



# City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council  
Chambers  
44 East Downer Place  
Aurora, Illinois 60505  
www.aurora-il.org

## Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday  
September 18, 2019  
7:00 PM

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### CALL TO ORDER

*Chairman Pilmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.*

### ROLL CALL

*The following Commission members were present: Chairman Pilmer, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Elsbree, Mr. Gonzales, Mrs. Head, Mrs. Owusu-Safo and Mr. Reynolds. Ms. Tidwell called in and excused herself from the meeting. Mr. Hull was absent.*

### OTHERS PRESENT

*The following staff members were present: Mr. Sieben, Mrs. Vacek, and Mr. Broadwell.*

*Others Present: Ray Shinkle (Insite), Joe Lusk (1111 Charles Street) and Bruce Goldsmith (Dykema).*

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**19-0791**

Approval of the Minutes for the Planning Commission meeting on September 4, 2019.

**A motion was made by Mr. Chambers, seconded by Mr. Elsbree, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried.**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

*Chairman Pilmer said if you are here for an item that does not appear on the agenda and you wish to speak to the Commission, we can give you 3 minutes to do so.*

*No one came forward.*

### AGENDA

[19-0715](#)

An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Telecommunication Facility (4211) Use on Lot 1 of the West Aurora High School Subdivision,

located at 1201 West New York Street (Insite & T-Mobile - 19-0715 / AU20/2-19.011-Su/R - SB - Ward 2019.011) (PUBLIC HEARING)

*Mr. Broadwell said this is a Special Use for a Telecommunication Facility at the West Aurora High School. Some details of this proposal include the installation of the telecommunication facility, which is in the form of an antenna array and then also the equipment shed at the base of the pole. The light pole itself will be a 120 foot tall light pole. They are going to replace one of the existing light poles near the football field and just build a new pole and add the antenna array on top of that. If you have any questions about the legislative history, you can see that in the Property Research Sheet. We do have a Petitioner here from Insite and T-Mobile who is requesting the Special Use. You can see in your Legistar packet kind of a site plan and elevations of the proposal. That will explain everything here. A few of the details of the proposal in regard to the telecommunications Special Use is that the tower itself does not exceed the 150 foot maximum allowed under an Administrative Review, which is one of the requirements for the Special Use. That the facility is also not within the separation that's required from other similar telecommunication facilities, which I think the closest telecommunication tower is approximately 3,300 feet and it also does not encroach the minimum required setback, which is the total height of the telecommunication facility to the property line. You can also see in your Legistar packet that the Petitioner has submitted documentation that the tower will be designed in a way that eliminates any visual intrusiveness. Again, it is just attached to the very top of the light pole, so unless you are looking at it directly you won't notice that there is an antenna right there. In regard to the Special Use itself, one of the things that I tried to do here in the staff report is outline the requirements that it is meeting to necessitate the Special Use. The first one is that if the tower is less than 500 feet from the closest residential structure/residential district then they need to apply for the Special Use, which is why we are here today. This tower is approximately 450 feet from the nearest residential property. So that is the first. The second is the availability of suitable existing communication facilities or other structures. The Petitioner has demonstrated that the construction of the facility will meet the needs to cover the need for improved data coverage and infrastructure for this area in Aurora, which is why this site was chosen.*

*The Petitioner was sworn in.*

*My name is Ray Shinkle. My address is 1089 Orwentsia Court in Naperville, Illinois. I am here with Insite representing T-Mobile. Steve did a nice job in his staff report kind of summing everything up and I'm sure most of you are familiar with these types of facilities, so I'll try and be brief and then answer any questions you have. T-Mobile is here basically to keep up with the demand for seamless wireless coverage. Though they launched their network in the late 90's, they are constantly working with their sales and marketing team and their engineering team to see where customer complaints or demands are coming from or where the network might be struggling with a lot of data. As you all know, and probably everyone in this room has got one of these phones, it has really become part of our lifestyle. It is not just a matter of making phone calls. It is texting, e-mailing. This is now almost our prime camera source, so we are testing and uploading photos and videos to social media and accessing the Internet, so it is a tremendous strain on the network. You also have more and more people cutting their landlines and using this as their only source of communication, so it is very important that T-Mobile keep up with the demand not only for the daily activities of the residents of Aurora, but also for the health and safety of the public knowing that over 70% of 911 calls are made from wireless devices. So you have a troubled area where you have surrounding sites with sectors pointing into the area right around Aurora West High School. It is getting a tremendous amount of wireless traffic and we are co-located, T-Mobile is co-located, on towers and rooftops surrounding this area, but*

