

**City of Columbus**  
**Public Hearing – 13932 Lake Drive CUP Application (PC-15-101)**  
**Applicant: Verizon Wireless**  
**January 7, 2015**

The January 7, 2015 Public Hearing to receive testimony regarding the request of Verizon Wireless for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a 130-foot tall communications tower at 13932 Lake Drive, Columbus, MN was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Myron Organ, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council members Bill Krebs and Jeff Duraine; James Watson, Charlie Wilson, Rob Osterberg, Dorothy Staples, and Lewis Martin.

**Sternberg:** And now we will have a Public Hearing and discussion for 13932 Lake Drive CUP application request, pages 1 through 53. And at this time I'd like to ask the recording secretary to read the notice as published.

Notice was read at this time.

**Sternberg:** Thank you. At this time I'd like to ask the applicants to please come forward to the front table, and, if you could, state your name and address for the record, please.

**Martin:** Yes. My name is Lewis Martin, of Martin Consulting.

**Sternberg:** Okay.

**Martin:** My address is 424 El Camino Drive, Frisco, Texas 75034.

**Sternberg:** Thank you. And, can you please explain to us what it is that you're asking this evening?

**Martin:** Yes. Verizon Wireless, their network, as the application would show, is...are you gonna? Am I in the way of it? (referring to overhead)

**Commission members:** No.

**Wolowski:** You can have a seat.

**Martin:** Okay. Perfect. Um, they've studied the area. They've looked at, basically, the RF engineers have done a professional study internally, and they've targeted several areas throughout the state of Minnesota that needed to be addressed, because of the increasing call volume, lack of service, and stuff like that. This was one of the areas that was identified. This search area, if you look at it, which that clearly identifies there (referring to map on overhead). We went through and looked, and tried to find some existing towers. As a part of my application we showed that all the towers—I think there were five towers—two of them we're on, one of them we're right beside, and the other two are so far of a distance

away, that they would have, basically, negligible impact. I mean they would have no impact on...even if we did put antennas on it, it wouldn't provide service to this area. So we tried to go about it being smart. We looked at prop., we looked for existing buildings or existing towers first. We then didn't find any. Our next step was to try to talk with, and I've been in touch with Elizabeth consistently. Where did she go? There she is. Elizabeth, and, uh, several people throughout the town, just trying to figure out, 'Is there any new towers going up in the area?' 'Has anything been approved that we could wait for, and let that go up?' There was nothing. And so, after that was...those resources were exhausted, we're left with trying to construct something that would be...minimize the impact to any type of residential neighborhoods. By doing that --a way of doing that is to locate it at some type of business or something that's construction or industrial, which, this is the property where this is located -- it is. We also placed it, pretty much as far back as we could, away from the road, so it won't have any impact, visibility-wise, to the street. So we tried to be smart about that as well. Uh, Rice Creek Watershed District rendered a verdict of, we'd have no impact on it. It doesn't exceed any of their thresholds. So, basically, we went back as far as we could on the property, number one. But, at the same time, not impacting the water retention ponds at the rear of the property. So, this...you look at the construction drawings provided by Design One, a professional surveyor -- professional engineering firm in the state of Minnesota. You can see that this tower has been designed to adequately meet Verizon's needs, and it could also, uh, provide for potential co-location for future tenants, should they decide they would want to locate on this tower. So, that's kind of a brief overview of why I'm here today requesting permission from the Planning Commission for this proposal. And as a -- this is an f.y.i. -- my, this search started for me in February of last year. So, I went through a search in February, March and April, got in contact with the current property owner here, probably May, June-ish. Started -- that's when I was talking with Elizabeth; we've been talking since May or June.

**Mursko:** Yup.

**Martin:** And, it's not something we tried to rush. We try to do it at an appropriate speed. We're not trying to force anything down anyone's throat, but we want to, we want to do something that's smart, so...

