

CITY OF NEW MEADOWS
PLANNING & ZONING MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.
NEW MEADOWS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 401 VIRGINIA AVENUE, NEW MEADOWS

Agenda Item 1) Roll Call – Welcome - Pledge of Allegiance:

Commissioners present: Martin Tushkowski, Debbie Stuart, Jeff Roff, and Jack Hellbusch.

Staff present were: Jacob “Mac” Qualls and Angie Mettie.

Public in attendance is shown on the attached sign-in sheet.

Jack Hellbusch opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item 2) PUBLIC HEARING: The Planning & Zoning Commission of the City of New Meadows will hold a public hearing concerning a Conditional Use Permit and Design Review Applications of a proposal from BMA Towers, LLC to erect a cell tower of a maximum height of 182 feet with a lightning rod on South End Road.

Jack Hellbusch opened the Public Hearing at 7:01 P.M.

Applicant Presentation:

John Hucks presented the BMA Towers Project proposal by BMA Towers, LLC regarding the application for a Conditional Use Permit for a cell tower on South End Road.

John Hucks: 2988 Round Valley Road, New Meadows, Idaho 83654. Hucks summarized the previous meeting with the New Meadows Airport Commission in which the Commission had three concerns regarding the tower. The concerns of radio interference and penetration of airport zones were dismissed. The sole concern was the lighting of the tower. Hucks stated that the FAA does not require towers under 200 feet to be lit. The Aviation Department of ITD also agreed that the tower need not be lit. Hucks noted that the Aviation Director at Life Flight stated that there were no plans to add a heliport to New Meadows. Hucks also shared how the placement of the tower would benefit the school and community and how the tower fits with New Meadows' Comprehensive Plan. Hucks submitted to the Committee several studies from reputable sources that showed no adverse health effects from radio frequencies of towers.

There was no written testimony received after the Planning & Zoning Packets were delivered. Qualls stated the only written testimony received was from Idaho Transportation Department and the Idaho Division of Aeronautics.

Opponent Testimony:

Dennis Nau: 3962 Hot Springs Road, New Meadows, Idaho 83654. Nau commended Hucks for his summary of the concerns of the Airport Commission. Nau shared that the FAA's Advisory Circular states that conditions may differ in rural areas and small communities, and that lighting of towers in those areas may be needed for safety reasons. Nau explained how the dual obstruction lighting worked and noted that the lights would not be visible to residents below the tower. In regards to a future heliport, Nau referred to Mark Lesser from Division of Aeronautics, who is currently involved in developing the Airport Master Plan for the City of New Meadows. This plan includes installing a permanent helipad at the airport. Nau felt that the cost of roughly \$7500 for obstruction lighting was minor when adding an extra margin of safety to the tower. Nau requested that the applicant voluntarily add lighting to the tower, and if not, then requested that City Council require the lighting as part of the Conditional Use Permit. Nau clarified that he was not against the tower, but against an unlit tower. He was in favor of a lit tower.

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Neutral Testimony:

Wes Jeffs: 409 North Cunningham, New Meadows, Idaho 83654: Jeffs had three points for the Committee to consider. He felt that the lighting of the tower for emergency purposes was very important, especially for planes with mechanical issues. He also felt that from the point of the investor, lighting would protect the tower from accidents. Finally, he asked the Committee to consider whether or not New Meadows needs the tower at this time.

Supporter Testimony:

Art Peavey: 2991 Round Valley Road, New Meadows, Idaho 83654: Peavey stated that having this tower may increase the Internet options in our community. He supported the increased services this tower could offer and stated that he would welcome the tower in his own backyard.

Applicant Rebuttal:

a) John Hucks: 2988 Round Valley Road New Meadows, Idaho 83654. Hucks noted the disconnect of whether or not Life Flight had plans to build a heliport in New Meadows. Hucks read part of an e-mail from Ryan Swakon, Director of Aviation Operations for Life Flight, in which Swakon stated that Life Flight is not building a landing pad in New Meadows. Hucks stated that his client would be willing to put lights on the tower at a later date, when the FAA determined it necessary or when Life Flight actually installs a heliport in New Meadows. At this time, he felt it an unnecessary expense.

The public hearing was closed at 7:30 P.M.

Agenda Item 3) Design Review:

Hellbusch stated that the design is a tower. The applicant has provided a photograph, the design of the tower, and where the fencing will be placed. Other than that, there was really no design to review. Hellbusch felt the design met safety standards.

Agenda Item 4) Conditional Use Permit:

Each member of the Committee shared their thoughts and concerns about the project.

Tushkowski stated that lighting seemed to be the only concern. He recognized that according to the information provided, the tower is not required to be lit. He felt that the tower is needed in New Meadows, as it would provide additional safety for the community. He agreed with the need for lighting and suggested that it be lit now, so that the applicant would not be returning later to revisit this issue.

Stuart stated that she also supports the tower. She felt that lighting would be important for security reasons.

Roff recalled the previous cell tower application and noted that the current applicant's placement of the tower was excellent. He appreciated the studies given on health effects. He felt that due to the fog and weather conditions in New Meadows, the tower should be lit. He also recognized the extra cost lighting would add to the project and felt it could be made up as clients took advantage of the tower. He commended the applicant for the excellent package.

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Hellbusch concurred with the Commission and with Mr. Nau that safety was of utmost importance. If lighting would add even a small amount of safety, it should be included.

- Roff moved to recommend approval of the application with the condition that lighting be advised; Tushkowski seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Tushkowski – aye, Stuart – aye, Roff – aye, Hellbusch – aye. Motion carried.

Qualls asked for clarification as to whether the motion was for design review or for the conditional use permit. Hellbusch commented that the motion was for both.

Qualls clarified that Life Flight Network was not planning to “build” the heliport, but Idaho Division of Aeronautics were including the heliport in the Airport State Master Plan, and that Division of Aeronautics would build it.

Agenda Item 5) Adjourn:

- Committee Member Roff moved to adjourn the meeting; Stuart seconded the motion. Voice vote indicated no opposition to the motion with all members signifying aye. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Jack Hellbusch, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Jacob “Mac” Qualls, City Clerk

