

**MINUTES OF MEETING
LADUE CELLULAR SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY OF LADUE, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020, 4:00 P.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 introduced himself, covered the basic parameters of the meeting and called the meeting to order at 4:04 P.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

Member Introductions

Chairman Charlie Hiemenz- Berkley Lane resident, 20-year member of the Ladue City Council, 2 terms as Ladue City Council President, also served on the Ladue Department of Public Works Committee and the Ladue Board of Fire and Police Commissioners

Andrea Sukanek- City Planner, 3 years cell regulation experience

Anne Lamitola- City Director of Public Works with expertise in right of way agreements and Chapter 90 of the Code of Ordinances

Anita Chimento- Ladue Crest Lane resident, multi-unit residential real estate developer

Larry Reed, Briarcliff resident, Senior Vice President of Pace Properties, commercial real estate, business development and investment services

Eloise Schmitz- Fordyce Lane resident, executive officer, and co-founder of LoanNEX, owner and partner of Adreon Investments, former executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Charter Communications

Mike Rupinski- Danfield Road resident, President of ZeroDay Technology Solutions and former Chief Operating Officer of Keeley Construction with experience in building cell networks

Chip Wiese- Fair Oaks Drive resident, President & Chief Executive Officer of Wiese USA, distributor of Caterpillar equipment and ham radio operator

Tim Reboulet-Pointer Lane resident, Global Cyber-Security, Risk Analysis, and Threat Mitigation

Opening Remarks

Mayor Spewak introduced herself as the Ladue Mayor, former City Council member and mother of four boys, and addressed the board sharing that storm water and cell coverage are two of the major issues in the City. She offered full support and City Council backing for the committee.

Background for Committee formation

Chairman Hiemenz thanked the committee members for their willingness to serve and shared background information resulting in the decision to form the committee. Inferior cell coverage causing dropped calls and capacity issues are problematic. Due to the pandemic, many residents are working remotely, creating an overwhelming volume of network data usage. The three service carriers, Verizon, A T & T and T-Mobile provide a consumer product to the residents of the City and thus cannot be regulated the same as a public utility.

Committee Discussion

Identifying the dead zone and gap areas in the City

The advantages of a hiring a consultant to conduct a physical survey were discussed. CityScape, a firm based in Florida, works with high end municipalities, and provides a catalog of cell signals, maps of density and coverage. They identify dead zones and advocate for more coverage. The committee supported also looking into a Chicago based company and obtaining comparable pricing information.

Role of 5g for City Inclusion

There is an expected upgrade to 5G beginning in 2021. The current A T&T equipment is inadequate to accommodate the conversion from 4G to 5G. A full survey of coverage, tower locations and antennas will assist the City with gaining information to approach all three carriers and make decisions.

5G technology will carry more bandwidth and require more antennas as the radio waves travel a shorter distance. The City geography makes it difficult for radio waves to wrap around through the rolling topography such as the dip on S. Warson Road. 4G will become obsolete within the next 5-7 years.

A ZOOM meeting was set up and attended by the City Planner and the Committee Chairman with an A T&T executive who oversees permitting and construction of cell towers in a five-state area. This individual has no awareness of any barriers of entry into Ladue and shared the perception that the City historically had a limited interest in adding additional sources of connectivity. The committee and city officials will be looking into possible Briarcliff and Fair Oaks coverage enhancement. COVID-19 has played a significant role in slowing the process by the carriers. The need for capacity has quickly grown and additional towers and antennas are needed to accommodate the increased need in terms of both coverage and capacity.

Resident survey Questionnaire

The merits of a resident survey were discussed. Mr. Hiemenz stated the emphasis of engaging the carriers and working with them to upgrade infrastructure rather than surveying residents. Ms. Chimento would like to gage issues and comments from residents and touch base with real estate agents, stating that cell coverage's importance for city growth and to attracting families into the area.

Mr. Rupinski shared carriers' interest in the last mile of copper coming into homes. 5G towers can provide both cell and fixed data. This could be captured in a citywide physical survey to identify dead zones and gap areas.

Mr. Reed brought up discontinued land lines, the issue of safety, and crucial need for dependable connectivity all through the City.

Chairman Hiemenz stated he had spoken to the Ladue Chief of Police, for 911 calls all carriers have a shared service agreement, emergency calls go through to the strongest signal.

The City can leverage itself with the carriers by having residents potentially bundle their carrier products and with the advantage of two interstate highways running through our boundaries. In a Comprehensive Plan survey 30 to 40% of the residents stated dissatisfaction with current cell coverage.

Mr. Reboulet shared the proposal from CityScape would be beneficial for getting carriers on board and the City to add the necessary towers and antennas and looking into tower and antenna information from adjoining municipalities.

Discussion also included adding the antennas to existing Ameren utility poles.

Mr. Reed shared that some residents may not be aware that they can connect cell phones to the Wi-Fi in their homes to enhance the connections and reduce or eliminate dropped calls.

Mr. Rupinski shared that 5-G belongs in the future and that the committee should first review the results of a physical survey to identify current dead zones and gap areas.

Outreach to primary Ladue carriers

Chairman Hiemenz shared the need to communicate with a decision maker for each of the three carriers.

Mr. Reed was tasked with creating a write-up for the upcoming City Newsletter with instructions for connecting cell phones to home Wi-Fi.

Mr. Rupinski was tasked with finding a Verizon contact to approach.

Ms. Schmitz was tasked with finding a T-Mobile contact to approach.

Mayor Spewak is going to work with staff to amend the 2021 budget to include funding for the consultant survey.

Mr. Wiese, although on the road, shared support for the survey to identify dead zones and gap areas.

Mr. Rupinski inquired if the survey would require a public bid and suggested that the proposer write that bid. He will also research a possible additional consultant to approach in addition to CityScape.

Barriers to entry

The barriers to entry were identified as buildings, topography, trees, the perception that Ladue is not interested in updating the technology and community support of tower and antenna installation.

Schedule next meeting

The next meeting will be held via ZOOM on November 19th at 9:00AM.

Adjournment

Mr. Reed made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rupinski. All those present were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:18.

Mr. Charlie Hiemenz, Chairman