



LITTLE LAKE FIRE DISTRICT



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Chris Wilkes
Fire Chief

May 29, 2020

Subject: AT&T Cell Tower Installation

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Planning & Building Services

Dear Planning Commission,

It deeply surprises me that the planning commission voted 6-0 directing staff to create a motion to deny the application for the cell tower installation on Manzanita Dr. in Willits. With the unanimous vote of the commission it shows a blatant disregard for public safety during major emergencies and the day to day operations (small emergencies) of emergency services.

The largest undeniable breakdown in emergency services in Mendocino County is communication. We struggle for radio coverage and cell coverage on a day to day basis and this is amplified during a major incident. As an example, during the after action review of the Mendocino Complex Fires communication and redundancy were the most major concerns. Emergency services at the local and county level take these identified problem very seriously. We develop plans for the future that include closing identified gaps in service and operations.

The installation of the cell tower on Manzanita Dr. is grant funded and helps move towards the State of California's mission to provide "First Net" communications statewide. First Net allows priority calling of first responders during major emergencies and creates redundancy in our coverage.

Mendocino County has spent good money on creating a county wide evacuation plan based on the needs of our residents and problems we have recognized during the Mendocino Complex Fire. We are also currently in the middle of developing an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan yet the planning commission voted 6-0 to deny infrastructure that is directly in-line with identified and recognized shortfalls in our emergency response.

I'm asking the planning commission to please pay attention to what your emergency services needs in order to function efficiently during our next major emergency. Let's not let a grant funded opportunity slip through our fingers.

Sincerely,

Chris Wilkes
Fire Chief, LLFPD

CC: John Haschak, 3rd District Supervisor