those sectors are getting close to being maxed out at certain times of the day, so the only way to offload that traffic is to add another site in the area in order to keep up with that demand. One of the challenges that you have as you get into a lot of these areas is we are already in the commercial or industrial areas where we are trying to penetrate and improve coverage near the residential areas. There is typically not a lot of existing structures. Nobody wants a new tower, so we look for existing towers, rooftops, water tanks, anything where we can co-locate. We didn't have that luxury here, but what we did have are the existing light poles at the Aurora West High School, which are already part of the visual landscape. This has been a very popular design that adds a minimal impact, but has a big impact for the wireless coverage and is something that the city just approved recently in the last 2 or 3 years with Aurora Catholic High School at Stuart Football Field, a very similar design that Verizon erected and there are other high schools where we have augmented the light poles and just put the antennas on top. You saw in the staff report and the application that it definitely has an impact on the coverage and solves the issue for T-Mobile. Having it be a School District is kind of a win/win situation. Not only is it kind of in harmony with the code as far as close to being a co-location, but also solves T-Mobile's coverage area and then also the rent revenue goes back to the community, so it is nice. I'm here to answer any questions that you have regarding T-Mobile's site selection process or the site that we've designed and presented to you tonight.

Mr. Gonzales said I have a question for you. So the towers that are being put up and the new antennas, are these 4G or are they 5G networking?

Mr. Shinkle said I think it will be a mix of both. It is probably going to be 4G and 5G. They will be prepping for the future. 5G is something that is coming so now they are going to build it for new sites and all existing sites are being upgraded as well.

Mr. Gonzales said is any additional buildout or change to the control boxes going to happen if it goes into the 5G?

Mr. Shinkle said no. That is all within the lease area, so that is already built for that capability.

Mrs. Owusu-Safo said I have a question. I'm familiar with seeing these in commercial or maybe industrial areas. Is there any frequency exposures that is of concern since it is at a high school and children and so forth?

Mr. Shinkle said to answer your question, no. This site will be well below the permissible level set by the FCC. It is a requirement for T-Mobile, but these antennas do exist all around. You'd be surprised to see how close. You probably drive by these sites every day and don't realize how close they are, but we are well within, probably within a mile of existing sites all surrounding this. Again, you have Aurora Catholic High School as one of those sites. You have Waubonsie High School with a cell tower right on campus right behind it. I could go through almost all the high schools. There is so much wireless activity. If they don't have an antenna facility on campus they have one probably right across the street serving it. This has really become part of the landscape and necessity in order for these phones to work.

Chairman Pilmer said I just have a quick question for staff. So the Petition is for atop 1 light pole, but with the co-location is there an opportunity to expand that to all 4?

Mr. Broadwell said there is the opportunity for co-location.

*Mr. Sieben said I believe though your question, the co-location would be on the one. Ray maybe you can answer that regarding co-location.*

*Mr. Shinkle said yes, that's a really good question. What we are proposing is kind of a stealth facility. The idea is to blend in with the other light poles that are there. What we've done at a number of other high schools in order to keep the symmetry is to keep the tower height as close to the other light poles as possible and if another carrier were to come and express the same interest, the School District would then lease another one of the light poles at the same height in order to keep it symmetrical. If you build one light pole to hold 4 additional carriers, you're talking about going from 120 feet to 180 feet and it just kind of loses that aesthetic that we are looking for here. I provided a picture of other high schools where we've done this and it's been very successful. Then the revenue does go back to the School District as well.*

*Mr. Sieben said Mr. Chairman I think your question was could they go on other light poles around the field. The answer would be no without a new Special Use.*

*Chairman Pilmer said they would have to come back to do pole #2, pole #3 and pole #4?*

*Mr. Sieben said yes.*

*Chairman Pilmer said thank you.*

*The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. The witnesses were sworn in.*

