

Text Change – Chatham County Communication Tower Ordinance

Public Hearing Input on proposed change taken on July 18, 2005

From: David LeGrys, former Planning Board Member and ordinance author.

To: Planning Director, Chatham County

I have concerns with the proposed text change to allow 300-foot towers in Ordinance areas 2 and 3 when a “substantial” need exists. The text change is too vague and will result in unneeded introduction of 300’ towers in these areas.

I strongly support the provision of telecommunication services for our fire and emergency personnel and urge that the application that accompanies this text change be approved as a variance (procedure described in the ordinance) or with a much more narrowly focused text amendment targeted at Chatham Emergency Services with special language for the technology in use.

300’ Towers are not always the best option and are not required. Take a look at the tower placement and signal coverage map provided by Cingular in 2005. It is difficult to see the differences (if any) in coverage between the 199’ and 300’ towers for this provider. There are many technical issues why this is the case, but the map shows this point clearly. Then look at the towers on HW 64 between Pittsboro and Siler City. These are 300’ towers and have significant coverage gaps between them. A better solution is illustrated by the placement of the 199’ towers on HW 751. More, well-placed 199’ towers are better.

300’ Towers Impact Property Values. When we developed the Ordinance and when we considered the towers on HW 64 and HW 15/501, I was told that property owners who wished to develop their property were concerned that large, lighted towers were very undesirable and would reduce their business opportunities. (I know that the cellular industry can produce experts to say otherwise, but we listened to the local landowners). This was one of the reasons we limited the 300’ towers to Area #1.

Restricting 300’ Towers follows the Land Development Plan. This plan calls for the protection of rural character. The use of 199’ monopole towers are less intrusive and do not have lights.

Personal Note. It might be suggested that by opposing this text change, I am not supportive of our Chatham Firemen. My father was a member of my hometown Volunteer Fire Company. He died in the line of duty while fighting a fire. Please believe me, I want the Chatham Firefighters to have whatever they need. I just want things done right.

