

PLANNING & ZONING REVIEW NOTES

IX. B.

SUBJECT:

A request by Brenton W. McConkey, Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP, on behalf of **Crown Castle International** to locate communication towers within Chatham County for the 2007 tower plan as follows: 199 ft. self supporting on NC 42 east of Corinth area 3; 199 ft. self supporting on west side of Big Woods Road near Hugh Stone's land area 3; 199 ft. self supporting on east side of Old Graham Road and north of Russell Chapel Rd. Area #3

ATTACHMENTS:

Included in the June 18, 2007 public hearing packet: Please notify the Planning Department if additional copies are needed.

1. Search ring maps and letter of requests
2. Email correspondence from Jeff Bandini
3. Email correspondence from David LeGrys
4. Color map provided by Allison Weakley with Planning Dept. commentary noted at the bottom.
5. Map prepared by Planning Dept. showing ½ mile search ring area in connection with Significant Wildlife Heritage Areas noted.

The following can be viewed on the Planning Department webpage at www.co.chatham.nc.us under Planning, Rezoning & Subdivision Cases, 2007:

4. Public hearing sign up sheet
5. Information provided by Allison Weakley regarding the Big Woods Rd. area site
6. **Revised** RF coverage maps for the NC Hwy 42 site
7. Propagation maps concerning water tower usage

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND:

A public hearing was held June 18, 2007. Due to time constraints, the Planning Board removed this item from the July 10, 2007 agenda and rescheduled for the July 31, 2007 special meeting. The request was then tabled by the Planning Board to seek additional clarification on the coverage areas for the NC Hwy 42 search area. That information has been received and may be viewed on the webpage.

Each year the county receives requests from cellular phone companies or other companies, who construct towers, about their plans for expansion of service within Chatham County. This year Crown Castle is proposing three (3) 199 foot towers at three (3) locations. A provider has not been identified for this portion of the search ring request but will be specified during the permitting process.

Re: Crown Castle International

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS:

Crown Castle submitted a request for three towers in the following search ring areas. The proposed towers meet the requirements for height maximums as stated in Article III Section 3-2 Area #3 specifics of the Chatham County Telecommunications Ordinance. The proposed towers requested have the following numbers and are in the following approximate locations of the projected search ring: 7897-3555 located around the south side of NC Hwy 42 in Corinth; 7904-3579v2 located in the area of Big Woods Rd. approximately on or near Jordan Hills Loop Rd.; and 7920-3577 located in the area east of Old Graham Rd. and north of Russell's Chapel Rd. The requests have been reviewed by previous Planning Board Chairman Dave LeGrys who authored the county communication tower ordinance. The ordinance recommends that towers be of the maximum height to facilitate any future collocation. After reviewing the radio frequency coverage maps, it is Dave's opinion that the proposed tower search ring areas are justified.

The search ring area for proposed tower number 7897-3555 located off NC Hwy 42 is next to a submitted search ring approval for Chase Real Estate Services on behalf of Sprint. Per email correspondence previously submitted with this request, it is stated both search rings are needed in order to "fill in" the gap and provide better coverage for this area. The Planning Department requested an "RF" map showing these two towers and the extension of each service area to ensure they are in fact "filling in the gap" and not overlapping coverage. The maps were received and Mr. LeGrys also reviewed them. It is Mr. LeGrys' and Planning staff's opinion both towers are needed to supply service to these areas. The overlap is minimal and required in hopes to eliminate drop areas between the two towers.

The search ring area for proposed tower number 7904-3579v2 located off Big Woods Rd near Jordan Hills Loop Rd. has been reviewed. It has been asked of Crown Castle whether or not they entertained a possible site to be located on the Chatham County water tower located on Jack Bennett Rd. behind North Chatham Elementary School. This site has also been reviewed for the impact a communications tower might have on sensitive environmental areas as seen on the map from Allison Weakley attached to this request. Our findings are the site is not within any of the Significant Wildlife Heritage Areas. The ½ mile search ring area does encroach into the Bush Creek Marshes but the ordinance would not allow any towers to be built in this area. Mr. LeGrys also states the use of the water tower on Jack Bennett Road would not support the coverage area needed that this tower can provide.

At the public hearing there was a concern regarding a private air strip located within the search ring area of proposed tower number 7920-3577. Our findings conclude there is a private air strip located off Lutterloh Rd. The applicant has been advised of the location. Lighting of the tower is not permitted in this area. (See last paragraph of these notes.)

A concern regarding lighting was made at the public hearing. The Chatham County Telecommunications Ordinance allows lighting of towers only in the Area #1 locations. You may refer to Article IV Section 4-1.5 for reference. All three of these proposed towers are within Area #3 locations where lighting is not permitted.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Planning Department recommendation that the Crown Castle search rings requests for all three (3) towers numbered as 7904-3579v2, 7920-3577, and 7897-3555 be approved.