

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DARIEN  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING  
August 5, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Lou Mallers – Chairperson, Michael Desmond, Robert Erickson, Hilda Gonzalez, Steve Hiatt, Julie Kasprovicz, Brian Liedtke, Ralph Stompanato

**ABSENT:** Bryan Gay

**OTHERS:** Joseph Hennerfeind-City Planner

Chairperson Lou Mallers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Darien City Hall, Council Chambers, 1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois. Chairperson Mallers declared a quorum present and swore in the audience members wishing to present public testimony.

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**A. Public Hearing PZC 2020-07– ComEd Substation – Lyman Avenue (Tower Height Variation) Petitioner Commonwealth Edison Seeks approval to vary Section 5A-5-12 (C) of the City Zoning Code, that otherwise requires a 60 foot maximum height for transmitting towers, for a proposed 104-foot tower to replace the existing 65-foot tower at the substation located north of 7700 Lyman Avenue in Darien, Illinois.**

Mr. Joe Hennerfeind, City Planner reported that there was an error in the initial notice and stated that the property has no address.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that Commonwealth Edison currently has a 65' communications tower located at the substation on Lyman Avenue. He reported that the petitioner proposes to replace the 65' tower with one at 104' in height (100' tower and 4' lightning rod) to accommodate a Smart Grid Automation Device Monitoring Support Structure. Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the structure will serve ComEd communications system exclusively and will not be a co-location tower.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the upgrades are part of a smart grid initiative to improve monitoring and response and is expected to reduce outage periods, speed repairs, and allow for efficient power switching when accommodating grid interruptions.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the ComEd substation has existed since the 1970s and pre-dates all development surrounding the complex. He reported that in 1987 the property was annexed into Darien and Special Use approval was granted by the R-2 zoning.

Mr. Heinerfeind reported that all towers must meet primary setbacks as established by the zoning district requires a 35' front yard setback and a 30' side yard setback. He reported that the site plans show that the tower would be 117' from the front lot line and 59.5' from the side yard to the north, placing the existing 65' tall tower in the same

location. He further reported that the tower is 250' from the property line of the nearest residential home, the fire station parking lot to the north or the property which is also owned by ComEd which granted an easement for the lot's construction.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that although Darien does not have a "fall zone" requirement, this would be the only adjacent developed area within immediate proximity.

Mr. Phil Haliburton, ComEd stated that the upgrade helps to sectionalize, automate and bring back outages faster.

Mr. Scott Saef, Sidney & Austin, representing ComEd displayed a power point presentation noting the details of the project. He also provided renderings of the facility.

Commissioner Hiatt questioned if the pole could be moved to another area on the property and if there is any flexibility regarding the height.

Mr. Saef stated that there has to be a close distance between the structure and radio equipment inside the building. He stated that the height is needed because the first antenna has to be above the tree line. He said if lower it will not support the system.

Chris Collins, ComEd stated that each antenna serves the same purpose. He stated that the remote radios will latch on to one of the antennas.

Commissioner Hiatt questioned if there is a need for 5 antennas.

Mr. Collins stated that there has to be a 10 foot gap and that 5 antennas are needed for the number of devices in the area.

Commissioner Liedtke questioned the purpose of the pole.

Commissioner Kasprowitz questioned why not have a couple antennas.

Mr. Collins stated that the height is needed and there are requirements to have a horizontal separation of 100 feet.

Ms. Kimberly Marshall, 7700 Lyman stated that the area is an eyesore and requested if Com Ed can clean it up some. She said there are dead trees, garbage and that she has had to hire an exterminator because of carpenter ants and rodents.

Mr. Hennerfeind provided a map to the Board showing the floodplain. He reported that the vegetation in the wetland cannot be touched and the only way to do something with the dead trees is if they are unsafe. He did report that there can be a clean up to get rid of the trash. He requested that ComEd investigate and exterminate if possible.

Mr. Haliburton requested a copy of the photos which Ms. Marshall provided. He said he would work with their environmental staff to address the issue.

Alderman Eric Gustafson, stated that he had conversations with a few of the residents in his ward. He stated that even with screening residents will see the tower once winter comes.

Alderman Gustafson questioned if this is connected with the smart meters. He questioned how the system knows there is an outage in a certain area. Alderman Gustafson stated that when he has an outage he calls ComEd and they have no idea of the outage.

Mr. Collins stated that this proposal is strictly associated with the distribution lines. He stated that when the meters go out a signal goes to command center and can determine where there is an outage.

Alderman Gustafson stated that the people on Marlboro hear a loud buzzing noise. He questioned if this does not get approved what is the risk to Darien.

Mr. Collins stated that the risk is communications not working and outages more likely and more duration.

Alderman Gustafson questioned how many are going up in DuPage County.

Mr. Collins stated that there are approximately 95 across DuPage County and that they try to use existing infrastructure. He stated that they will have to build another 100.

Robert Marshall, Darien hard to believe that ComEd can't move 50 feet out with repeaters.

Mr. Collins stated that moving would be a loss from radio to antenna and a lot of infrastructure. He stated that repeaters are only for a small amount of devices.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the Committee received correspondence from Ann Dormandy.

Mr. Hennerfeind questioned if the substation at 87<sup>th</sup> and Lemont Road substation will result in any other poles within our jurisdiction.

Commissioner Liedtke asked if they would be open to using a different paint to blend.

Mr. Collins stated that they will not be upgrading at the substation and that they are willing to work with the City regarding the paint color.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the west side of property is in a higher restrictive flood zone and if moved there would be additional restrictions and not sure if moving is an option.

Commissioner Desmond stated that he was never a fan of tall towers but that this is an advantage to the City and a great benefit.

Commissioner Kasprowitz questioned if the poles can be added on later.

Mr. Collins stated that can probably add poles later but they have never done it.

Commissioner Liedtke questioned why they can't have 3 or 4 radios.

Mr. Collins reported that 5 radios maxes out and if one radio fails, other devices will pick up.

There was no one else wishing to present public comment and Chairperson Mallers closed the public hearing.

**Commissioner Liedtke made a motion and is was seconded by Commissioner Hiatt approval of PZC 2020-07– ComEd Substation – Lyman Avenue (Tower Height Variation) Petitioner Commonwealth Edison Seeks approval to vary Section 5A-5-12 (C) of the City Zoning Code, that otherwise requires a 60 foot maximum height for transmitting towers, for a proposed 104-foot tower to replace the existing 65-foot tower at the substation located north of 7700 Lyman Avenue in Darien, Illinois.**

**Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED 8-0.**

Mr. Liedtke stated that he did not put a condition into the motion but he would strongly encourage a light blue or gray color to blend in.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the solar panel variation for Lace School will be brought before the PZC.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Erickson made a motion and is was seconded by Commissioner Desmond to approve the June 17, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes.**

**Upon voice vote, THE MOTION CARRIED 8-0.**

### **NEXT MEETING**

Mr. Hennerfeind announced that the next meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2020.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (On any topic related to planning and zoning)**

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Hiatt made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Desmond. Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED** unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

**APPROVED:**

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**Elizabeth Lahey  
Secretary**

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**Lou Mallers  
Chairperson**