

City to withdraw consent for cell tower

Residents argue structure too close to homes, farms

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City staff should withdraw their consent to a proposed 70-metre cell-phone tower that has raised concerns among Greely residents, council decided on Wednesday.

Osgoode Councillor Doug Thompson suggested having staff recall their agreement with the tower project proposed by Rogers Communications at 1536 Sale Barn Rd.

Residents have argued the locations for such towers should be better planned and that the proposed structure would be too close to a subdivision and agricultural land.

Attempts to find a compromise with the company were not successful, Thompson said, and more effort should have gone into having Rogers co-locate its equipment on an existing tower or structure, or build a new tower farther away from homes.

Though Rogers did what it's supposed to do for such a proposal, the requirements that are set out "failed the residents of this community," Thompson said. While a small number of homes within a certain distance of the tower were notified, most homes in the subdivision were not, he said.

"This has left the residents of this community very upset. Many had just purchased lots or had just completed building their dream homes,"

and there are concerns related to health, esthetics and decreased property values, Thompson said.

Thompson wasn't sure how the staff position might affect the project because the final approval is in the hands of Industry Canada. The federal department requires companies to consult with municipalities and the public.

The president of Rogers was to be informed of council's decision, Thompson said, and the company wants "to be good corporate citizens." Part of the problem for Rogers, Thompson suggested, is that relocating the tower would take too much time now that the project has progressed as far as it has.

Rogers Communications spokeswoman Patricia Law provided an email stating that "this is an important site for us.

"We look forward to working with the municipality to try to find a solution as soon as possible to provide better wireless service for our customers," the statement said.

Under the city's policy that applies to proposed towers more than 15 metres tall, companies should try to co-locate the antenna on an existing tower, building or structure before constructing something new, and to "maximize" the distance between a tower and residential zone.

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