

BENTON-PARISH BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS

MINUTES

Thursday, May 12, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
Town Council Chambers – Benton Town Hall
105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana

MEMBERS PRESENT

Fred Rankin
Scott Alexander
Jim Morris

OTHERS PRESENT

Carlotta Askew- Brown
Neil Erwin
Ray Hayes
Mark Hodges
Richard Jones
Roland Owens

MEMBERS ABSENT

Doyle Adams
Michael Acurio
Nancy Penwell

Fred Rankin, Chairman, called the meeting to order,

(A) Carlotta Askew-Brown Assistant-Director called the roll and stated a quorum was present.

(B) Special Exception Use

1. The application of Reynolds Grocery 2, LLC for Special Exception Use approval to sell low content alcohol for off-premise consumption at 1115 Hwy 162 Benton, LA.

The applicant Roland Owens was present to answer questions.

Mr. Owens stated that they own a small grocery store and would like to sell low content alcohol.

Mr. Rankin asked for comments from the public.

Scott Alexander made the motion to approve the application.

Jim Morris seconded that motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. The application of Verizon Wireless to request Special Exception Use to place a 226' Telecommunication Tower on a tract of land located at 5313 Linton Cutoff Rd. Benton, LA.

The applicant, Mark Hodges was available to answer questions.

Mr. Hodges stated that Verizon has picked this location to place a telecommunication tower. He stated that they have all the clearances to include environmental, FAA, cultural resources and that there are no wetlands to be mitigated. Mr. Hodges also stated that a Geotech study will be done once they get further into the process and they will design the tower based on the results of that study.

Mr. Hodges commented that the tower height was reduced from 256' to 226'. Mr. Hodges also addressed the concerns about the flooding and stated that the engineers did not see flooding as an issue and that they have towers in all locations including those that flood and the towers are built with that in mind.

Mr. Rankin asked if a tower has ever fallen.

Mr. Hodges stated that he's worked in the field for 16 years and that he's worked with over 3500 towers and he's personally never had a tower fall, even with the last few hurricanes. Towers are designed to fall straight down.

Mr. Morris asked if any towers have ever fallen straight down.

Mr. Hodges stated that he has never experienced a tower falling.

Mr. Alexander asked if the tower was designed to collapse on itself.

Mr. Hodges stated yes and they have letters indicating that.

Mr. Alexander asked if others will be able to co-locate.

Mr. Hodges stated yes.

Mr. Morris asked if anyone else would be able to co-locate outside of telecommunication providers.

Mr. Hodges stated that no other carriers outside of telecommunication would be able to co-locate.

Mr. Hodges stated that technology is increasing so fast that soon we will be able to control certain elements of our homes from a vehicle and that technically it's already here and this area needs more capacity.

Mr. Rankin called for public comment.

Richard Jones, a representative from the public, stated that the majority of his questions had been answered but that he still had concerns about the failure of the structure.

Mr. Hodges stated that he was not an engineer but that the engineers for Verizon were confident in their study.

Mr. Jones also stated that he can't see how this tower would improve his property value and he would prefer that the tower be moved back a couple hundred feet.

Mr. Hodges stated that they are so deep in the process that without considerable resources, it could not be relocated.

Mr. Alexander stated that he understood that the property owner picked this location and did not want it to move.

Mr. Jones stated that everything is negotiable.

Mr. Hodges stated that they have approached several people in the area and were turned down. They also preferred to put the tower in an inconspicuous place.

Mr. Alexander stated that he owns twenty-two (22) acres across the street and that he doesn't want to see it either and that he understands Mr. Jones concerns but Verizon has addressed all of the issues and that they will build based off of the Geotech.

Mr. Jones stated that he believes that the property is undevelopable and that it can be moved.

Mr. Hodges stated that moving it is a possibility if the Geotech comes back negative but that he doesn't see that happening.

Mr. Alexander stated that the Board asked Verizon for additional information and that Verizon has provided it.

Mr. Jones stated that he would be a lot happier if they moved it 300' back.

Mr. Rankin called for additional comments.

Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Scott Alexander made the motion to approve the application.

Jim Morris seconded that motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes
Being no corrections, the motioned passed unanimously to approve the minutes.

2. Old Business
None

3. New Business
None

4. Adjourn

Fred Rankin

Mr. Fred Rankin, Chairman

Chairman: Mr. Fred Rankin

Vice Chairman: Mr. Doyle Adams