

**Amelia Q. Schoeneman**

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**From:** Cal Pearson <calcpearson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 31, 2020 1:41 PM  
**To:** Planning and Zoning Department  
**Subject:** Conditional use permit

[External Sender - Please Use Caution]

My name is Cal Pearson. My address is 14772 670th ave., McCallsburg, iowa.

My wife Lynda and I purchased our acreage in 2006. We love this property and have done extensive work on it, which has obviously increased our tax base.

Since we moved here we have been surrounded by wind turbines. Does this affect our property value?...who knows, but taxes continue to rise, so, maybe not.

Now the next thing we are faced with is a 265 communication tower that is to be located within a 1/4 mile of our property. This will directly affect our beautiful view. It will be REALLY close.

I do not understand why the tower has to be located so close. Our property is the only property within 1/4 mile of the proposed tower. All this land out here and the tower has to be this close to a residence? Even the farmer will not be able to see it.

I have asked this commission for consideration before, without success, so I am not expecting great results. I would like ask what you would do if this was your property.

Please consider moving the site 1/4 mile east.

Thank you, Cal

Public Comment on Case CUP03-20  
StoryComm Communications Towers

By

Andrew & Naomi Friend

Friend's Flowers

16117 550<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Story City, IA 50248

<https://friends.flowers/>

### **Summary**

We believe that our property was overlooked during the planning of the location for tower CP03-20. It will be an obnoxious site from our property, impairs our views of the Skunk River valley, eliminate our star gazing abilities at night, and jeopardize our financing of a 30 year mortgage. We strongly believe the tower can be moved to a nearby location that does not impair other dwellings while satisfying the needs of the StoryComm system.

### **Background**

StoryComm is proposing to build a new public safety communications system that will provide service for multiple public entities in Story County. The system will be comprised of 5 towers. Two towers exist, and three towers will be built. Of the towers to be built, one is proposed to be located in south-central Story County near Maxwell and Cambridge, another will be near McCallsburg and Zearing, and the third tower is proposed to be located just east of Gilbert, near our house on 550<sup>th</sup> Ave.

### **Impact of tower on surrounding views from 16117 550<sup>th</sup> Ave, Story City, IA**

Our house was built in 1930. In November of 2019, we began a \$230,000 complete home expansion and renovation. The construction is not complete and is targeted to be finished during Fall of 2020. We designed our house around the best views of our property, which are to the Northeast, East, and Southeast, all overlooking the Skunk River Valley.



Figure 1: East and South View from house of Skunk River Valley

The majority of the house overlooks the above view, including the living spaces, and bedrooms.



Figure 2: View of House from SE. Proposed tower would be directly behind where photo was taken from



Figure 3: Our house features a prominent SE facing porch (under construction), which would look directly at the proposed tower site.

