

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
LADUE CELLULAR SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CITY OF LADUE, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021, 9:00 A.M.**

**DUE TO THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ORDERED BY ST. LOUIS COUNTY ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS DUE TO COVID-19, THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM**

Chairman Hiemenz called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M. The following members were present:

Chairman Charlie Hiemenz  
Anita Chimento  
Tim Reboulet  
Larry Reed  
Eloise Schmitz  
Mike Rupinski  
Chip Wiese

Also present were Andrea Sukanek, City Planner; Anne Lamitola, Director of Public Works and Nancy Spewak, Mayor

**Approval of the January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Rupinski made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting. Mr. Reed seconded the motion. All those present were in favor.

Chairman Hiemenz reported that City Planner, Andrea Sukanek, would be leading the discussion on the examination of cell service issues in Ladue. Ms. Sukanek presented the following:

*Goals*

- Cell service in all areas of Ladue
- Concealed and streamlined antennas tower equipment
- Residents' satisfaction with cell service and the appearance of the City

*Observations*

Areas in Ladue have inadequate coverage and network capacity.

Ladue has two 85' tall towers and 5 antennas that are between 50 and 60 feet in height; 2 stealth towers, 1 disguised antenna, 2 utility poles. The remaining 21 antenna locations are 50 feet or less in height.

Ladue antennas on utility poles' height is restricted to about 40 feet as they cannot exceed 15 feet above the highest power line.

Antennas on utility poles in Ladue have not generated much resident opposition.

Ladue ordinance allows towers/antennas on properties in commercial zoning districts, 2 acre or greater non-residential properties in residential zoning districts such as schools, clubs, churches, cemeteries, and utility easements.

Most commercially zoned areas and surrounding residential areas have adequate cell service.

Coverage decreases in the areas to the north and south near Ladue Road and Litzsinger Road and increases in the central corridor near Clayton Road.

Two churches, a cemetery, and the City-owned mulch site have stealth towers in Ladue. Other cell towers are either in commercial zoning districts or are on utility poles. Several schools, clubs, and churches are eligible for towers or antennas.

St. Peter's Church has lapsed prior approval for an antenna over 100' in height in their steeple.

Proposed towers near 1-64 and within 150 feet of a subdivision were opposed by many residents of that neighborhood.

Proposed stealth towers in areas with larger lots and more separation from homes have faced less opposition and have been approved.

State and federal laws impede the City's ability to limit antenna requests. The City cannot deny small cell antennas in a commercial area or co-location on an existing antenna support structure. Depending on the situation, a co-location may include adding antennas and increasing the height of the support structure by up to 20 feet.

Mr. Rupinski suggested adding a map of tower/antenna locations and coverage information listed by carrier. However, this does not include information provided to the City by the carrier.

Mr. Hiemenz stated that AT&T was the carrier that initially prompted the tower application at St. Peter's before changing their focus to nodes. As their focus changed interest in the tower faded.

Ms. Sukanek stated that publicly owned structures with existing antennas can be increased by up to an additional 20 feet in height and quantity of antennas without city approval, while the owners of privately owned poles will retain control.

#### *Assumptions*

The City's coverage would improve by adding more tall towers, increasing the height of the antennas, and increasing the number of antennas on utility poles.

Utility poles with a single antenna and a height of 50 feet or less are more likely to have resident's support.

Cell coverage issues will not be resolved with 40' cell antennas on utility poles.

Additional towers/antennas in commercially zoned areas would be of little benefit to areas that are not adequately served.

An antenna at St. Peter's Church would positively impact cell coverage in the northwest portion of the Ladue.

Antennas on school, church, and club properties could be higher than utility poles and thus improve cell service.

Cell providers prefer having fewer tall antennas compared to several shorter antennas, but there are limited places in Ladue for placement of a tall antenna.

State law dictates that antennas added to utility poles already supporting cell antennas height can be increased by up to 20 feet with Ameren approval and without zoning approval from the City.

Ameren may be reluctant to allow very tall utility poles in residential areas. They may be more inclined if the height is deemed acceptable by the City.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Hiemenz stated that the residents want coverage without the visual consequences that accompany the improvements. There is a willing ambassador for Old Warson Country Club regarding tower/antenna placement if desired. Determining the balance between coverage and equipment and proper marketing are essential.

Ms. Chimento inquired about the necessary accessory structures that accompany towers and zoning requirements of said structures.

Mr. Hiemenz stated these structures are batteries and generators. They can be reduced in size, but reduction impacts the ability for consistent service.

Mr. Rupinski added the trend is leaning towards more residents relying on cellular communications. Also, advancements in technology (5G) require carriers to densify their cellular antenna infrastructure. St. Louis County or Missouri may not have instituted this yet, but in the state of Florida, commercial and public use buildings are required to have a minimum cell strength inside buildings for emergency response. These entities may want to partner with us to achieve this and not rely on private infrastructure.

#### *Conclusions*

Additional antennas and/or taller antennas are necessary in residential areas to address coverage gaps.

Allowing taller utility poles along with streamlining the application process would aid Ladue with cell service.

It is worrisome to allow more antennas to be placed on utility poles since additional antennas and 20' additional height being added to those utility poles in the future without City approval.

More towers and antennas on non-residential properties such as schools, churches and clubs in Ladue could help with coverage. Barriers may consist of awareness or opposition to having an antenna.

Mr. Rupinski requested heat maps by carrier, current and anticipated coverage laws, and carrier contacts be added. The contacts will not be added to any public document.

Mr. Hiemenz would like the City Planner to take the lead on these endeavors at the conclusion of the committee meetings once the committee review and recommendations have been presented to the Ladue City Council.

