

May 4, 2012

TO: George Bell, Chairman  
Lake County Zoning Board of Appeals

FROM: Brad Denz, Senior Planner  
Lake County Department of Planning, Building and Development

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CASE NO: 4917

REQUESTED ACTION: 1. To increase the height of a radio communications tower from 50 feet to 120 feet.

2. To increase to maximum allowable impervious surface from 0.50 to 0.53.

It is the desire of the applicant to construct a radio communications tower which will be accessory to the proposed fire station.

HEARING DATE: May 10, 2012

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#### GENERAL INFORMATION

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APPLICANTS: Lake Villa Township

# OF PARCELS: The subject properties are in the process of being resubdivided from 7 (seven) lots into 2 (two) lots.

SIZE: 2.05 acres

LOCATION: 37850 North Highway 59, Lake Villa, Illinois

EXISTING ZONING: R – 3

EXISTING  
LAND USE: vacant

PROPOSED: fire station

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**SURROUNDING ZONING / LAND USE**

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NORTH: Residential-3 (R-3) / Lake Villa Township office building  
WEST: Residential-3 (R-3) / single-family dwellings  
SOUTHWEST: Residential-3 (R-3) / open space within a residential subdivision  
SOUTH: General Commercial (GC) / vacant  
EAST: General Commercial (GC) / water tower and medical office

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**COMPREHENSIVE PLANS**

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LAKE COUNTY: Residential Single-Family Small Lot

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**DETAILS OF REQUEST**

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ACCESS: Direct access is provided from Route 59.  
NONCONFORMING LOT: Once the resubdivision is recorded, the subject property will be a conforming in the Residential-3 (R-3) zoning district.  
FLOODPLAIN / WETLAND: According to the County's GIS, the property is not located in a wetland or floodplain.  
SEWER AND WATER: Public sewer and water.

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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The property is in the process of being resubdivided from 7 (seven) lots into 2 (two) lots. The newly created lot to the south will be purchased by the Lake Villa Fire Department for a new fire station. The remnant lot to the north will be retained by Lake Villa Township which is improved with an office building utilized by the Township. The west side of Park Court was recently vacated by the Township in which the vacated area will become part of the land area for the Lake Villa Fire Station.

The applicant is in the process of site plan review and the subdivision review process with the Department Development Review Team. In terms of establishing an essential quasi-governmental use such as a fire station, staff refers to Chapter 5 of the Lake County Framework Plan which elaborates the need for fire protection services. Specifically, this section of the Framework Plan states "Excellence in fire protection, emergency preparedness and response,

and emergency medical services (EMS) are essential components of Lake County's quality of life. Ensuring this excellence in both personnel and equipment will be a challenge. The increase in the numbers of houses and non-residential structures that will be built in the County as it grows to 2020 will require an increase in the number of fire fighters and EMS personnel, additional fire stations, more fire trucks, and more ambulances". A designated goal of Section 5.28 of the Framework Plan is to "Ensure that excellent fire protection, emergency and disaster response, and emergency medical services will be available throughout Lake County".

Given the amount of floor area, building size and necessary equipment/apparatus to appropriately accommodate a fire station, staff feels the Board should take into consideration the unique circumstances of the variation requests to allow for effective fire protection services and thereby accomplish a Framework Plan goal.

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## RECOMENDATION

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With regards for the communications tower for the proposed use, staff has no objection to increase the height of a radio communications tower from 50 feet to 120 feet as the request would meet the intent of the regulations.

1. Exceptional conditions peculiar to the applicant's property:

Comment: Technically there are no physical limitations on the subject property itself to construct a communications tower at 50 feet. However given the necessity of the Lake Villa Fire Department to construct a 120 foot communications tower which is consistent with the height of other towers in their district, the variation is necessary for the Fire Department to provide optimal service to their constituents.

2. Practical difficulties or particular hardship in carrying out the strict letter of the regulation:

Comment: As stated within the *Additional Comments* section of this report, in establishing a quasi-governmental use such as a fire station, staff believes it is necessary to consider the necessary equipment/apparatus to allow for effective fire protection services. To compel the Fire Department to meet the 50 foot height requirement for the communications tower would not be in the best interest of the general public.

3. Harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations:

Comment: Granting the variation is in harmony with the general purpose of the regulations. Moreover it will allow the applicant to adequately serve the immediate population with enhanced emergency services.

Staff has no objection to increase to maximum allowable impervious surface from 0.50 to 0.53 for the proposed use as the request would meet the intent of the regulations.

1. Exceptional conditions peculiar to the applicant's property:

Comment: The subject property contains a watermain on the property which creates a 15 foot easement. The site capacity calculations require the subtraction of the easement area to establish the net site area for maximum allowable impervious surface.

2. Practical difficulties or particular hardship in carrying out the strict letter of the regulation:

Comment: As stated within the *Additional Comments* section of this report, in establishing a quasi-governmental use such as a fire station, staff believes it is necessary to consider additional building size and parking lot size to allow for effective fire protection services. As the applicant has requested a minimal increase of 3% for the maximum impervious surface, to compel the Fire Department to design its project in order to meet the designated threshold of impervious surface would not be in the best interest of the general public.

3. Harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations:

Comment: Granting the variation is in harmony with the general purpose of the regulations. Moreover it will allow the applicant to adequately serve the immediate population with enhanced emergency services.

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### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

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In the event the Board grants the variation for the communications tower, it shall only be for the 1 (one) communications tower proposed as indicated in ZBA application #4917.

**To:** Brad Denz  
**From:** Eric Steffen  
**Date:** May 2, 2012  
**Subject:** ZBA Case #4917; Project #4785 – Lake Villa Fire Station – Increase height of a radio communications tower from 50 to 120 feet and increase the maximum allowable impervious surface from 0.50 to 0.53.

**BUILDING & ENGINEERING DIVISION (ENGINEERING COMMENTS)**

This division has reviewed ZBA Case #4917 with the following comment:

1. This division has no objection to the proposed increase in tower height and increase in the allowable impervious surface. The proposed fire station project is currently under review and a Site Development Permit will be required for the proposed improvements to the site.

EDS:mak