CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Hamerly at the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

Present: Chair Randall Hamerly
Vice Chair John Gamboa
Commissioner Michael Hall
Commissioner Rich Haller
Commissioner Tamara Zaman

Absent: None

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
Ashiq Syed, Associate Planner
Nancy Stewart, Administrative Assistant III

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Hamerly.

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from November 6, 2018, Regular Meeting
   A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Gamboa, seconded by Commissioner Haller to approve the minutes, as submitted. Motion carried, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Design Review Application (DRA 018-010): a request to modify the antenna placement on an existing wireless telecommunication facility within Highland Community Park.

Community Development Director Mainez gave a review of the staff report, explaining it is a follow-up to the Planning Commission’s November 6 meeting. At that hearing, a Motion was made to approve, and the vote was two in favor, two against, with one Commissioner absent. As a result, the Motion failed and was considered No Action by the Planning Commission. On November 15, staff met with Commissioner Hall who was absent at the November 6 meeting, presented him with the design application and a copy of the minutes from that meeting, and answered questions as appropriate. As all five members of the Planning Commission are present tonight, it is appropriate to introduce a new Motion, though the public hearing should not be re-opened, as it was closed at the last meeting.
Chair Hamerly gave clarification regarding his objection to the proposal, stating this had been approved as a low-profile installation because of its high visibility in a prominent public park. The applicant at that time was able to get the height and level of service they had asked for, somewhat blending in with the existing light towers. What is proposed now is a conventional array, 12 foot diameter, with the assurance they are doing this so they can put even more of those assemblies on the same tower, which means it is a completely conventional installation. If this would have been proposed on their initial application, he would not have supported it. He feels that it is disingenuous for them to say now that it is built, they are going to propose an absolute conventional tower in the middle of the ballfield, and probably have two more 12 foot diameter arrays at lower elevations on the pole. He concurred with Commissioner Gamboa that it would be an eyesore in the middle of a public park, and there was no attempt to even make it low-profile. He feels they had not pursued a good-faith submittal on their first round if this was really where they wanted to go next, being so short after their initial approval.

Commissioner Haller shared his concern with regard to the 2-2 vote, inquiring whether that was a new policy or interpretation.

Community Development Director Mainez answered it is not a policy; the law requires a majority vote, and when you have a tie vote, the Motion technically is dead. Normally thereafter someone on the Commission would introduce or discuss further in an effort to then achieve a majority vote. If this situation should arise again, the options could be to have further discussion in the hopes of a different outcome, or make a Motion to continue the item.

Commissioner Zaman asked if the proposed application was the only option, or did they have another stealth or low profile option?

Associate Planner Syed stated right now the three levels of the antenna are each four feet in length. Those are being replaced with six feet, which is the next step up. The applicant is trying to keep it as compact as possible in terms of height at the 78 foot mark, but in terms of being stretched outward just for cell coverage, that is what has to be done.

Commissioner Gamboa stated there are options that can be stealth, but they were trying to mesh it in with the light tower at the time. With the 12 foot diameter array, there are other options that can be used, but not in that spot. It would have to be moved to a different location.

Commissioner Zaman stated the representative stated at the last meeting that these antennae would soon be obsolete. This would mean a choice of having either the 12 foot eyesore, or an obsolete pole in the middle of a ballpark; is that correct?

Chair Hamerly stated the obsolescence was the 5G.

Associate Planner Syed stated the proposed tower is not for 5G; it is to keep up with the current rate of speed. The current tower is unable to support that broadband anymore.

