

APPROVED MINUTES

EDEN PRAIRIE PLANNING COMMISSION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018

**7:00 PM—CITY CENTER
Council Chambers
8080 Mitchell Road**

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

John Kirk, Charles Weber, Ann Higgins, Andrew Pieper, Ed Farr, Mark Freiberg, Michael DeSanctis, Christopher Villarreal, Carole Mette

CITY STAFF:

Julie Klima, City Planner
Matthew Bourne, Manager of Parks and Natural Resources;
Kristin Harley, Recording Secretary

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Pieper called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Farr was absent.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Kirk moved, seconded by Weber to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED 8-0.**

IV. MINUTES

MOTION: DeSanctis moved, seconded by Higgins to approve the minutes of November 19, 2018. **MOTION CARRIED 8-0.**

V. INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

VI. PUBLIC MEETINGS

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

**A. XCEL FIELD AREA NETWORK (FAN) MONOPOLE/ANTENNA
INSTALLATION SITE PLAN (2018-24) AND VARIANCE #2018-05**

Location: 12580 Technology Drive

Request for:

- Site Plan Review on 12.16 acres

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- Variance to permit a monopole tower at 165 feet. City Code maximum is 150 feet.

Chris Rogers, Principal Land Rights Agent at Xcel Energy displayed a PowerPoint and explained the application. It proposed creating a Field Area Network (FAN) to allow the substation to communicate wirelessly with Xcel's customers. Rogers introduced Chris Searles, FAN Planning Engineer, explained the configuration of the network served by the monopole. Rogers added Xcel's customers will have smart meters installed, allowing the proposed tower to monitor usage, outages, etc. via a proprietary language. Searles explained this would allow for a faster bandwidth and quicker response to customers' needs. This was a pilot program to be expanded throughout the Metropolitan Area.

DeSanctis asked if Xcel anticipated any interruption of cell service in the area, and Searles replied cell service was a different bandwidth. Rogers explained this was a specific network that would not impact others, including cellular. Mette asked if this program would interfere with other emerging smart technologies used in residents' homes. Searles replied this bandwidth was between the frequencies used for those, so there would be no issues or interruptions. This would be part of a larger network including Westgate, Hiawatha West, and Midtown Feeder network hubs and could also feed information to residents' meters and interrogate them. The network would reach the Viking's substation and south toward the Flying Cloud Airport. This monopole would be 165 feet; each substation requires a different height.

Higgins asked if this height was at maximum, and Searles replied Xcel had a tower in Colorado at 195 feet, and other towers were even taller, depending on the requirements of the site. Villarreal asked if the towers acted as a "mesh" allowing the others to transmit and receive data in the event one tower did not function. Searles replied this was not the case; however, the technology would allow the signal to find another path to complete itself. This was a situation best avoided. Villarreal asked how far away the monopole would be from the 345 kV line. Rogers indicated the location of the 345 kV tower on the overhead view, potentially a couple hundred feet. It would also be more than 25 feet from the line that ran along Highway 5.

Klima presented the staff report. Xcel Energy was requesting a site plan review to construct a new monopole, as it would be impractical to remove the high voltage power lines to accommodate the FAN antenna on the existing 165-foot tower. A height of 165 feet was required to accomplish the program goal.

Pieper asked if Klima knew where the original code requirement of 150 feet came from. Klima replied staff conducted research and found back when the City was establishing height requirements staff looked at as to how other communities addressed this question, and the City opted for the 150 foot as it was within the

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range found (150-160 feet). There was at least one other tower in Eden Prairie that had a height variance.

Mette asked the heights of the other towers shown in the presentation. Searles replied those were 10-12 feet high at most. DeSanctis noted the FAA did not require lighting on top of the tower, yet it was in proximity to Flying Cloud Airport, and asked if Xcel anticipated any line of sight concerns. Searles replied Xcel had worked closely with the FCC which communicated with the FAA, and there were no concerns as the tower was in no local flight path. Rogers noted there was a letter in the commissioners' packets explaining no need for lighting.

MOTION: Higgins moved, seconded by Freiberg to close the public hearing.
MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

MOTION: Villarreal moved, seconded by Kirk to recommend approval of the Site Plan Review on 12.16 acres based on the information contained in the December 5, 2018 staff report and plans stamp dated October 26, 2018.
MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

MOTION: Kirk moved, seconded by Villarreal to approve Variance #2018-06 to permit a monopole tower at 165 feet based on the information contained in the December 5, 2018 staff report and plans stamp dated October 26, 2018.
MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

VIII. PLANNERS' REPORT

Klima presented discussion items from the 2019 Planning Commission Work Plan: charter statement, roles and responsibilities, and goals for each quarter. First quarter identified Aspire 2040 implementation strategies; the second quarter identified code amendments and the Parks zoning district needed to align current policies with the Aspire 2040 Plan; the third and fourth quarters identified further code amendments and policy clean-up needed, as well as a training curriculum for Planning Commission members beyond the current conflict-of-interest curriculum, incorporating current commissioners' recommendations and a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Villarreal noted ventilation requirements forbade unique dining experiences such as the Korean Barbeque, and asked where were the opportunities to find creative solutions that follow code yet did not stifle unique cultural experiences. Klima replied this was a question more about the building codes than the zoning regulations. This would be out of scope for chapters 11 and 12 but she could have a conversation with the building officials. Villarreal emphasized again the planning for electric vehicles charging, such as DC fast-charging, and urged an effort to identify optimal locations for these. Klima replied staff could reach out to the point people in the organizations involved in this effort and explore possibilities.

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MOTION: Villarreal moved, seconded by DeSantis to approve the 2019 Planning Commission Work Plan. **MOTION CARRIED 8-0.**

IX. MEMBERS' REPORTS

Pieper thanked Freiberg, newly elected to the City Council, for his service. Freiberg thanked the Planning Commission for its hard work.

X. CONTINUING BUSINESS

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Freiberg moved, seconded by Kirk and Weber simultaneously to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION CARRIED 8-0.** Chair Pieper adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.