

Adverse Decision Would Pose a Threat to All County Residents

Ugly cell towers

If the appeal overturns the recent Board of Zoning Appeals decision, which turned down applications to erect two ugly twin towers in the midst of Kingsmill, the Deep Pockets will have won, and the public will have lost.

It is likely that an adverse decision would pose a threat to all James City County residents. The wireless providers would plan to erect towers wherever and whenever they please, with impunity, since the developer-oriented James City staff would feel obligated to review such applications lightly, and the public and review committees and boards would be reluctant to stick their necks out. Indeed, the emasculated review boards might well find it difficult to attract qualified members.

In the huge wave of documentation submitted by the carriers to overturn the BZA's decision, a simple fact has been lost. The proposed twin towers were found to have not met the county's ordinances. They would not be unnoticeable to the "casual observer" as required.

Indeed, the tower proposals failed several tests. They would stand out above the surrounding trees and landscape by 40-50 feet. They would be located less than the required 400-foot distance from the nearest residence. The surrounding mature tree buffer is extremely thin and far less than the 100-foot minimum required. The towers would not appear consistent with native vegetation in the area. Instead, they would be quite out of place, looking more like giant redwood trees of the West.

To top these negatives, the proposed towers would not, by the wireless companies' own estimates, improve service to a large number of Kingsmill residents.

Since there are viable technologies available that are capable of providing considerably better service than that of the proposed towers, without their intrusive nature, there is little reason to give the old-fashioned cell towers a second look.

For example, the newer Distributed Antenna System is in use throughout the United States, Canada and elsewhere in the world.

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