

**McDowell County Planning Board
Regular Meeting
04/28/2014
Minutes**

The McDowell County Planning Board met in regular session on April 28, 2014 at 7pm. The meeting was held in the McDowell Economic Development Associations Boardroom at 25 South Garden Street.

Members Present:

C.B. Edwards, Vice Chairman
Arvin Hicks
Benny Stamey
Sam Dotson
Dan Thornton
Tommy Stamey
Tony Brown, Alternate

Members Absent:

Max Boyd, Chairman, Medical Leave
Bob Brendle
Dennis Whitson
Rex Wood, Alternate

Staff Present:

Jim Edwards, IPDC
Ronald Harmon, Board Secretary

Other Present:

Dudley Green, Sheriff
Ricky Crisp, Captain MCSD
William Kehler, McDowell County Emergency Services Director
Craig Walker, Deputy Director McDowell Emergency Management
Jonathan Yates, Representing AT&T

Call to Order:

Vice Chairman C.B. Edwards called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Vice Chairman Edwards announced that a quorum of members was present and seated Alternate Member Tony Brown on the Board.

The next item on the agenda was approval of the agenda for the April Meeting. Benny Stamey made a motion to approve the agenda was presented, second from Dan Thornton, vote taken motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was approval of the March 24, 2014 meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Edwards asked for a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as presented. Motion to approve was made by Benny Stamey, second from Dan Thornton, vote taken motion carried.

Discussion of Poor Cell Reception:

Vice Chairman Edwards turned the floor over to Ronald Harmon. Ronald explained that the county was seeing a surge in the number of cell tower co location permits as well as inquires for new tower regulations. He explained that he would like the Board to take the opportunity before them to let Emergency Services and the Sheriff relay to Mr. Yates the areas in the county that have inadequate cell reception. Ronald explained that when the Board was doing their due diligence for the Gated Community Ordinance, something stuck with him. Captain Crisp had explained that in certain instances when the Sheriff's Department responds to alarm calls in remote areas of the county in a Gated Community, they may have to drive several miles away from the development to get cell coverage in order to call in and get the gate code.

Jonathan Yates explained that he would be happy to hear about what areas of the county needed better coverage and introduced his network engineer who would take the information and map out the county so they could begin to help address this issue.

Ronald introduced William Kehler, Craig Walker, Ricky Crisp, and Sheriff Dudley Green. Ronald explained that he had a map to be marked up showing the areas of poor reception and turned the floor over to William Kehler to discuss issues Emergency Services face with poor cell reception, and the areas coverage is lacking. Johnathan Yates explained that the map would help greatly with addressing the areas in the county that were in need of better coverage.

Vice Chairman Edwards stated that he lived in the Sugar Hill area and that cell coverage was very poor. Mr. Kehler and members of Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Department, worked to identify and mark the map showing the areas of the county that had poor or no cell reception. Ronald stated that once the map was drawn he would take it back to the GIS Administrator and have a PDF made. Mr. Yates explained that the attribute that made McDowell County so beautiful to live in, was also the major factor in making cell reception difficult, namely the terrain. William Kehler asked My Yates if Emergency Services could possibly have equipment on their tower. Mr. Yates replied that yes it was possible.

Discussion was held about ways to address the issue. Johnathan Yates stated that he would work through Ronald to gather information to help address the issue. Vice Chairman Edwards thanked everyone that came out from Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Department to contribute to the conversation.

Sneed Tower Request:

Ronald turned the floor over to Johnathan Yates for the formal presentation of the Sneed Tower request. Mr. Yates stated that the Sneed tower was designed to cover 221 North. Mr. Yates explained that the tower meets or exceeds all requirements of the ordinance. Mr. Yates explained that the tower was designed to accommodate up to three co locations as well. He stated the compound would be 100x100. Mr. Yates stated that the property was plentiful with pines, maples and oaks to mask the tower and no light was required on the tower.

Vice Chairman Edwards asked how long it would take for the tower to be put into operation. Mr. Yates stated that he wasn't sure until the tower was approved and placed on the schedule. Vice Chairman Edwards asked if anyone on the Board had questions, absent of questions Vice Chairman Edwards asked for a motion to approve the Sneed Tower Request. Motion to approve the tower as presented was made by Benny Stamey, second from Sam Dotson, vote taken, the motion carried unanimously.

Hidden Forest Tower Discussion and Request:

Ronald stated that he copied the Board with the Hidden Forest request. Ronald explained that the tower met all criteria of the ordinance and that a variance was not being sought, the requested height was 150 feet. Ronald stated that this was the Board's first reading of the tower and if they so wished could delay a decision until the next scheduled meeting. He further stated that Staff's recommendation was for approval since a variance was not requested and representatives for the tower company were present. Ronald turned the floor over to Johnathan Yates for the formal presentation of the tower request. Mr. Yates explained that the tower was located off Moonlight Drive in the Woodlawn area and would help bridge the deficiency in coverage in the Northern Part of the county.

Benny Stamey stated that he would like to say that the Planning Board is very easy to work with in regards to tower approvals. He further stated that the Board had fought for some time to get the issue of poor reception addressed, he said many people now including himself relied on cell phones as their sole means of telephone communication.

Benny Stamey made a motion to approve the Hidden Forest Tower as presented, second from Dan Thornton, vote taken motion carried unanimously. Johnathan Yates thanked the Board and assured them that he would replay the message that McDowell County was serious about working with companies to address the deficiency in coverage in the county.

May Meeting Discussion:

Vice Chairman Edwards stated that the next item on the agenda was discussion of the May meeting and turned the floor over to Ronald. Ronald explained that the May meeting date fell on the Memorial Day Holiday, and County offices would be closed. Ronald explained that currently there was nothing set for the agenda that could not be addressed at the June meeting, he stated the meeting date could be moved forward or simply canceled. Vice Chairman Edwards asked

what the pleasure of the Board was. Dan Thornton made a motion to cancel the May meeting, second from Benny Stamey, vote taken motion carried unanimously.

With no further business Vice Chairman Edwards asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Benny Stamey, second from Tony Brown, vote taken motion carried.