

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: August 6, 2008

RE: August 11, 2008 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has two action items.

I Action Items

A. Consideration of a Petition from St. Mary's Church for an Amendment to Their Special Use Permit for Church and School Facilities at 222 Waterman Street in the City of Sycamore.

At the last regular Plan Commission meeting of July 14, the Commission held an informal workshop session to review a plan for additional classroom space at the St. Mary's parish campus on Waterman Street. After some years of fund-raising and after exploring a variety of uses that could be incorporated in the new parish activity center, the St. Mary's Catholic Parish has proposed additional construction classroom space and the remodeling of some existing classroom and administrative space to better serve students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The new addition will be attached to the existing school hall, as the attached color renderings and computer simulation depict. The front façade of the new addition will be consistent with the front façade of the "purple" house at the corner of Waterman Street and Somonauk Street (210 Waterman Street).

An amendment to the existing special use permit for school functions is required because the footprint of the development area will change. The proposed change is a minor one and will afford the parish some much-needed space. On July 14, the Commission expressed its support for the petitioner's proposal.

A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is requested.

B. Consideration of a Petition from BTS Tower Development, LLC for a Special Use Permit for a 190 Foot Monopole Wireless Communication Tower at the Southeast Corner of Page and N. California Streets in the City of Sycamore.

BTS Tower Development is proposing to erect a 190-foot monopole wireless communication tower at the southeast corner of Page Street and N. California Street. The exact location is the parking area at the northwest corner of the property that is presently owned by Dick Anderson, and was formerly one of several Duplex facilities.

A tower of this height and presence will of course be of interest to neighboring property owners, and the City has published legal notice of this hearing and sent letters to adjacent property owners, advising them of the petition. In addition, the DeKalb Taylor Airport and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Police have been notified of the petition so they may participate in any discussion of its potential impact. Airport officials will of course be interested in any encroachment on flight paths, and the Sheriff's department will be interested in any impact on its communication facilities.

According to Article 4.3.3 of the City's Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO"), special uses may be granted only if the following evidence is established:

- a. The proposed structure or use at the requested location is necessary or desirable to provide a service or a facility which is in the interest of the public and will contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood or community;
- b. The proposed structure or use will not have a substantial adverse effect upon the adjacent property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, utility facilities and other matters affecting the public health, safety, and general welfare; and
- c. The proposed structure or use will be designed, arranged, and operated so as to permit the development and use of neighboring property in accordance with the applicable district regulations.

In terms of zoning criteria, some relevant provisions are found in the UDO and some are found in the City Code. According to the UDO's Table of Permitted Uses (Article 5.3.1), communication towers of the type proposed here may be installed in several zoning districts, including "M-1" Light Manufacturing District. The parcel in question is zoned "M-1." Article 6.2.1 of the UDO references two other two other relevant sets of standards which apply in this case: the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Sycamore City Code, Title 3, Chapter 15. The City Code provisions are attached.

According to the City Code, the local zoning requirements for communication towers also include the following:

- Towers shall be located in the side or rear yard. In the case of a corner lot, the tower shall not be closer to the adjoining side street than the principal building. The proposed location is a corner side yard. If the tower was permitted, it would be approximately 60 feet from California Street and 40 feet from Page Street, in conformance with the setback requirements (25 feet and 15 feet, respectively).
- Towers shall not be visible between the ground level and ten feet (10) above ground from any adjoining street. The UDO allows fences up to 10 feet in height in M-1 zoning districts if installed in the rear and side yards (Article 6.2.1, D,2).

According to Building Commissioner and Zoning Officer Lyle Doty, the proposed tower meets the City's zoning requirements.

The City Code also prescribes collocation protocols to assure that efforts are made by a tower builder to minimize the diffusion of antennas throughout the community. At this writing, the required collocation conference and public solicitation of interest have not been undertaken.

Finally, formal reviews of the proposed tower's impact on the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office and the DeKalb Taylor Airport have not been completed. For its part, the Airport collaborates with the FAA through an established review process tied to the specific location of the tower in relation to flight paths served by the airport. The County of DeKalb's dispatch function which also serves the City of Sycamore depends upon the monopole tower near the intersection of Locust Street and Exchange Street.

On August 11, a public hearing will be held by the Plan Commission to invite comments and questions from those who wish to be heard on this topic. Until the reviews of DeKalb County and the DeKalb Taylor Airport have been completed, no action is recommended.