*I'm Joe Lusk. I'm representing my mom at 1111 Charles Street, which is 3 houses from the high school. Ray explained that it is a 30 year lease. What percentage then is increments from the 30 years for increase? Is anybody else from T-Mobile, can they have Verizon go on the tower too or is it just T-Mobile itself? They have said at one time for West Aurora they were going to expand to the west. Does it have any implications for expansion of the parking lot with this operation? This money goes all to West Aurora High School for them to disperse as needed, is that correct? Do we have to go to the School Board to find out how much money and what they are going to do with the money?*

*Chairman Pilmer said well you may. That might be something the Petitioner will have to answer. We'll try to answer as many of these as possible with the help of staff and the Petitioner to answer them.*

*Mr. Shinkle said to answer your questions regarding the revenue, yes that would have to be, I would imagine the School Board. It's all public information so anyone could go address the School Board or FOIA the School Board to find out, but it is a 5 year agreement with 5 renewals, so it is a 30 year agreement. As far as the financials and how the School District is going to distribute that money I have no idea, so that would be something that would have to be addressed with the School Board, but our lease agreement is with the School District, not with West Aurora High School. As far as expansion, I know that we spent months on working on a design and making sure that this is something that would work for the School District. I don't think the football stadium is going anywhere, so I imagine the light poles are pretty safe. I can't imagine that they would be looking to take that down.*

*Chairman Pilmer said then can you just explain the co-locating again?*

*Mr. Shinkle said again, what the School District and T-Mobile have designed is this tower is for T-Mobile only. But they wrote a letter and submitted it with the packet that any other carriers, whether it is Verizon, AT&T or Sprint, if they have the same coverage issue and desire to co-locate on campus, they will agree to lease one of the other light poles and mirror what T-Mobile has designed in order to keep it symmetrical. That application will have to go through the same process that T-Mobile is going through, but again, it's in harmony with the code that keeps it symmetrical and we think keeps it a stealth design versus a 200 foot tower and hope that someone comes along.*

*The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.*

*Mr. Broadwell said staff would recommend approval of the Ordinance granting a Special Use Permit for a Telecommunication Facility use on Lot 1 of the West Aurora High School Subdivision located at 1201 W. New York Street.*

*MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Chambers*

*MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Anderson*

*AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Elsabee, Mr. Gonzales, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, Mr. Reynolds*

*NAYS: None*

*PASS: Mrs. Head*

#### *FINDINGS OF FACT*

*1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?*

*Mr. Chambers said yes and these are listed in the staff report.*

*2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?*

*Mr. Reynolds said it is a good use for the subject property.*

*3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?*

*Mr. Reynolds said again, it is a good use for the property.*

*4. Will the proposal maintain a compatible relationship with the traffic pattern and traffic volume of adjacent streets and not have an adverse effect upon traffic or pedestrian movement and safety in the general area of the property in question?*

*Mrs. Owusu-Safo said there should be no impact to traffic due to this proposal.*

*5. Will the proposal allow for the provision of adequate public services and facilities to the property in question and have no adverse effect upon existing public services*

*and facilities?*

*Mrs. Anderson said there should be no effect.*

*6. Does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to maximize pedestrian and vehicular circulation ease and safety, minimize traffic congestion, and not substantially increase the congestion in the public streets?*

*Mr. Chambers said this should not have any adverse effect on any of the traffic flow or traffic patterns.*

*9a. Will the special use not preclude the normal and orderly development of improvement of surrounding properties due to the saturation or concentration of similar uses in the general area?*

*Mr. Cameron said there should be no effect.*

*9b. Is the special use in all other respects in conformance to the applicable regulations in the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Plan Commission?*

*Mr. Chambers said yes.*

*14a. Are the goals set forth in Section 19-65 being better served by allowing a height of the proposed communications facility above what is allowed as an Administrative Review (Sec. 19-70)?*

*Chairman Pilmer said I would say these goals have been met.*

*14b. Are the goals set forth in Section 19-65 being better served by allowing a reduction in the separation of the communications facility from residential structures and/or residential district boundaries (Sec. 19-68, p.1)?*

*Chairman Pilmer said again, there is a Special Use within 500 feet of residential, but I would overall say these goals have been met.*

*14c. Are the goals set forth in Section 19-65 being better served by allowing a reduction in the separation of the communications facility from other communication facilities?*

*Chairman Pilmer said I would say yes.*

*14d. Are the goals set forth in Section 19-65 being better served by allowing a reduction in the facility setback requirement from any adjoining lot?*

*Mrs. Owusu-Safo said I believe it met the setback requirements.*

*14e. Are the goals set forth in Section 19-65 being better served with a design of the communications facility with particular reference to design characteristics that have the effect of reducing or eliminating visual obtrusiveness?*

*Mrs. Head said yes, those goals were met.*

14f. Is there the availability of suitable existing communications facilities, other structures, or alternative technologies not requiring the use of towers or structures that would better serve the goals of the article?

