



**CITY OF COTTONWOOD  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
COTTONWOOD RECREATION CENTER**

150 S. 6th Street  
Cottonwood, AZ 86326

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Monday May 15, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Masten called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

**A. Roll Call**

**Commission Members Present**

Commissioner Stephens  
Commissioner Glascott  
Commissioner Nelson  
Commissioner Gehlert  
Vice Chair Garrison  
Chairwoman Masten

**Commission Members Absent**

Commissioner Klinge

**Staff Members Present**

Scott Ellis, Community Development Director  
Rudy Rodriguez, Deputy City Manager  
Gary Davis, Community Development Senior Planner  
Tina Hayden, Community Development, Planner  
Charlotte Page, Recorder

- B. Approval of Minutes:** March 20, 2023 Regular Meeting  
March 27, 2023 Special Meeting  
April 17, 2023 Regular Meeting

***Motion: I make a motion to approve the minutes from March 20, 2023, March 27, 2023, and April 17, 2023.***

***Made by: Chairwoman Masten***

***Unanimously Carried***



**II. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES:** Director Ellis reminded the Commission that the June meeting will be held on June 26, 2023 due to the holiday on June 19, 2023. The new City Manager Scotty Douglass started today and is in a City Council Meeting this evening.

**III. CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** Donald Reichartz asked if there could be more crosswalks on State Route 89A near Big 5. His wife recently fell in this area, he reported there are no crosswalks for 8-10 blocks, and he felt it would benefit the public if the City would install a camera to monitor the danger to pedestrian traffic. He had already reported the problem to the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Joe Marcinko stated that roads are in very bad shape. He wants the City to use the ‘infrastructure money’ to make more repairs such as restriping the roads and repainting crosswalks. He finds the road conditions unacceptable. Joe mentioned how supporting additional retail for the City would increase tax revenue. When valley residents shop outside of Cottonwood, we miss out on tax revenues. He would like to know about the schedule for the completion of the Groseta Ranch Road connector that is being worked on. Joe asked to limit the concrete truck traffic through Old Town.

Chairwoman Masten asked for City Staff to reply in regard to the schedule for the completion of the road connecting State Route 89A to Main Street in Old Town.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

**V. NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. DR 23-004 – A REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW FOR A 75-FOOT TALL MONOPINE WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS TOWER** – Consideration of a Design Review application to allow a 75-foot tall monopine wireless communications tower in the C-1 (Light Commercial) zone on a site approximately 0.8 acres in size, located on the southeast corner of the intersection of N. Main Street and E. Coconino Street at 127 N. Main Street. APN 406-43-007. Applicant: Shawn Sanchez.

**Summary:** Planner Hayden presented a PowerPoint on the Design Review proposal, associated stipulations, and what recommendations the Commission could make to City Council. Planner Hayden reviewed Ordinance 730 which changes a previous requirement for tower structure sites to provide space on site for a fall radius equal to the reclining length of the structure. After May 19, 2023, Ordinance 730 will allow structural engineering plans that demonstrate the fall radius for a tower to be reviewed and approved by the Building Official and City Engineer.



The site plan was presented showing the fall radius for the proposed tower. Elevations were presented with two alternative heights for the tower. An eight-foot screening fence is proposed. Renderings of the proposed tower and photos of surrounding properties were shown.

Planner Hayden said Staff findings for the fence enclosure include compatibility with the land would requiring screening, there would be no environmental effects due to the eight-foot tall fence, and the proposed screening would minimize potential commercial nuisance.

Planner Hayden read the stipulations for the proposed tower into the record:

- 1. The project shall be developed in conformance with the development plans as reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the May 15, 2023 meeting.**
- 2. The project shall conform to the Code Review Board comment letter dated December 2, 2022 and any additional Code Review Board comments.**
- 3. The project shall comply with all applicable Sections of the Zoning Ordinance including, but not limited to, C-1 Property Development Standards, General Provisions, Signs, Parking and Loading Requirements, Landscaping Requirements, and Outdoor Lighting Code.**
- 4. The wireless tower shall be constructed as a monopine with a minimum of three branches per foot of tower height.**
- 5. A building permit application must be submitted within 24 months of Design Review approval. If this requirement is not met, the Design Review approval shall be revoked and new Code Review and Design Review submittals will be required.**

Planner Hayden said the Commission is required to make a recommendation and provide findings to City Council regarding the request for tower height in excess of sixty feet.

