

**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

<p>PROJECT NAMES: SP202000012 Scruby Property - Tier III Personal Wireless Service Facility</p> <p>SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Agricultural-Forestal Districts Advisory Committee review of a special use permit request for a 94-foot tall monopole tower with two (2) antenna arrays and related ground equipment adjacent to the Yellow Mountain District.</p> <p>STAFF CONTACT: Scott Clark</p>	<p>AGENDA DATE: February 1, 2021</p> <p>ATTACHMENTS: Yes</p>
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BACKGROUND:

The subject property (Tax Map 54 Parcel 72A) is a 1.1-acre parcel located on Greenwood Station Road (Route 690), adjacent to the Yellow Mountain Agricultural/Forestal District (see Attachment A). The adjacent District parcels are Tax Map 54 Parcel 71B and Tax Map 55 Parcel 15.

The special use permit application requests a 94-foot tall monopole tower with two (2) antenna arrays and related ground equipment (see Attachment B; please note that Attachment B is provided with a hyperlink, rather than as a separate PDF, as it is too large to send by e-mail.) These facilities require a special use permit approval from the Board of Supervisors.

COMMITTEE REVIEW GUIDELINES:

Section 3-202(D) of the Albemarle County Code reads as follows:

D. Consideration of district in taking certain actions. The county shall consider the existence of a district and the purposes of this chapter and Chapter 43 of Title 15.2 of the Virginia Code in its comprehensive plan, ordinances, land use planning decisions, administrative decisions and procedures affecting parcels of land adjacent to the district.

The County’s practice has been to consult with the Committee on any special use permit requests located on land adjacent to an existing District.

Those purposes of the Agricultural-Forestal Districts chapter of the County Code are listed in Section 3-100, “Purpose and Intent”:

The purpose and intent of this chapter are as follows:

A. It is the policy of county to conserve and protect, and to encourage the development and improvement of, its agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural or forestal products. It is also the policy of the county to conserve and protect agricultural and forestal lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide essential open spaces for clean airsheds, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and for aesthetic purposes.

B. It is the purpose and intent of this chapter to provide means by which agricultural and forestal lands of either statewide or local significance may be protected and enhanced as a viable segment of state and local economies, and as important economic and environmental resources.

The Committee's role is to assist the Board of Supervisors by commenting on any possible impacts to the Yellow Mountain District from the proposed use. The Committee's review should directly address Agricultural-Forestal District impacts. Other aspects of the review, such as visibility of the facility, impacts on the Greenwood-Afton Historic District, etc., will be addressed in staff's report to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

The Committee's recommendation will be included in staff's reports to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors when public hearings are held for this item.

DISCUSSION:

Section 3-101 of the County Code further explains the County policies that the Districts should promote. Staff will address this proposal's impacts on each policy below:

A. Production of food and other agricultural and forestal products. It is the policy of the State and the County to conserve and protect and to encourage the development and improvement of the Commonwealth's agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural and forestal products.

The presence of a cell tower on a 1.1-acre parcel that is outside the District and that is adjacent to an interstate highway will not limit the capacity of land in the District to produce agricultural or forestal products. Traffic for construction of the facility would be short-lived and so would not impede farm traffic once the facility was in place.

B. Provide essential open spaces. It is also the policy of the State and the County to conserve and protect agricultural and forestal lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide essential open spaces for clean air sheds, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, as well as for aesthetic purposes.

Open spaces within the district would not be reduced by the creation of a monopole tower on an adjacent parcel. The district's value for watershed-quality and wildlife-habitat protection would not be impeded by adjacent tower construction.

C. Strong agricultural and forestal economy. It is the policy of the County to support a strong agricultural and forestal economy.

A monopole tower on adjacent property does not impede the District's ability to support agricultural or forestal production. Theoretically, farms in the area could use the telecommunication service provided by the tower.

D. Protect and preserve natural resources and retain continuous and unfragmented land. It is the policy of the County to protect and preserve natural resources, which include mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, streams, groundwater, and retain continuous and unfragmented land for agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, and natural resource protection.

Development of the site would not create fragmentation of land ownership or of land cover within the district. The parcel's small size and location adjacent to a major highway make its value to landscape connectivity minimal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Physical impacts of the proposed use will be limited to the parcel adjacent to the District, and would not impact agricultural resources on land in the District.

Therefore staff recommends that the Committee advise the Board and the Planning Commission that the proposed use does not conflict with the purposes of the Agricultural-Forestal Districts.

ATTACHMENTS:

A – Location Map

B – [Special Use Permit Plan](#)

Attachment A