Chairman Pilmer said I think they are repurposing existing structures that are in place and will have minimal change to the surrounding area.

Mr. Broadwell said this will next be heard at the Building, Zoning and Economic Development Committee on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.

**A motion was made by Mr. Chambers, seconded Mrs. Anderson, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 9/25/2019. The motion carried.**

[19-0761](#)

A Building, Zoning and Economic Development Resolution Approving a Final Plan on Lot 1 of Aurora University 2nd Resubdivision located at 1433 Prairie Street for a Student Success Center (Aurora University - 19-0761 / AU20/3-19.132-Fpn - TV - Ward 4)

Mrs. Vacek said Aurora University is requesting approval of a Final Plan. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing house and driveway at 1433 Prairie Street and then the construction of a 7,320 square foot Student Success Center. As part of the proposal, they will be doing a structured detention system, which will be proposed right along Prairie Street right in front of the Success Center. This will fulfill their stormwater requirements. There are building elevations and landscaping in your packet, so you can take a look at those. The elevation is a combination of stone and cedar siding. I'll turn it over to the Petitioner unless you have any questions for me. Just to note too, the Student Success Center is shown on their Master Plan, so it is in keeping with their Master Plan.

Good evening. I'm Bruce Goldsmith with Dykema law firm representing Aurora University. With me is Carmella Moran, Vice President. I just wanted to give a few of you who are new to the Commission a very brief history of the master planning for Aurora University. Aurora University was originally limited in development of property south of about Kensington Street, so it significantly reduced its capability of expanding. With the first Master Plan that we did some time ago, we opened up the land from Gladstone to Randall Road down to Prairie and then in the second Master Plan we moved all the way over to Evanslawn, so that took the whole south campus from Gladstone to Evanslawn. With these Master Plans, we put a set of locations on the property that could be future buildings. This is one of the areas where a location was identified. This building is a multi-purpose building. It will be used for a variety of University purposes as well as it probably will house where the Board of Directors meet and have other meeting functions. It is right south of and slightly west of the parking deck that is being constructed currently and it is fully consistent with the Master Plan, so that's why we are here on a Final Plan. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend conditional approval of the Building, Zoning and Economic Development Resolution approving a Final Plan on Lot 1 of Aurora University 2nd Resubdivision located at 1433 Prairie Street for the Student Success Center with the following condition:

1. That the approval of the Final Plan be contingent upon Final Engineering approval.

*Mr. Cameron said just a question. Do we have any idea on what the timeframe is for completion of the parking lot?*

*Mr. Goldsmith said the parking lot is on schedule to be completed in November.*

*Mr. Sieben said do you mean the deck?*

*Mrs. Vacek said the deck.*

*Mr. Goldsmith said and just for people who may not have heard in the approval process, it is a 503 car parking deck that will substantially increase on-campus parking.*

*Mr. Cameron said I would like to comment that I'm pleased with the brick and the exterior of it compared to the first drawing that we had where it was 400 feet in a wildly painted block facility.*

*Mr. Goldsmith said design is a process and it took a little time to get where the University wanted it too. The façade brick really did make a difference.*

*MOTION OF CONDITIONAL APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Cameron*

*MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Chambers*

*AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Elsabee, Mr. Gonzales, Mrs. Head, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, Mr. Reynolds*

*NAYS: None*

*Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Building, Zoning and Economic Development Committee on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.*

**A motion was made by Mr. Cameron, seconded by Mr. Chambers, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 9/25/2019. The motion carried.**

## **PENDING**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Mr. Sieben said our next meeting will be October 2nd. The only item will be the Zoning Text Amendment related to the recreational cannabis State Act. We will have a proposed Text Amendment for you by the end of next week.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Mrs. Head, seconded by Mrs. Anderson, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Pilmer adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.**

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