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RP residents fighting cell-phone antenna

Radiation worries cause neighborhood residents to start petition

Todd Anderson carries two cell phones with him, but the prospect of a cell-phone antenna pole in the park next to his Rohnert Park home has him worried.

"Cell-phone technology is too new. Kids on the Little League field shouldn't be the guinea pigs," he said.

Despite assurances by the federal government that the antennae pose no hazard, "I don't think they have done enough research to say these things are safe," Anderson said.

Anderson and 45 of his neighbors signed a petition last week objecting to the cell-phone antenna that Verizon Wireless wants to install at Magnolia Park, on a light pole between the home plates of two baseball fields, next to bleachers and a concession stand.

The antenna, which Verizon would lease from the city for \$18,000 a year, is intended to provide cell-phone coverage for the southeast area of Rohnert Park, and in the M section, the city's newest neighborhood.

But neighborhood concerns were enough to convince the Planning Commission to delay a vote on the antenna, even though federal law says towers that comply with emission standards cannot be denied on the basis of perceived health risks.

In theory, say city officials, the only reason approval is necessary from the Planning Commission is because of the height and aesthetic concerns with the antenna pole and a proposed 400-square-foot building that would house transmitter equipment.

The federal guidelines aren't good enough for Jeanie Simon, whose house is within 50 feet of the antenna site, which would also be within 300 feet of Monte Vista Elementary School.

"Why can't they put it somewhere less populated, where the concerns aren't so great? This is where our children play," said Simon, the mother of two girls, aged 6 and

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There are hundreds of cell-phone antennae in the Bay Area and consultants for Verizon say they are commonly placed on light poles at schools and city parks.

Still, Verizon agreed last week to work with opponents to see if an alternate site can be found for its antenna.

Planning commissioners also admitted some qualms about the safety of the antenna before putting the matter over to their May 27 meeting.

Concerned residents argue there is conflicting information about the safety of cell phones. In Britain, for example, the antennae aren't allowed near schools.

Anderson, who works as a broadcast engineer for a TV network, said he fears for the safety of his three children, aged 4 through 12, who play in Magnolia Park.

Some studies have suggested a link between leukemia and electromagnetic radiation, such as that emitted by cell phone transmitters.

But William Hammett, a consulting engineer for Verizon, said "those are speculative conclusions."

He said there are no verified reports of injuries or adverse health effects to people exposed within permissible limits adopted by the Federal Communications Commission in 1999.

"This is based on decades of studies, page after page after page," Hammett said of the FCC guidelines.

In his report, Rohnert Park Senior Planner Ron Bendorff quoted a University of Wisconsin report that said "so far no conclusive evidence has tied health hazards to cell towers, but experts say more studies should be conducted before drawing final conclusions."

City officials acknowledge that people should stay 12 feet away from the Verizon cell-phone antenna, but it would be 70 feet high on the light pole.

Consulting engineers said that at ground level, exposure would be about 0.3 percent of the applicable public limit. The maximum calculated level at the second-floor level of any of the nearby homes would be 0.48 percent of the public exposure limit, according to the engineers.

Currently in Rohnert Park, there are two cell-tower sites on city property: an array on the Public Safety building on City Hall Drive and a tower at the KRCB facility on Labath Avenue.

There are other cellular installations on private property, such as an SBC antenna on Commerce Boulevard.

And Sprint PCS is proposing a cell-phone antenna in Benicia Park, another Little League site.

The city wants to locate a public safety radio transmitter on the proposed Verizon pole, a consolidation that will save the city as much as \$60,000, since it won't have to build its own tower, according to Assistant City Manager Steve Donley.

The Verizon and Sprint deals will generate money for the city. The City Council earlier this year agreed to lease the park pole to Verizon for \$18,000 a year, contingent on the Planning Commission approval.

There's a similar lease agreement with Sprint, which already has agreed to pay the city \$30,000 up front to fund a scoreboard and new bleachers at Benicia Park.

Donley said it is understandable that people react when they hear the term electromagnetic "radiation." It is a complex scientific topic, but in fact, he noted, there is a whole gamut of radiation, ranging from the sun's rays to televisions, radios, microwave ovens and cell phones.

He said the city must rely on the credible scientific information that is the basis of federal guidelines.

"Each city can't create its own standards," he said.

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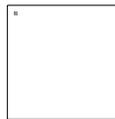
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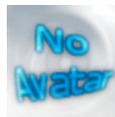
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Re: RP residents fighting cell-phone antenna  
by **heidimkup** on Tuesday, March 29 @ 01:01:40 CST

heidimkup

I am involved in a very similar battle with my town and Verizon.

I would like to know how this case ended. Did the planning commission and Verizon agree to an alternate site?



Re: RP residents fighting cell-phone antenna  
by **Guest** on Thursday, August 04 @ 08:16:52 CDT

People and City/County Governments seem really worried about cell towers and the "suspected" radiation effects they "think" the site may produce.

I've worked in the Radio Frequency field for 35 years now. I was a "Ground Communications Equipment Repairman" in the USAF, I've worked for Motorola RF Service centers, I've worked on and operate Ham Radio, I've installed antenna array and transmitter equipment (still do). Trust me when I say that these concerns are unfounded. For many reasons:

1. TV or FM radio transmission sites have been putting out 1000's

of times the amount of RF radiation for many many years! It's NOT "new technology". No one petitions to have them removed for "suspected" radiation effects.

2. "IF" there were a problem, and there's not, being closer to a site would actually be safer! The antenna arrays on these sites are designed to make the RF energy go outward. A home, school, or playground 50 yards away would actually have the energy going over their heads. I've see cases where an antenna was installed on the roof of a taller building, and the people inside on the bottom floors had no signal!

3. If there were a problem... carrying a cell phone and using it near your children would expose them to much more radiation than a cell tower site. Unless they climbed the tower and hugged the antenna array.

4. 991, Police, Fire, and other public safety tower sites also put out a lot more RF energy than cell tower sites do.

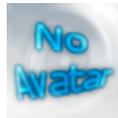
5. Government research on the issue has proven that RF energy levels are not \*\*\*\*\*ulative... for example: A cell site with 10 50 watt transmitters does NOT expose one to 500 watts of energy.

6. You'll receive more RF and other radiation on a daily basis from your home microwave oven and TV sets, than you will from cell sites (or any RF site for that matter).

I could go on, but the point is... this is NOT new stuff, and it's actually weaker than what people have already been putting up with for many many years.

Gene

gwells@1st.net



Re: RP residents fighting cell-phone antenna  
by <http://www.x.jg> on Tuesday, March 21 @ 05:56:43  
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