Commissioner Gehlert questioned if the project requires Conditional Use Permit (CUP), he asked what notifications were done for the project, especially for the properties nearby in residential use, and if this project had attempted to co-locate at any existing site.

Planner Hayden confirmed a CUP was not necessary for this project, and no neighbor notification was required. She said the applicant had reached out to the neighbors, and



would have additional information as to the site selection. Planner Hayden stated that the applicant said they considered the selected location the best option for the project.

Ben Sheedy, State 48 Development Consulting, represented Vertical Bridge, the applicant. Ben said the goal is improved cell reception for citizen and emergency communications. He said the existing monopines in Cottonwood are 90' towers. The additional height is needed because of the pine screening, and the height will also provide better options for future co-location on this proposed tower.

Commissioner Nelson asked about other design options for screening, other than a pine tree, and how property owners were notified of this project. Commissioner Gehlert asked about the equipment at the base of the tower, and if any noise that would be produced from the equipment. Commissioner Gehlert stated the existing monopine designs he has seen are not actually very much like a pine tree, he wants something that is more pine like. Commissioner Gehlert also asked who would maintain the project?

Vice Chair Garrison asked for more information on the proposed height of the proposed tower; the presentation showed two different heights for the proposed project, and the proposal shows a fall radius of twenty foot. He expressed concern for the proximity to a residential property east of this proposed project and the need for maintaining the site.

Ben Sheedy confirmed that the applicant had attempted to reach out to adjacent property owner by phone and had not received any input. Equipment located at the base of the tower would not be noisy with a possible noise of a generator which would be used only for backup power. Ben said the Vertical Bridge company will be responsible for maintenance of the project once it is built.

Director Ellis confirmed that notification to neighbors is not required for Design Review, the height of the tower to be considered will be the overall height of the entire structure proposed, the 80' height with the lightning rod for Design Review purposes, and recommendations to City Council. Planner Hayden stated the revision to the Ordinance will allow approval of the tower based on having engineering that demonstrates the fall radius, which requires approval of City Engineering and a City Building Official.

Director Ellis stated the recommendation of approval to Council for the additional height would be only if the applicant can show that is the least intrusive way of obtaining the service they are lacking.

The Commission asked for a demonstration that the additional height of the proposed tower would provide increased service quality.



Ben Sheedy reviewed mapped data from T-Mobile showing the difference of reception quality or enhanced coverage, based on the height of a structure, in two different locations relative to Old Town.

Chairwoman Masten stated the level of coverage did not seem greatly improved in the coverage map presented. Commissioner Nelson asked what the applicant thought the level of improvement would be. Ben Sheedy estimated the improved reception would be 20-30% better coverage with the taller structure. Commissioner Gehlert asked what the visual impact of the project would be from the street. Chairwoman Masten stated that she would like to see a rendering of the project from the street and have better documentation of the projected coverage in addition to the map that was presented. Vice Chair Garrison asked if they could provide an example projecting this project as proposed and compare that to a tower that would be within the current allowed height of sixty feet.

Phil Terbell spoke in favor of the project. He supports having improved wireless reception and he was concerned for the possible falling of the structure.

Donald Reichartz said the public needs to be notified and have the opportunity to speak, he does not like the appearance of the tower, and he suggested that the cemetery would be a good location for this project.

Suzanne Marcinko spoke to the need for improved cell reception, and she was not concerned about the visual impact of the project.

Commissioner Stephens stated there is a need for improved services and she is in favor of the project. Commissioner Glascott also favors the project because of the need for improved cell service. Commissioner Nelson agreed there is a need for better cell service. Nelson stated he is concerned about the fall radius, and would also like to have the neighboring property owners informed of the project and have an opportunity to voice their opinions. Commissioner Gehlert agreed that local cell service needs to be improved, but he is concerned about the visual impact of the project and he was most concerned that the neighbors were not notified. He stated the project is closer to the neighbor property than it is to the structure on the proposed site, and he would like to know what input the next-door neighbor has.

Vice Chair Garrison stated that there may be better sites for the project that may be better for the visual impact and improve the outcome for the coverage. He stated the existing tree tower in Cottonwood is not attractive. Vice Chair Garrison also would like to have the property to the east involved in the process.



