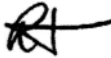


LEGISLATIVE #

090110

TO: Russ Blackburn, City Manager
THRU: Erik A. Bredfeldt, Planning and Development Services Director
FROM: Ralph Hilliard, Planning Manager
DATE: September 21, 2010
SUBJECT: Cell Tower



On June 6, 2010, during citizen comment, citizen Julia Reiskind addressed the City Commission regarding the proposed plan to establish a cell tower at Westside Park and some of the issues her neighborhood has had with the placement of a cell tower in her neighborhood. Following a discussion of cell towers, the City Commission requested staff to provide a memorandum to the Mayor and City Commission discussing the feasibility and desirability of preparing a cell tower master plan. There was some mention that Alachua County has a cell tower master plan that provides a plan for where towers will be located in the future in unincorporated County. However, County staff has indicated that they do not have such a master cell tower location plan.

Staff research indicates that there are some communities that have prepared cell tower master plans. West Palm Beach as recently as April 2010 held a workshop on the possibility of developing a master plan to use city owned property as possible deployment sites. It appears that most master plans are developed with the idea of determining which government owned properties should be made available for this service. There are master plans that do provide generalized map location down to detailed parcel maps of where facilities will be located. It appears that most communities have adopted land development regulations without specified mapped locations to guide the development and location of cell towers in compliance with Federal Regulations.

It is staff's opinion that based on our current regulations (developed in 2005) and the lack of population growth within the City and the development of sufficient towers in the unincorporated areas around the City there is little need for a detailed master plan process. Any type of master planning process would need to be a joint plan with Alachua County due to the overlapping territory of cell towers. Alachua County invited the city to be a part of their telecommunication planning several

Cell Tower Memo
Russ Blackburn/Ralph Hilliard
September 21, 2010
Page 2 of 2

years ago, but the City did not participate for unknown reasons. However, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County regulations are very similar and appear to have controlled the proliferation of towers in the community. Since 2005 the City has permitted two towers, one each in northwest and southwest Gainesville, both which have space for multiple carriers to locate on each tower.

Recommendation: It is staff's opinion that a master plan is not needed, but the City needs to determine whether it will allow certain parks and open spaces areas to be used for this purpose. As an option the City may want to hire a local consultant to address where the technology is headed in the future to determine whether changes to the Code are needed.