

# Capitola radio tower still getting static

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CAPITOLA — The City Council took no action last week on the embattled cellular tower proposal on Rosedale Avenue, but members appear to be inching closer to a thumbs-up vote.

The process was frustrating to local residents who say they worry the tower's power output could cause health problems.

The applicant, John McCoy, also expressed frustration. He sometimes seemed exasperated, saying that he had already worked with residents and the city government to come up with a workable plan.

At a public hearing Thursday, the primary sticking point for city government was the pole's location on the Rosedale industrial property. Since the Planning Commission approved the project, the plans have changed slightly, with the proposed pole moving to another part of the property.

McCoy has proposed a taller replacement for the tower on his property to accommodate more telecommunications companies. He already ran into controversy when the original 55-foot tower was put up earlier this spring. Residents Lemary Renauer and Arn Johnson said no one alerted them that it was coming, and called it an eyesore.

Evan Shepherd of Nextel Communications, which would have cellular equipment on the tower if it is approved, said the tower's power output would be less than 0.8 percent of federal safety guidelines. "There is a wide margin of safety here," said Shepherd.

Independent consultant Peter Polson, who was paid by Nextel to appear at the meeting, said the FCC guidelines were endorsed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

He also said that the power emanating from the tower would actually pass over the neighboring houses. Houses 200 feet from it would receive the maximum exposure, he said.

Polson said the 0.8 percent figure is the result of mathematical equations. He said he couldn't take direct power measurements because the new pole hasn't been built.

He also said annual testing could be done to make sure it never violates FCC standards.

Johnson expressed anger that he had fought hard to keep the tower at least 100 feet from his home. "We settled for that because we couldn't get anything better. Now, this will be several feet from us," he said. "It's back in its previous position."

Another neighbor, Kelly Dunaway, said that if the pole were proposed near a public school, "the outcry would be incredible."

According to federal regulations, local communities have authority regarding the aesthetics of a pole, but much less sway when it comes to health issues, as long as power input falls within federal guidelines.

Dunaway expressed her frustration with the rules. "Ugly? I live in a mobile home park," she said. "Beauty is not my concern."

On July 3, the Planning Commission conditionally approved the 70-foot-high pole that would replace the existing 55-foot pole. But the decision was appealed to the council's higher authority.

Since then, the proposal was redrafted and the position of the proposed tower was changed. McCoy said he was trying to keep the pole as far from neighbors as possible. But Johnson and Renauer said the new position was actually closer than

ever to their property line.

McCoy said he could move the pole back to its original spot. This seemed to appease most members of the council, but they also wanted specific measurements and drawings showing exactly where the new pole would be.

McCoy said he'd take measurements. The city will take measurements of its own, in response to a neighbor who said she was worried about bias.

The council also took issue with one of the conditions that the planning commission had approved. This condition stated that McCoy could add small devices to

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