Chairwoman Masten wants more information regarding how necessary the project is, what the visual impact will be, and she said she was surprised the neighbor to the east is not present to give input. Chairwoman Masten proposed to table the project for citizen notification and to have the applicant submit additional data for a tower that would follow current height restrictions. Chairwoman Masten asked if there could be a stipulation for the project to get input from nearby residential property owners.

Commissioner Nelson stated that Staff has followed the current Ordinance for the review of this project.

Director Ellis confirmed that the Commission will not be able to stipulate that the applicant notify nearby residential property owners or require the applicant to seek property owners input based on the current Ordinance.

Commissioner Gehlert asked about the Code Review process and if the airport requirements are met.

Director Ellis said any requirements of the airport or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would have to be identified and would be addressed before a building permit could be issued.

**Motion:** *Motion to approve DR 23-004 to allow a 70-foot tall monopine wireless communication tower, subject to the stipulations that were read into the record by Staff.*

**Made by:** *Vice Chair Garrison*

**Second:** *Commissioner Glascott*

**Roll Call Vote:**

*Commissioner Stephens - yes*

*Commissioner Glascott - yes*

*Commissioner Nelson - yes*

*Commissioner Gehlert - no*

*Vice Chairman Garrison - no*

*Chairwoman Masten - no*

*The Motion Did Not Pass*



**Motion: I move for the recommended approval to the City Council to allow a 70-foot tall wireless communications tower that exceeds the 60-foot permitted allowance by 10 feet at 127 N. Main Street.**

**The Planning and Zoning Commission finds that the tower height is the least intrusive means of filling a significant gap in the wireless communications provider's coverage within the City.**

**Made by:** Vice Chair Garrison

**Second:** Commissioner Glascott

**Roll Call Vote:**

Commissioner Stephens - yes

Commissioner Glascott - yes

Commissioner Nelson - yes

Commissioner Gehlert - no

Vice Chairman Garrison - no

Chairwoman Masten – no

*The Motion Did Not Pass*

Chairwoman Masten invited the applicant to resubmit.

2. **GENERAL PLAN UPDATE** – Progress Report on the 2023-2024 General Plan Update process, and discussion of proposed vision and values to be included in the plan.

**Summary:** Senior Planner Davis gave a PowerPoint presentation on the General Plan, reviewing the public participation process, results compiled from public comments and draft values statements. A database of over 200 emails are being contacted for updates on the process and distribution of information. Information on the General Plan has been presented at numerous public meetings, various City Commissions and at public events like 'Walking on Main' and Chamber mixers to generate interest and receive input.

Public comments have been received from public meeting participants and over 425 survey respondents. Senior Planner Davis said about half of the comments come from residents within the city limits and the other half from residents in neighboring areas.

The General Plan will work to balance public comment to provide a vision for values, goals, and objectives for the next 10-year term of the General Plan. The City Atlas will contain much of the information that has been presented in the General Plan in the past. This companion document will be updated more often than the General Plan.



The General Plan will include the elements of Economic Development, Land, Housing, Circulation, Public Services, and City Facilities. Many elements will overlap in the sections that contain the specific policies. The Vision Statement is drafted from the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, and the Mission statement remains 'Inspiring a Vibrant Community'. Senior Planner Davis said the plan's challenge is maintaining a 'small-town' character and relaxed quality of life, while providing for sufficient housing and a strong economy. Draft value statements were reviewed for the five elements.

The next public hearing will be Saturday May 20, 2023 at 10:00 am. After that meeting, Staff will work on drafting the plan's goals and objectives. Input on the values statements will be incorporated into the draft for the General Plan.

Patti Greenelch, who lives in the Verde Villages, asked for steps for annexation to be included in the General Plan. She said the Villages have no representation although they outnumber the population of Cottonwood, have more income, and are paying City taxes. She would like to see information included that would help citizens pursue annexation so citizens would know what they can do to influence the future. She wants Verde Villages to be part of Cottonwood and for citizens to understand the pros and cons of the possibility of future annexation of Verde Villages.

Chairwoman Masten asked Staff to follow up on the annexation question.

Andy Groseta commented on the number of responses, and said the city needs to emphasize more jobs and promote economic development as part of the General Plan. He said traffic relief is a concern, and he supports developing additional roadway options for relieving congestion generated by future growth.

Donald Reichartz encouraged the City to improve community involvement. He said the citizens deserve to know more about projects, and the Ordinance should include citizen notification.