Ms. Schmitz reiterated the importance of working with neighboring municipalities. Monitoring activities in nearby communities could address some of Ladue's needs at the same time.

Mr. Hiemenz shared information that Frontenac, Huntleigh and Clayton have a seamless process. Carriers meet with the Director of Public Works and/or the City Planner, meet the criteria, then complete the process. They do not face the same challenges as the City of Ladue.

Mr. Reed added the need to develop carrier contact, meetings with said contacts, overcoming the City's negative perception and regaining a place in capital budgets of these carriers. Topography is difficult to overcome. He would like to see the permitting process condensed and simplified. A one-page node application with quick approval and a three-page maximum for antenna and towers.

Ms. Chimento shared the need to educate and market this information to the residents. Schools, churches, and clubs may be more receptive with economic incentives post pandemic. An architectural improvement, such as a clock tower, could change an eyesore to an attractive tower.

### **Possible amendments to current Ladue Residential & Commercial Regulations**

Four types of towers that can be approved in Ladue:

Communication Towers are 100 feet tall, self-supporting towers with antennas. (they are only allowed in G2 and H zoned commercial areas)

Stealth Towers are 80 feet tall, self-supporting camouflaged towers with antennas. (these are allowed with a Special Use Permit on a nonresidential property in residential areas at least 2 acres in size)

Communication Antennas can be no more than 70 feet off the ground and may be no higher than 15 feet above highest power line. They are attached to an existing structure. In commercially zoned areas they are allowed on utility poles or buildings, set back as required, and 60 feet maximum height or with a Special Use Permit. In residential areas, they are permitted on nonresidential, two or more-acre properties, on a pole, or in a right-of-way.

Concealed Antennas, have no maximum height, are concealed within an existing structure. In residential areas, on a nonresidential, two or more-acre property, on a pole, or in a right-of-way. Allowed in commercially zoned areas must meet architectural review criteria.

#### *Examination of City Zoning Regulations pertaining to Communication Antennas*

The Special Use Permit process requires a recommendation by the Zoning and Planning Commission and takes about 90 days. For small cell antennas, such as those on utility poles, the City has a 60-day time limit, so we have developed an expedited SUP process for those types of antennas that takes around 60 days.

#### *Possible code changes to relax requirements and potentially allow for better coverage.*

The City could change the regulations to expedite the process for certain types of antenna applications, such as a utility pole, not exceeding the designated height with a single antenna. However, once an antenna is placed on a utility pole, that pole can be increased by as much as 20 feet and additional antennas can be added. The City can create an overall utility pole height.

One of the limitations in the Ladue Zoning Code is that antennas are not allowed to be located more than 15 feet above the highest power line on a utility pole. This often keeps poles and antennas from exceeding 40-45 feet. This requirement could be eliminated and replaced with a maximum height limit of perhaps 50-55 feet for an antenna on a utility pole.

The requirements for permitted antennas are listed separately from the requirements for antennas that require a Special Use Permit. Consolidating this into one section of the Zoning Code would be more user friendly.

New poles may be installed in commercial/industrial zoning just for the purpose of supporting a small cell facility. In residential districts, these can be installed with a Special Use Permit, but the zoning code does not have specific standards for a stand-alone pole. Additional standards would add clarification and to encourage equipment that will not be offensive to the residents.

Mr. Rupinski added community outreach and marketing are necessary, along with carrier outreach, to let the carriers know we are still working with them.

Ms. Lamitola added that stand alone poles in rights-of-ways have location restrictions. Some communities have them located in the right-of-ways, but the Ladue's are very narrow. Ladue could partner with the carriers and have legal authority to acquire right-of-ways. When limiting the height of utility poles, it should be noted that there are levels of height and power, such as high transmission lines.

Mayor Spewak suggested that she, Ms. Lamitola and Ms. Sukanek reach out to Ameren and maximize that relationship.

Mr. Wiese stated the high voltage lines toward Brentwood and Overland have cell equipment on them along commercial corridors.

#### **Update on Discussions with AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile**

Mr. Hiemenz gave an update.

Verizon continues to work on getting the City of Ladue into the Capital Budget. Their focus is on nodes and not towers.

A T&T has all the new nodes up and running along Litzsinger and S. Warson. They still are planning to blanket Ladue in their budget plan. A T&T has been the most receptive to the City of the three primary carriers.

T-Mobile and Sprint have more interest in expanding through towers. They would like to increase the mono-pole located at Price and Clayton roads from 85' to 100'. They are also interested in erecting a 130' tower on St. Louis Country Club grounds. T-Mobile will be redirecting the signal from the tower at Dielmann and Old Bonhomme to the City of Ladue.

#### **New Business**

The next meeting the committee will be working on the "lightening round", finalizing the formal document for review and recommendation to the City Council. The Council will familiarize themselves with the recommendation. The meeting will consist of a brief summary and questions. All the Committee is welcome to attend the April City Council meeting via ZOOM.

The City Planner will coordinate the drive testing, as it is in the City budget.

Mr. Wiese added this is an opportunity for the City to come in from behind and get in front of the new technology (5G). Driving north on Warson past Rodes Park there is higher ground. It is 150-170 feet higher there. He added the need to get the word out about the changes in policy and public support.

Ms. Chimento requested the elevation be added to the map.

#### **Schedule next meeting**

The next meeting will be held via ZOOM on March 25th at 9:00 A.M.

#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Hiemenz adjourned the meeting at 10:12 A.M.

  
Mr. Charlie Hiemenz, Chairman