Community Development Director Mainez stated this is a license agreement, so in the event that the technology is no longer being used, the applicant would have to remove that structure and replace it with the sports lights that are currently out there.
Chair Hamerly stated the coverage maps shown on the initial application indicated the present array was capable of meeting the coverage needs the applicant had at the time. If the number of subscribers has increased and their bandwidth is not capable of keeping up with the demand based on the number of people accessing that tower, that is one issue, but the fact is they do now have the coverage level they were seeking with their initial application. That was why they were granted the 80 foot height, so they would have that coverage and fill in the hole that was in that part of the city. Exhibits showing present and proposed coverage and broadband support and were not included in the packet. It appears the applicant is just saying this is what is needed to keep up with the competition; the array is being moved up higher up on the pole to give better coverage, and the lower levels of this co-locatable tower would be filled by others. The initial application was for a co-locatable installation, so the technical side of it is what left him wondering why this wasn't part of the initial application. If it was not able to meet the needs, why was it proposed in the first place?

Associate Planner Syed stated in 2012 at the time of the initial propagation maps, there was a blank area of coverage which this current tower had been able to fill for the past six years. But due to the rate of their coverage increase, the applicant needs to relocate those lower level antennas to the upper level to maximize coverage, and in its current state, it cannot be co-located because there are already antennas at 66 feet and 72 feet. By removing those, it would allow co-location of another provider in that opened up area.

Chair Hamerly asked if there were to be 12 antennae and they redid the array and added one more antenna to each of the three levels giving them 12, would that give them the same coverage or service capability without clustering them in the 78 foot level with all 12 antennae having a 12 foot diameter array? Would the existing installation be capable of meeting their needs if it were not a co-locatable, if it were a single-use tower, and all 12 antennae were all for this applicant?

Associate Planner Syed answered no, it is just the newer technology in the six foot long antennas they are planning on putting in; that is what supports the current smart phone networks.

Chair Hamerly stated so they are also saying this would not be a viable co-locatable location if it would not meet the level of service unless all 12 antennae are at 78 foot level.

Associate Planner Syed stated Verizon would like to be at 78 feet; they are not concerned with the occupants or the coverage of the lower levels.

Chair Hamerly stated that is his point. If it is not possible for them to say install six antennae at 78 and six antennae at 66, it would still leave the lower level for somebody else for a double co-locatable antenna. The applicant is essentially saying that unless they can all be at the 78 foot height, this location would not be able to meet the needs.

Community Development Director Mainez stated if the city received a request from another applicant, it would be possible for a company that does 5G to be at the lower level. They could use a smaller facility that would connect to another small facility down the block.

Chair Hamerly stated he had heard they were going to start using light poles.
Community Development Director Mainez stated the city is taking over all of the lights. We already have a couple of requests to put facilities on the street lights, so that might be an opportunity to co-locate; a smaller facility with maybe a booster station of some sort. It is constantly changing. As Associate Planner Syed stated, this company is changing their facility to meet their needs. We don't know who would occupy below.

Commissioner Haller stated it is difficult to understand why they need 80 feet if they can put it on a street light.

Associate Planner Syed stated that is 5G.

Chair Hamerly stated but you will see a lot more installations; instead of one tower being able to hit two to four miles, now you will have these every mile. It is more like a net as opposed to a broadcast.

Commissioner Haller asked so unless the Resolution is in favor, we would have to direct staff to prepare a Resolution for next time that it was decided to vote no?

Community Development Director Mainez stated that is correct.

**A MOTION** was made by Commissioner Haller, seconded by Commissioner Hall to adopt a proposed resolution, approving Design Review Application (DRA 018-010) to modify the antenna placement on an existing wireless telecommunication facility and associated operating equipment subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact. Motion failed, 2-3, with Chair Hamerly, Vice Chair Gamboa and Commissioner Zaman dissenting.

**A SECOND MOTION** was made by Chair Hamerly, seconded by Vice Chair Gamboa to adopt a resolution denying Design Review Application (DRA 018-010) to modify the antenna placement on an existing wireless telecommunication facility and associated operating equipment subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact, and direct staff to bring back a modified resolution for denial, inclusive of findings to support denial. Motion carried, 4-1, with Commissioner Haller dissenting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

December 4, 2018 - Next Planning Commission meeting:

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly declared the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Submitted by: Nancy Stewart

Approved by: Randall Hamerly, Chair
Planning Commission

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