



**CHATHAM COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
AGENDA ABSTRACT**

**ITEM NUMBER:**  
**MEETING DATE:**  
9-3-08

**PART A**

**Subject:** A request by **Verticality, Inc.** to request search ring approvals for 6 proposed new cell towers in the county.

**Action Requested:** See Recommendations.

**Attachments:** *Included in the May 19, 2008 public hearing packet: Please notify the Planning Department if additional copies are needed.*

1. Letter of Request with location and height information for towers from Verticality, Inc.
2. Location map of proposed towers
3. Map of existing and proposed RF coverage
4. Maps of individual tower and search ring locations with existing and proposed RF coverage in areas

*The following can be viewed on the Planning Department webpage at [www.chathamnc.org/planning](http://www.chathamnc.org/planning) under Rezoning & Subdivision Cases, 2008:*

5. Public hearing sign up sheet
6. Planning Department map of proposed search ring locations
7. Email correspondence dated August 20, 2008 from Verticality
8. Four (4) propagation maps in relation to the water towers

**Submitted By:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Megginson, Planning Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**County Manager Review:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charlie Horne, County Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**This abstract requires review by:**

**County Attorney**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Reviewed

**Finance Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Reviewed

**Budget Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Reviewed

## PART B

**Re: Verticality, Inc.**

**Introduction / Background / Previous Board Actions: *(Updated information on the use of water towers can be viewed in the bold, italicized wording)***

*The Board of Commissioners voted at their meeting on June 16, 2008 to delay their decision, to provide time for the applicant to contact the Chatham County Utilities Department to see if locating antennas on two water towers could better serve the areas. Previously, Mr. Dave LeGrys, who serves as the consultant to Chatham County for search ring submissions, stated that he believed coverage would not be adequate by locating on the water towers because of their height and the topography of the land surrounding those water towers. The applicant contacted Mr. Roy Lowder with the Chatham County Utilities Department and it is the opinion of the applicant from propagation maps that a larger area would have coverage with the proposed cell tower locations verses minimal support from locating on the water towers. The Norwood water tank is 174 feet tall and the Big Woods are tower is 186 feet tall. Both tanks fall below what the tower ordinance requires for cell towers.*

A public hearing was held May 19, 2008. There were three speakers at the public hearing, including Mr. Ian Ormsher, representing the applicant, Mr. Gerald Smith, a resident living on Highway 87 approximately ¼ mile from the Gum Springs tower search ring, and Mr. Dave LeGrys, previous Planning Board member who volunteers annually to review the tower requests.

The Planning Board reviewed the submittal at their regular meeting on June 3, 2008 and recommended by a unanimous vote of 9-0 to approve the search rings for the six proposed tower locations. Some Planning Board members had a concern the towers that were proposed that are described as less than 199 feet might not be correctly reflected in the RF maps. There was also a concern that use of the county water towers on Jack Bennett and Mann's Chapel Roads had not been sufficiently examined. Planning staff has spoken with the representative from Verticality, Mr. Ian Ormsher, and he thinks they can have this requested information available for the Commissioners' meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The recommendation at the end of these notes reflects these issues.

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 Verticality, Inc. is proposing six (6) 180-foot to 199-foot tall towers at six (6) locations. A provider has not been identified for this portion of the search ring request but will be specified during the permitting process.

### **Issues for Further Discussion and Analysis:**

A public hearing was held May 19, 2008. There were three speakers at the public hearing, including Mr. Ian Ormsher, representing the applicant, Mr. Gerald Smith, a resident living on Highway 87 approximately ¼ mile from the Gum Springs tower search ring, and Mr. Dave LeGrys, previous Planning Board member who volunteers annually to review the tower requests.

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 Verticality, Inc. is proposing six (6) 180-foot to 199-foot tall towers at six (6) locations. A

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(CH\_H21, CH\_H22, CH\_H24, and CH\_H25) in Area #3 to be built at 180 feet. The other two towers Verticality is proposing in Area #2 and Area #3 will be built at 199 feet.

Article III, Section 3-2 (3) of the Chatham County Telecommunications Ordinance states “telecommunication towers may not be placed in any “Major Wildlife Areas” identified in the “Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Chatham County, North Carolina, 1992.” It appears that a portion of the search ring of tower CH\_H22 may fall within the Morgan Creek Floodplain Forest, as identified by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

Verticality, Inc. has provided RF coverage maps for the six proposed tower search rings showing the towers will provide coverage in existing gaps or improve coverage in areas where the existing coverage may not be adequate. During the public hearing Mr. Ian Ormesher stated that the company not only had the coverage maps prepared based on existing data, but also had a representative drive around the County with various phones to check the coverage provided by existing antennae locations. 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 co-location. After reviewing the radio frequency coverage maps, it is Dave’s opinion that the proposed tower search ring areas are justified.

**Recommendation:** It is the Planning Department and Planning Board recommendation that the Verticality, Inc. search ring requests for all six (6) towers sited as CH\_H21, CH\_H22, CH\_H24, CH\_H25, Gum Springs, and Brickhaven be approved with the condition that the location of any tower within the CH\_H22 search ring be located outside the identified North Carolina Natural Heritage Program site of Morgan Creek Floodplain Forest, that all towers be a minimum of 199 feet in height. The Planning Board recommends that new RF maps reflecting the 199 feet towers be provided. A review of the possible use of co-locations on two water towers, being Jack Bennett Rd. and Mann’s Chapel Rd., has been supplied as they relate to the respective, proposed tower locations. Propagation maps show the use of the water tanks would not be feasible in providing better coverage for the area therefore the proposed search ring to locate towers in those areas in lieu of locating on the water tanks are allowed as submitted.