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Radio tower OK'd

Gains in safety offset concerns

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A 250-foot radio tower is set to be built near Spindletop and several other subdivisions in the Goshen area, allowing for the county's emergency dispatch reception to reach areas where service has been spotty.

Last week the Oldham County Planning and Zoning Commission approved the tower on Ky. 1793.

It will have antennas for Oldham County dispatch and cell phone service provider T-Mobile, according to plans.

The North Oldham Fire Protection District presented its plans for the tower in November, but the commission delayed its vote and asked officials to return with more information on why it was the best location.

Officials said that the tower will improve radio coverage and dispatch reception and reduce the number of lost or delayed 911 calls.

Joe Schoenbaechler, who represented the fire district during the commission's meeting last week, said that T-Mobile would pay for the tower to be built.

The current emergency communications antenna is on top of a water tower on Ky. 1793 that is slated to be demolished.

Schoenbaechler said that it only reaches about 76 percent of the Goshen/Prospect area, and the 250-foot tower would reach about 89 percent of the area.

But some residents who oppose the tower called it an unneeded eyesore.

Resident Lori Martin said the antenna should be placed on the new Louisville Water Co. tank at U.S. 42 and Ky. 1793, which is on property the school board owns.

Attorney Berry Baxter, who represented residents during the commission's meeting, said the fire district could have looked into placing a longer antenna on the Louisville Water Co. tank.

But Schoenbaechler said he didn't think that the tank could handle the weight.

He said the district did consider putting an antenna on the water tower at its current height, which is about 180 feet.

That option wouldn't serve as many areas as the 250-foot tower, he said.

He said the district also considered building a 200-foot tower, but it also wouldn't reach the river areas the district wants to reach.

Commissioner Joyce Albertsen said the priority should be safety.

"I think cell towers are not beautiful," she said. "They don't add to the landscape. They don't add aesthetics.

"However, they do add safety."

Commissioners voted 10-2 to approve the tower, and 11-1 to approve a waiver that allowed its height.

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