**Sternberg:** Okay. Does the Planning Commission have any questions?

**Krebs:** What radius does this cover then, once your tower is up?

**Martin:** There's a propagation map. They design 'em...different towers are kind of dif—are designed for different purposes.

**Krebs:** Mm-hmm.

**Martin:** Typically -- this is for edification purposes -- towers are either built for coverage or capacity.

**Krebs:** Okay.

**Martin:** So, if you have an area that doesn't have any service, they're, they want it for the coverage. Well then you may have a tower three miles down here and three miles down here, and then, in the

center, there's no, you know, there's no coverage could happen. But then once -- if they extend the signal, you have too many people using it, they need it for capacity. This tower is for both. So, it's like a double hit. And, Verizon doesn't spend money to build towers. They don't take that decision lightly. It's honestly a last resort. So, if they could have used an existing structure at a quarter of the cost -- penny-pinching company -- they definitely would have done that. So, um, I would like to refer you to the maps, to kind of show you... 'cause it's really a great indication of what area would be covered. It would be the letter from Verizon's engineer, and the top of it says, 'Justification of Need for a New Tower and Reasons for the Exclusions of All the Adjacent Towers.' It was prepared by Jordan Alstad, one of the engineers. Page...

**Preiner:** 27.

**Krebs:** 27. Yup.

**Wolowski:** 27 in the...?

**Krebs:** In our, in our book...

**Martin:** This page is the first page.

**Wolowski:** Okay.

**Martin:** And then the second page would be the one that's attached...uh, it's blue, kind of.

**Krebs:** Yup.

**Martin:** You can see, if you look at the center of the page, in very light reading, anything in white is considered deficient. So, at the center of the page there's something called Aragorn. If any of you all have ever watched 'The Hobbit' or 'Lord of the Rings,' I guess some of these engineers have a sense of humor. A bunch of my sites are named Gimli, Legolas, Ara..., all these characters from... So people are like, 'Isn't that Lord of the Rings?' So, I was going to beat you to the punch. But, where it says Aragorn, that area where it says there's no tower in the area, it kind of shows what the coverage is there, on page two. When you go to page three, you can then see how that blue just fills in. Boom. It pops in there and fills that out. So...and if you go to the next page, which is page four -- that was my exclusion analysis, why we tried to use 'em. Um, a tower would have to be, honestly, within half a mile or three-quarters of a mile for it to even be considered to try to try to make it work. Anything over a mile just, it really wouldn't work for what they're trying to do here, because it's not a 200-foot tower, it's not a 300-foot tower. You see the height. It's rather small. So, if you look at that first one. I'll put it -- alternate one: 3.47 miles away. The second one's 1.81 miles away. The third one is ¼ mile away, but we're already there. The fourth one is 5 miles away, and the fifth one is—we're on that tower already. So, I tried to put all the towers within a, you know, I think it was like a five-mile radius or something like that. So, I wanted to show you that we didn't take this lightly, as well.

**Sternberg:** Any other questions?

**Preiner:** Um, yeah. Mr. Chair. When would you begin construction and when would you expect it to be finished?

**Martin:** What would happen (knocked on the table)...get past the Planning Commission meeting tonight, then go for, once the City Council, if they approved it (knocked on table). And then, once that would happen, it would then go...I would have to file for my building permit. Once I got my building permit, we would then give it to our construction team. So that, right there, is probably at least a couple months right there. The construction team, once the spring started, they would put it, and they'd assign groups. Like, they'll give one professionally bonded, insured construction team maybe ten sites to build. They'll give a second one ten sites to build. So, I don't know at this time what phase it would be put in, but the goal is to have it up by – to start construction by mid-summer probably, or sooner. But, for us to, for Verizon, in order for them to order the equipment in the tower, their own finance department requires that the site be zoning approved, where they can do that. Otherwise they'd be ordering a whole bunch of towers and stuff laying around that never got approved by the cities. So...

