

Elmhurst Development, Planning & Zoning Committee Meeting

October 26, 2015

7:03pm – 9:07pm

32 Present; 1 Absent

26 Public; 6 Staff

Elmhurst College Student Observer: E. Berley

❖ **Chairman Levin called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.**

❖ **Business Before the Committee**

- **Please note:** items are out of order due to the length of cell tower discussion.
- **B. 15 P 15 Ole Auto Sales Conditional Use for Pylon**
 - Sign company and general manager present
 - Requesting approval for a pylon sign at 260 W. Grand placed in the middle of the building.
 - Approved based on the consistency of pylon signs among auto shops and it meets the requirements.
 - General manager and sign company were dismissed.
- **A. 15 P 14-PI Telecom Conditional Use for a Cellular Tower**
 - Request for 100ft mono-pine Cell tower at 520 E. Grand in Mount Emblem Cemetery.
 - **Public Comment:** A total of 24 people showed up to the meeting to voice their concerns about the cell tower. Many of the concerns were very similar. Flooding of the neighborhoods was discussed because a lot of the area already suffers from a flooding problem. The citizens believe that the cement at the base of the cell tower would leave the water with no way out of the neighborhood. Another concern about the tower was the appearance. The citizens are afraid that the displeasing look of the tower would make the property value of the area decrease. Citizens continued to express their concerns about traffic during the construction of the cell tower. The access road of the tower would also be located on Wrightwood, and residents of the road worried that this would create more complications. One resident expressed that he didn't see a need for a cell tower. A mother expressed her concern about the health issues that are created by cell towers. A common solution among the residents was that the company should find a different location for the tower. There was even a petition that was taken throughout the surrounding neighborhoods to show how passionate the residents feel about this project. A lot of people were extremely displeased, and made several accusations towards the city of Elmhurst, the tower company, and Mt. Emblem Cemetery. One resident suggested that all parties involved were being paid off by T-Mobile, and multiple people accused the city of Elmhurst of not taking care of its residents.
 - **Applicant Comment:** A lot of residents were very involved in this meeting, and definitely did their homework. A few took this opportunity to confront the applicant about questions and comments they had about the tower. The Chairman had to step in and remind them of the process of the meeting, and that each party would get a turn to speak. The applicant began by addressing all the issues that the residents explained. He explained that the flooding would not be worsened by the cell tower because they are not building it on the creek bed, like some citizens thought, and the tower needs to meet certain environmental standards that would not allow them to build it if it caused the flooding to worsen. Also, the company would be using gravel instead of what is usually used. This shows that the company is going above and beyond to make sure residents are happy. The company furthered this by planning to create retention storage underneath the tower, which might even help the flooding problem. He addressed the

decreasing property value issue by saying that the mono-pine design is not an eyesore, and he even referenced a study to prove that it isn't. The company is also spending an extra \$50,000 to create the tower "as stealth as possible". He also explained that the design of a mono-pine is to blend in with a forest area. He answered the question of the gentlemen who didn't know why it was necessary by saying that cell companies are given complaints about dropped calls and due to the amount of complaints they choose which areas need another tower. The company is given an area and then they are responsible for deciding the best location in that space. He explained that the increase in cell phone use has caused a higher demand for these towers. It was discussed thoroughly and decided that the only place for the cell tower is in that portion of the cemetery. He went on to assure the residents that construction of the tower would not take long, and after that a worker would have to access the tower about 1 time a month. Therefore, traffic would not be an issue with the cell tower.

- **Committee Comment:** Throughout this portion of the meeting the committee tried to suggest different areas for the tower, but none could be decided on. The Chairman and other committee members agreed that flooding is an issue in the area, but it is not something that would be worsened by the cell tower. The committee took the time to go over each issue and express their concerns, but ultimately nothing was going to be affected by the cell tower. For example, there is no evidence that cell towers have negative health effects on the surrounding areas. The committee explained that the public would be able to utilize this tower because many houses have done away with landlines.
- **Approval:** The committee decided that it would move to approve the cell tower because it does not directly affect the neighborhood in the ways that the citizens expressed. It meets the standards and the company is going to do its best to conceal it and use materials that they city approves. It will have positive effects on the community by bringing more business, such as T-Mobile and other cell phone companies in the future. It also provides the town with better cell reception, and might even reduce flooding in the areas.

➤ **C. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Commercial Signage**

- Announced that Nu Crepes had been accommodated with a Schiller Court way sign added to the current Elmhurst sign on the property.
- Meeting with attorney to discuss the codes that need to be brought up to date due to the Reed Supreme Court ruling.
- The attorney explained that whatever is changed in the text must be changed throughout all sign codes. There needs to be consistency throughout the text. The committee expressed the concern about a gray zone, which creates confusion about what signs can be regulated because the Supreme Court ruling does not apply to commercial signs. Therefore, it is important for the committee to create a draft for their attorneys to look over before anything is submitted.

❖ **Meeting Adjournment**

- Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:07pm