

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: TWR-2019-01 Value Concepts, Inc., US Hwy 84 E. E-A, New 300'
Telecommunications Tower

Work Session/Regular Session

DATE OF MEETING: May 28, 2019

BUDGET IMPACT:

FUNDING SOURCE:

() Annual

() Capital

(X) N/A

() SPLOST

() TPLOST

COUNTY ACTION REQUESTED ON:

HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES:

This case was tabled at the May 14 Board of Commissioners' meeting. It is an attempt by the applicant to construct a new ~300' telecommunications tower. The location of the proposed tower is a 100'x100' lease area that is accessed by a 30' easement from US Hwy 84 E. The subject property is currently zoned Estate Agriculture (E-A) and is allowed to be used for the construction of a new telecommunications tower with GLPC review and LCBOC approval. For further reference, where towers are allowed per the various zoning districts, new towers require LCBOC approval while collocation on existing towers require only administrative approval. Additionally, if the proposed tower is determined to likely interfere with the use of aircraft traffic operations around the Valdosta Regional Airport (VLD) or Moody Air Force Base (MAFB) the application can be required to receive a letter of clearance from the aforementioned bodies. In this case, because of the tower's height, communications regarding this case have taken place with MAFB and the Valdosta Airport Authority. The Valdosta Airport Authority concluded that the location and height should not affect the airport. Moody Air Force Base personnel have determined that the proposed tower should not be a large impact regarding the helicopter flight training path. A TERPs analysis from MAFB is still pending as of this submittal. Additionally, the FAA has not yet rendered a determination.

The primary motivation for a new tower at the subject property is a gap in the existing coverage area. The subject property is in the Rural Service Area and depicted as Agricultural/Forestry on the Future Development Map. While the character areas comment generally on the preservation of rural areas, Goal 10 of the Comprehensive Plan cites the support of technological infrastructure. The conflict between preservation and upgrading the technological infrastructure yields a potential hurdle in the interruption of the rural skyline.

Concerning the rural skyline, as long as the burden of proof for a new tower has been satisfied, Staff believes that the justification for the infrastructure outweighs the rural skyline concern.

At the regular April meeting of the GLPC, 2 representatives of the applicant spoke in favor of the request stating

that the benefits of additional coverage and dependence on this coverage for safety are the motivation behind the request. A representative from MAFB spoke of concerns with the request stating that the proposed site is within a helicopter training flight path and additional time is needed to fully assess its impact. After considerable discussion, the GLPC voted on an 8-2 vote (opposed by Commissioners Ball and Hightower) to Table the request until the May regular meeting of the GLPC. Staff has found this request overall consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the TRC had no objectionable comments regarding this request.

- OPTIONS: 1. Approve
2. Approve with conditions
3. Table
4. Deny

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve

DEPARTMENT: Planning

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Molly Stevenson

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

GLPC Action: Table