**Preiner:** Very good.

**Martin:** It wouldn't be two years, and it's definitely not going to be two months. I would definitely anticipate it being sometime between the summer – if something, weather was a variant -- potentially the late summer, but that's what they're looking for.

**Wolowski:** I have just a quick question. How long does it take for you to put that up?

**Martin:** Um, they'll have some equipment on site, which will probably take for the...they can actually stack the tower itself in a day. So, I'm going to tell you two days, in case there's something there. The build out for the foundation and everything runs about three weeks. But, what's nice is, the property's commercial, so the property's already being used for commercial purposes. So we're going to be using the existing road, the existing driveway. So there wouldn't be any impact to like traffic or any impact to anything that's going on in there. So it'll all be contained on the property for which we're leasing the land. So, I would anticipate, once the foundation was up, the tower could be up. They'll let that cure. Obviously, you know, you want to do that. And then, once your cure period is over, as deemed by a professional engineer, they'll stack it with a crane. They'll send a crew out that'll put the antennas on top of there. We'll run, there'll be fiber cables down to the equipment shelter, which is outlined in the drawing provided by Design One – this sheet of paper. And, on the drawings you can see, if you look at A1, which is the second page of that document, very bottom, right-hand corner. Here is the first and second page. If you'll look at the second page, please? You'll be able to see that there's like that lease area, and there's a rectangle. That's where the equipment will be housed inside of it. And there's a little circle there that outlines that's where the center of the tower would be. And then at the bottom of the page, it kind of shows you the property as a whole, the long rectangular property of where it would be – on the very far back part of the property, meeting all setbacks that are required by the City of Columbus, as I received the document from the City – the two different documents, I think it was from Lorie Lemieux, she said that the engineer said that it did meet all the setbacks in fact.

**Sternberg:** Any further questions?

**Krebs:** So you did... May I ask, Mr. Chair? Um, you did see the findings of facts and the recommendations that were... or permit conditions that were set forth by, uh, our Planner, our City Planner?

**Martin:** Yes, Ma'am. And they all seem reasonable, with one clarification. Um, Elizabeth, you did point out that about the tower, Verizon would prefer not to paint it. We found out most... some municipalities have done that – I've been doing this for 20 years, since 1995, and I can tell you how many municipalities say, 'That's the biggest mistake we made.' Because, in five years, if it starts flaking or something, people start complaining. Then you've got... what are you gonna do then? It's galvanized, which is supposed to be rust-proof. Most of the poles out there... it's so low anyway, you... I would strongly recommend... Verizon even asked me to ask you that as well, is that we don't paint this tower, because that would just – it's a long-term maintenance issue. Very similar to the way the highway departments -- their poles they have. I've talked to probably at least 20 different DOT supervisors in probably 15 different states, and they all say, 'Oh, you do not want to paint that. That is the biggest maintenance nightmare.' So, that would be appreciated if that was not...

**Sternberg:** Our other tower is not painted, correct?

**Wolowski:** Right.

**Mursko:** Correct.

**Sternberg:** It's just galvanized steel.

**Mursko:** And that was determined by the Planning Commission and Council, that, not to paint that.

**Martin:** I would politely and kindly request that same determination for this, please.

**Sternberg:** Yeah. I think it would, I think he's correct. I mean, pretty soon you'd have flaking paint, and it would look worse than a non-painted structure.

**Martin:** And, you know, there's, since 1978 they don't make residential paint with lead, but commercial paint has it. So then, you have to deal with that, and that's something the City, the property owner – I can pretty much vouch for him—and myself, we, none of us want to deal with that unnecessarily. That would be my recommendation, please.

**Sternberg:** Okay. Well thank you, sir.

**Martin:** Appreciate it. I'd like to thank each of you for your time this evening.

**Wolowski:** Thank you.

**Sternberg:** And, at this time, I'd like to open the meeting to the public. If there's anybody here from the public to speak on the matter, you can please come forward. Okay, no one from the public. I'm gonna close the public hearing with the right to re-open if it becomes necessary.

Hearing closed at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary