100 foot, the compound is only about 60 by 60 feet, which allows for future expansion and collocations. The entire compound is gravel surfaced for maintenance considerations, but areas outside the compound would be left in their natural state.

Mr. Dasevich asked why the enclosure is not located near the existing parking lot, to limit the travel into the park. Mr. Crane explained that many of the other areas identified on the map supplied by the Dasevich's would impact future development plans for other ball fields or include more challenging topography.

Ms. Corwin read an email from Bill Pavlak on Pinery Circle who also expressed concern that the cell tower would be unsightly and suggested other areas should be considered.

Mr. Beach asked if the concern of the Dasevich family related only to the visual impacts of the cell tower, since the neighborhood is nearly one quarter mile away. He noted that limiting the tower to 197 feet allowed for the cell tower to be constructed without the lights otherwise required by the Federal Aviation Agency. Mr. Beach noted that the questions about why one area was selected over another in the park would be best directed to the Board of Trustees. The Planning Commission must balance the need of the broader community for improved cellular service against these concerns noted today. He noted that if not the park, then the revenues could pass to a private concern and not provide the additional public benefit.

Mr. Charlick asked for an explanation of the use of the path. He was confident the path would not stand up to the loads of heavy equipment. He thought the applicant did a good job limiting the footprint, but wondered who was responsible for maintenance of the path. Mr. Crane admitted that they equipment would probably destroy the path, but they expect to replace it. Mr. Beach noted that maintenance of the path would be included in the lease agreement.

Mr. Beach thought that the use itself is a very straightforward issue. The use of cell phones in our society is ubiquitous, and there is a demonstrated gap in coverage in this area, since the nearest cell towers are miles away.

Mr. Green suggested that the alternate locations identified by the Dasevich family carried some merit, especially location 1 near the entrance to the park. Mr. Kevin Curtis noted that he has spent some time reviewing conditions at the park, and that the topographic concerns on that side of the park are considerable. The path selected is less invasive to the operation of the park.

Mr. Beach made a motion to recommend special approval of land use for a wireless facility for Duck Lake Pines Park, parcel 11-24-176-004 upon the finding that the proposed use is consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Charlick supported the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Curtis – yes; Mr. Charlick – yes; Mr. Heyn – yes; Mr. Beach – yes; Mr. Green – yes; Mr. Beach – yes; Mr. Smith - yes. The motion was approved with seven yes votes.

Agenda Item #2:

Parcel # 11-24-176-004

Zoning: ARR, Agricultural and Rural Residential

Address: Duck Lake Pines Park—1241 N. Duck Lake Rd

File#: SPR 22-12 Request: Site Plan Review

Applicant: C&W Consultants on behalf of Verizon Wireless

Owner: Charter Township of Highland

Mr. Beach asked if the footprint of the site plan would remain essentially the same if the location within the park were altered. Mr. Crane agreed that the general layout would remain unchanged. Mr. Beach noted that in Ms. Corwin's memorandum she noted that the supplemental landscaping would be required if upon completion, the site proved to be inadequately screened. He noted that this general condition would carry to an alternate site within the park.

Mr. Beach moved to conditionally approve the proposed site plan for a wireless communication facility in Duck Lake Park subject to the following: 1) approval of the land use by the Township Board; 2) the understanding that the general framework of the facility can be considered a template for the layout and improvements such that should the Board of Trustees choose to alter the location, the applicant need not appear before the Planning Commission unless staff finds a material difference requiring additional review and approval. Mr. Green supported the motion. Mr. Curtis – yes; Mrs. Lewis-yes; Mr. Beach – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Charlick – yes; Mr. Green -yes; Mr. Heyn – yes. The motion was approved with seven yes votes.

Agenda Item #3: Committee Updates

Zoning Board of Appeals:

Township Board:

Highland Downtown Development Authority:

Planning Director's Update

Committee updates were discussed.

Agenda Ítem #4: Minutes: November 3, 2022

Mr. Beach moved to approve the minutes of November 3, 2022, as corrected. Mr. Curtis supported the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Beach announced his retirement from the Planning Commission with a brief summary of the work completed by the Commission during his tenure and an encouragement to the members to carry on the work of the Planning Commission. Mr. Beach served the community as a Planning Commission member for forty years, including 25 years as the Chairman, and under six different supervisors. He joined the Planning Commission during the effort to draft the first Master Plan for the community, and is rightfully proud that the framework laid then is still relevant today.

At 8:20 p.m., Mr. Beach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Green supported the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary ARS/ejc