

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2005**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District  
Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District  
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District  
Laurie Frost Wilson, At-Large  
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Walter A. Alcorn, At-Large  
Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Catherine Belter, Springfield District  
Kathy Smith, Sully District  
Tessie Wilson, Braddock District

**OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

James R. Hart, At-Large  
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District  
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District  
Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

David Marshall, Assistant Director, Planning Division,  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
Dean Tistadt, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Facilities and Transportation  
Services (FTS), Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)  
Marguerite Verville, Business Process Analyst, FTS, FCPS  
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission

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The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Suzanne F. Harsel, in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room of the Fairfax County Government Center, at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 20035.

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Chairman Harsel introduced Marguerite Verville, who was new to the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services (FTS), Fairfax County Public Schools.

Chairman Harsel noted that a federal judge had recently ruled against a San Diego, California ordinance regarding the location of monopoles because it was in violation of the Telecommunications Act.

Dean Tistadt distributed the wireless telecommunications facilities policy that had been adopted by the Fairfax County School Board on April 15, 2005, a copy of which is in the date file.

Commissioner Murphy reviewed the history of monopoles in the County and said the Board of Supervisors had established a Telecommunications Task Force which he had been chairing. He explained that the Task Force had been comprised of three elements: 1) citizens; 2) industry representatives; and 3) landowners such as the School Board, Water Authority, Park Authority, Virginia Department of Transportation, and Dominion Power. He explained that it was beneficial to the County for telecommunication devices to be logically placed on public land as opposed to being placed in proximity to residential communities where there would be a greater impact. Commissioner Murphy indicated that the Board of Supervisors had approved a Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance regarding the location of telecommunication facilities in the County which had both been revised in the early 1990s. He stated that after meetings with Department of Planning and Zoning and FTS staff, he and Mr. Tistadt had agreed that the current procedures for obtaining approval of telecommunications facilities had to be revised due to other issues regarding monopoles at schools. He commented that the new School Board policy would help streamline the process to ensure that the District Commissioners were informed of potential sites as early as possible.

Mr. Tistadt explained that the School Board policy would limit telecommunication devices to certain locations where they would not be aesthetically intrusive because they would be integrated into existing vertical structures such as light stands or power transmission poles.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Tistadt noted that there had been cases where an existing light stand had been removed and replaced by a monopole with hanging lights. Ms. Verville pointed out that recent monopoles had not been placed on current light structures.

Mr. Tistadt said it had not been well advised to locate monopoles on small properties such as elementary schools. He then outlined the draft "Procedures for Seeking Approval of Telecommunications Monopoles and Associated Facilities," a copy of which is in the date file.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Tistadt concurred that FTS would also send written notice to the Board Supervisor representing the district where the site was proposed to be located.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Tistadt said it would be up to the school's principal to decide whether every Parent Teacher Association (PTA) member or only the Executive Board would be notified. Catherine Belter suggested that this be specified in the draft procedures and Chairman Harsel agreed.

Commissioner Wilson pointed out that PTAs had different ways of notifying its members either through special notification or an electronic mailing list, but said she believed that flyers sent home with the students was an effective method. Tessie Wilson disagreed, noting that the flyer method would not work with high school students. Kathy Smith added that there would always be people who did not receive notification.

Ms. Wilson recommended that the phrase “at the school’s discretion” be added at the end of Paragraph C, Sentence 1 under Section II of the draft procedures. Commissioner Wilson replied that she was not opposed to this recommendation, but noted that the PTA was separate from the school’s principal who had the authority to select the method of notification such as via the school website or newsletter.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that the more channels of communication the more likely all residents in the local community would be notified.

Mr. Tistadt told the Committee that he would present their suggestions and comments to the Superintendent of the County Schools.

Commissioner Murphy pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan encouraged the placement of telecommunications facilities on school properties. He said he expected that the school’s principal would be aware of how the PTA communicated with the parents.

Chairman Harsel noted that if it was anticipated that a certain application would generate a lot of public interest, the Commission would encourage the use of balloon tests on the proposed site.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Chairman Harsel explained that after an application had been presented before the Planning Commission, it would be forwarded to the School Board for information. Ms. Wilson indicated that in many cases, the school had held a voluntary meeting to inform the local community that there was a proposal to construct a monopole on the school site.

In response to a question from Mr. Tistadt, Chairman Harsel said it was important that the community at least be heard, but noted that they would need to understand that an application could not be denied due to health concerns.

Mr. Tistadt finished outlining the draft procedures for approval of monopoles.

Commissioner Murphy explained that the procedures were not exclusionary because the Commission would ensure that balloon tests and at least one community meeting would be conducted. He expressed the need to streamline the process so that the Commission became involved at the appropriate time and not after the application had been completed.

Responding to a question from Commissioner de la Fe, Ms. Wilson said the intent of the School Board policy had been to place telecommunications facilities primarily on high school sites, although it had not been specifically limited.

In response to a question from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Tistadt indicated that nothing had been written expressly to prohibit monopoles at elementary schools, but that it was unlikely.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Hart, Mr. Tistadt stated that the draft procedures would be forwarded along with the Committee feedback to the Superintendent who would then revise the procedures and forward them to the School Board in the next few weeks. He added that he would distribute the revised procedures to the Committee.

In response to a question from Commissioner Koch, Mr. Tistadt explained that the proposal to integrate a monopole into an existing power pole on a property across the street from Westfield High School had been deferred until it was determined that it would not limit the use of the property.

Responding to questions from Chairman Harsel, Ms. Verville noted that as referenced in Section IV of the draft procedures, the same notification process would occur when different carriers expressed interest in co-locating on an existing monopole.

In response to further questions from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Tistadt indicated that the same procedures up to and including School Board approval would be followed when a request to extend the height of an existing monopole was received. However, he said the same procedures, excluding School Board approval, would be followed when a request to add an antenna on an existing pole without a change in its height was received. Ms. Verville concurred.

Commissioner de la Fe pointed out that the Commission could approve additional co-location at the time of the initial 2232 application, which would then return as a "feature shown."

Chairman Harsel commented that there were certain telecommunications carriers that did not notify the Commission of upcoming applications. Mr. Tistadt replied that the revised process would dramatically improve the communication between the Commission and applicants.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Ms. Verville said it was not appropriate to include a policy prohibiting the use of barbed wire at telecommunications facilities within the procedures, but noted that there were construction standards that prohibited its use.

Ms. Wilson reported that through the use of proffer money, the School Board and the Board of Supervisors had fully funded the installation of Automated External Defibrillators in every school and public building in Fairfax County. She added that Inova would be donating some of the training on the devices.

Commissioner Wilson requested to see the final language regarding cash proffers because she said there would be a case tonight regarding this issue.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wilson, Chairman Harsel explained that the General Assembly had mandated that cash proffers only be used toward Capital Improvement Program items because they were voluntary.

Responding to another question from Commissioner Wilson, Commissioner de la Fe stated that an applicant could not specify whether the money proffered for schools would be used toward operational items, but this contribution could be an addition to the proffers.

Chairman Harsel announced that she would schedule another Committee meeting at the beginning of November.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.  
Suzanne F. Harsel, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Fairfax County, Virginia Planning Commission Office.

Meeting by: Linda B. Rodeffer  
Minutes by: Kara A. DeArrastia

Approved on: January 18, 2006

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission