

Memo

To: Blount County Planning Commission
From: Building Commissioner
CC: Other commission members and staff.
Date: 9/15/2011
Re: Cellular tower regulations.

Current Regulations

C-4. Visual effects and screening. Towers and antennas shall meet the following requirements: (a) Towers shall either maintain a galvanized steel finish or, subject to any applicable standards of the FAA, be painted a neutral color so as to reduce visual obtrusiveness; (b) At a tower site, the design of the buildings and related structures shall, to the extent possible, use materials, colors, textures, screening, and landscaping that will blend them into the natural setting and surrounding buildings; (c) If an antenna is installed on a structure other than a tower, the antenna and supporting electrical and mechanical equipment shall be of a neutral color that is identical to, or closely compatible with, the color of the supporting structure so as to make the antenna and related equipment as visually unobtrusive as possible.

Regulations for discussion

C-4. Visual effects and screening. Towers and antennas shall meet the following requirements: (a) Towers shall be camouflaged to reduce visual obtrusiveness, subject to any applicable standards of the FAA, unless the applicant can provide proof that a camouflaged tower is not feasible. (b) At a tower site, the design of the buildings and related structures shall, to the extent possible, use materials, colors, textures, screening, and landscaping that will blend them into the natural setting and surrounding buildings; (c) If an antenna is installed on a structure other than a tower, the antenna and supporting electrical and mechanical equipment shall be of a neutral color that is identical

to, or closely compatible with, the color of the supporting structure so as to make the antenna and related equipment as visually unobtrusive as possible.

The changes found in the second section C-4 are what you had asked me to bring back this month for discussion. Other possible ways to reduce visual impacts from cellular towers are painting the towers neutral colors, waiving or reducing the separation requirements to promote the use of shorter towers, and using close mount or internal mount antennas. We have had success in the past with the close mount antennas on painted towers and there is an example of the clustering of shorter towers in the material from last month. That specific example was three towers that were 85 feet tall and used at flag poles. These designs should be a good starting point for the discussion on limiting the visual impacts of cellular towers.