



Memo

File #: 353-24

Agenda Date: 7/16/2024

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Beth Beatty, City Manager

SUBJECT:

Ordinance Approving an Amendment to a Special Use Permit (Ordinance #16160) to Allow an Existing Stealth Communications Tower to be Converted to a Monopole Tower, Located at 1300 N. Kelly Avenue (ZBA 2024-30)

BACKGROUND:

The petitioner, SBA Communications Corporation, is requesting approval of an amendment to a Special Use Permit (Ordinance #16160) which allowed the installation of a 118-foot-tall “stealth” telecommunications tower and associated ground equipment at 1300 N. Kelly Avenue in the Joliet Park District’s Garnsey Park. The amendment would allow a change in design from a stealth tower, which conceals the antennas in the top of the pole, to a monopole tower, which will have visible antennas at the top (see attached tower elevation and antenna plans). The tower height and the ground equipment shelter would remain the same. The proposed antenna modifications will increase wireless coverage for T-Mobile and potential future carriers, as the monopole style would allow multiple carriers to use the pole. The tower currently serves T-Mobile and is owned by SBA Monarch Towers. The Joliet Park District, which owns the park property, is not opposed to the change in design.

The existing tower, which was approved in 2008, is located on the north side of the larger baseball field in Garnsey Park, approximately 400 feet from the west property line along Raynor Avenue and 375 feet from the south property line adjacent to the northmost residence on Kelly Avenue. The tower is disguised as a light pole, with park lighting mounted near the middle and the antenna hidden in the topmost part of the stealth tower. The ground equipment structure is fenced and screened by evergreen shrubs. The park lighting on the pole and the ground equipment structure and screening would remain. There is another communications tower on the site, located on the east side of the baseball field, that was approved by City Council in 2004. The property is zoned R-2 (single-family residential).

In 2008, the petitioner was required to post a \$35,000 bond in the event that the tower was abandoned and needed to be removed. According to the petitioner, this bond is still in effect.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING:

The Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing on this matter on June 20, 2024. Eric Greenfield with SBA Communications Corporation, petitioner, represented the petition. No one appeared or submitted comments in opposition to the petition. Meeting minutes are attached.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS:

Ralph Bias moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals recommend approval of the amendment to a Special Use Permit (Ordinance #16160) to allow an existing stealth communications tower to be converted to a monopole tower at 1300 N. Kelly Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. That the petitioner shall maintain the existing \$35,000 bond, which would be used for dismantling the tower and associated equipment in the event of future abandonment.

Vincent Alessio seconded the motion, which passed with four (4) aye votes and no nay votes. Voting aye were: Riggs, Nachtrieb, Alessio, and Bias. Voting nay were: none. Absent were: Roehr and Hennessy.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Administration concurs with the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals and recommends that the Mayor and City Council adopt an Ordinance approving the amendment to a Special Use Permit (Ordinance #16160) to allow an existing stealth communications tower to be converted to a monopole tower at 1300 N. Kelly Avenue, subject to the same conditions approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals above.