



**OAK RIDGE PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING  
DECEMBER 16, 2021 - 7:00 P.M.  
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present**

Nancy Stoudemire, Chair  
Jason Streck, Vice Chair  
Ron Simpson  
Patti Paslaru  
Patrick Fiorentino  
Larry Stafford

**Staff Present**

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk  
Sean Taylor, Planning Director

**Board Members Absent**

Tammy Gardner  
Maureena Shepherd, Alternate  
Rick Schlaginhaufen, Alternate  
Megan Dyson, Alternate

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Stoudemire at 7:00 p.m.

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

*Jason Streck moved to approve the agenda, and Patti Paslaru seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (6-0).*

**3. APPROVE MINUTES**

*Jason Streck motioned to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2021 meeting, and Patrick Fiorentino seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (6-0).*

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**SP-21-04:** Communications Tower Group, LLC Ballantyne One, 15720 Brixham Hill Avenue, Suite 300, Charlotte, NC 28277 (Dale Finocchi, representative), requested approval of a site plan for a new Stealth Wireless Communications Facility (Monopine Tower) and associated equipment. The property, at 2309 Oak Ridge Road, is located at the intersection of NC 68 and Oak Ridge Road. It is Guilford County Tax Parcel 166211 consisting of approximately 39 acres, zoned PI (Public and Institutional), Scenic Corridor Overlay, Greensboro (GW-III) watershed. It is owned by Oak Ridge Foundation Inc.

Planning Director Sean Taylor read the property address into the record and asked that the staff report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes, be accepted as presented.

Stoudemire reminded attendees that this was not a public hearing.

Dale Finocchi, 2020 Walker Avenue, Greensboro, introduced himself and said he represented the company building the tower, who was working with Verizon. He said he was available to answer any questions from the Board.

Ron Simpson noted that the proposed facility, which he assumed was a cell tower, is 180 feet tall and the surrounding trees are 65 feet. He said he did not recall approving a cell tower that was so tall in relationship to the trees. Taylor said much of the reason for the height of the tower was due to the grade of the property. He said a lot of the trees that had been measured were sitting on a higher grade than where the tower would be located, which would account for some of the elevation.

Finocchi with the exact height of the trees would be determined in the tree survey, which was forthcoming, and that the grade of the property was how the company had determined the proposed height of the tower. Despite the height, he said the tower would essentially not be visible. He said along with the grade, another factor is the size of the property. He said the tower would be 1,300 feet from the intersection, 700 feet from the rear of the property, and 400 feet from NC 68. He said there was a great deal of space between the proposed tower location and the road. He referred the Board to the photographs included in the packet. He said the tower would be built in a downhill area that was a vast distance from anything else.

Paslaru said that, in looking at the photos, the height did not appear to be extreme to her.

Finocchi added that in places where the tower was visible, it meets regulations.

Patrick Fiorentino asked that someone explain the difference between "stealth" and "camouflage" in regard to cell towers. Taylor said he was trying to understand the difference, but some would say that "camouflage" would be totally invisible, like a camouflaged hunter in the woods. He said "stealth" basically meant it was there, but no one would know it. Finocchi added that "stealth" had to do with incorporating a tower into other structures, while "camouflage" was related to the tower itself. Fiorentino asked if the proposed tower meets the definition for "camouflage," and Finocchi said yes.

Larry Stafford said that the proposed monopine structure would still look like a "Charlie Brown Christmas tree."

Taylor said cell phone companies had realized there is a big gap in coverage around the NC 68/NC 150 intersection. He said because the intersection is the busiest place in Oak Ridge, it was almost an infrastructure need.

Simpson asked Steve Wilson, Oak Ridge Military Academy president, if the Town had approved a cell phone tower on Wilson's personal property fairly recently, and Wilson said yes. Wilson said at the Academy they had looked at three or four different sites on the campus, and the biggest concern was whether it would be visible. He said in this location, it would be in a wooded area and behind the gym.

Streck said the location seemed pretty far from the roads, and it seemed as if the tower would be minimalistic in relationship to some other cell phone towers he had seen.

Stoudemire asked how much clearing would need to be in done in the area around where the tower would be located. Finocchi said the area chosen was already partially cleared due to trees that had fallen, so the company would primarily just be cleaning that area out. He said the least amount of area needed would be 100-foot-by-100-feet, but again said most of the area was already cleared.

*Jason Streck made a motion to conditionally approve SP-21-04 pending the technical review by staff. Patti Paslaru seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (6-0).*

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

*Patti Paslaru moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Jason Streck seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (6-0).*