Joe Marcinko stated that the public needs to know about the meetings and suggested a mass mailing to get more public involvement. He asked about the population of Cottonwood.

Senior Planner Davis stated the population of Cottonwood is 12,296 as of the 2022 Census. The entire Verde Valley includes census designated places with populations around 12,500–12,600, Clarkdale's population is around 4,400–4,500, and Cornville is around 3,000.





Bob Rothrock, who lives in Old Town, mentioned the need to promote economic development in addition to tourism, he said recreation and tourism bring jobs but they are typically low-level jobs. He suggested that broad band may promote remote work possibilities. He stated that adding more hotels may cause over tourism problems in the future.

Commissioner Nelson complimented the City Staff on the efforts of the General Plan project. He asked about the next steps in the process.

Senior Planner Davis said the next step in the project is to write the Policies and Goals & Objectives for the draft of the new General Plan. A review of the current General Plan will take place to strengthen the current policies and value statements.

Commissioner Nelson asked what role the Commission has in helping at this stage.

Senior Planner Davis encouraged the Commission to get the word out and encourage participation in the General Plan. Recent spikes in responses were generated by notices in local water bills and a notification from the school district to their contacts.

Commissioner Stephens said Senior Planner Davis is "doing a phenomenal job". Commissioner Gehlert, Commissioner Glascott and Vice Chair Garrison complimented the efforts of Staff on the draft of the General Plan and the input they have generated in the community.

Vice Chair Garrison commented on the City of Cottonwood's commitment to the public. The City provides an economic center and services to the much larger regional area. The larger population area influences economic development. Citizens pay taxes and utilize various services. Vice Chair Garrison said he supports working on stronger economic development, and requested to sit down with City Council for another session to discuss the Commission's roles in upholding the values set forth in the General Plan. He stated Commission's discussions are inclusive of goals of the General Plan, and he wants to work with Council for further review of the public comment to give more input in support of the General Plan content.

Chairwoman Masten complimented the efforts of Staff for the draft of the General Plan that has been developed. She said she wishes more citizens would show up, she liked the recent outreach efforts to schools and by using a flyer with the City water bills. She said the Commission is dedicated to vibrant economic development, and said individual interpretation plays a role in their efforts. Chairwoman Masten said economic development actionable items include "mixed use, bringing Old Town east, and continuing to develop walkable corridors". She said these options may influence less dependence on the large



retail stores and give more opportunity for small family business development, which is something that could make Cottonwood more unique in the future. Chairwoman Masten asked about additional outreach and possibly involving the chamber in the survey outreach.

Senior Planner Davis asked the Commission to review the value statements and give any recommendations as he is working on the text over the next few months.

**VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS: NONE**

**VII. SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:** Commissioner Nelson requested information to be presented on the slag pile. Director Ellis said he is working on placing this on a future agenda.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:17 PM**

**Motion: To Adjourn.**

**Made By: Chairwoman Masten**

*Notice is hereby given that pursuant to A.R.S. subject to certain specified statutory exceptions, parents have a right to consent before the State or any of its political subdivisions make a video or audio recording of a minor child. Meetings of the City Council are audio and/or video recorded, and, as a result, proceedings in which children are present may be subject to such recording. Parents in order to exercise their rights may either file written consent with the City Clerk to such recording, or take personal action to ensure that their child or children are not present when a recording may be made. If a child is present at the time a recording is made, the City will assume that the rights afforded parents pursuant to A.R.S. have been waived.*

*Information on the above agenda items may be obtained in person from the Community Development Department, 111 N. Main Street in Cottonwood, or by calling (928) 634-5505.*

*A verbal comment period will be provided during each hearing item. The Chair may impose a time limit on each speaker. The Commission will not consider written materials submitted less than three working days before the meeting.*

*Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02(B) the Commission may vote to go into executive session on any agenda item pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (4) for discussion and consultation for legal advice with the City Attorney.*

*The Cottonwood Council Chambers and Cottonwood Recreation Center are accessible to the handicapped in accordance with Federal "504" and "ADA" laws. Those with needs for special typeface print or hearing devices may request these from the Planning Technician at 634-5505 (TDD 634-5526). All requests must be made at least 24 hours before the meeting.*

*Members of the Planning Commission will attend either in person or by telephone conference call.*