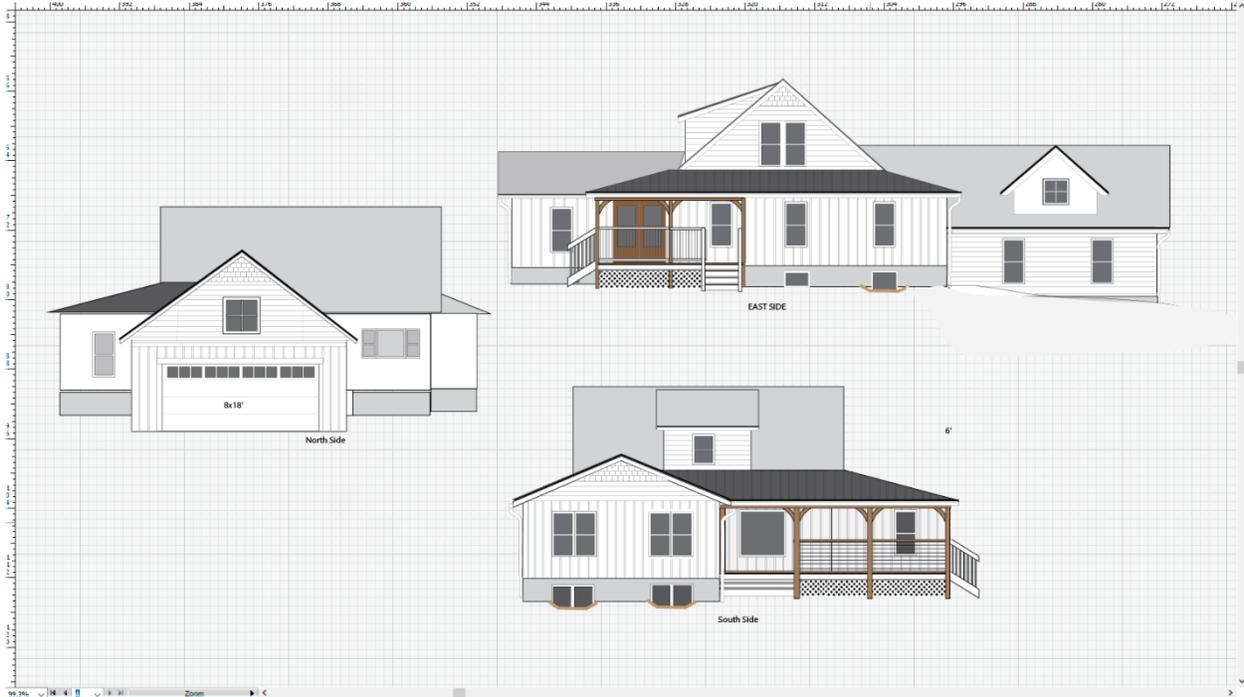


Figure 4: Artist's rendering of completed house

As mentioned in the Staff Report, tower CUP03-20 would be 800 ft SE of our property. We strongly feel that it would impair our views and ability to surrounding area. As demonstrated in Figure 5, the tower would be a dominating presence in the surrounding landscape with no buffer.



Figure 5: East and South View from house of Skunk River Valley with tower drawn in (not to scale, upper portion of sky omitted due to camera limitations in panorama mode)

If we had known about the tower prior to November 2019, would we have redesigned the house additions, or possibility not even embarked on the construction activities all together.

## Review of Staff Report

As implied in the section above, we feel that the impact of tower CUP03-20 on the surrounding area has been improperly minimized, particularly on our property. As such, a review and critique of the staff report will follow.

- (a) Pg. 8, Compatibility section: "These towers will be noticed by the nearby landowners due to the heights necessary to achieve the project goals. Required setbacks from property lines will be met to minimize impacts."
  - a. Our Response: The required setbacks are not enough in this case to minimize impacts due to the close proximity to nearby dwellings and the lack of a visual barrier between our house and the tower. We feel that the proposed tower would be unsightly and obnoxious. There are other nearby locations that would fit the requirement of compatibility (see discussion in "Review of Staff Report, section g")
- (b) Pg 8, Transition section: "The development shall provide for a suitable transition, and if necessary, buffer between the proposed buildings or use and surrounding properties."
  - a. Our Response: There is not a single tree between our house and the tower location to block the view. The other two tower sites (CUP04-20, CUP05-20) are well positioned so that trees are in between the tower sites and nearby dwellings. In addition, towers are normally located near other tall structures, or in commercial areas. This is not the case for tower CUP03-20 as it is in the middle of an agricultural field with no nearby buildings.
- (c) Pg 10, Signs and Lighting section: "The towers will have dual lighting controlled by a photo sensor—from dusk to dawn, a top beacon will have a red, flashing light, with steady red side markers."
  - a. Our Comments: Due to the lack of trees between our house the tower site, and the positioning of our house addition to face SE towards the tower site, we anticipate an obnoxious amount of red light originating from the tower and infiltrating our windows at night. We have already had issues with towers 5 miles away to the east.
- (d) Pg 10, Environmental Protection section: "The development shall be planned and operated in such a manner that will safeguard environmental and visual resources."
  - a. Our response: The tower would greatly diminish the visual resources from our property to the east and southeast (see Figures 1 & 5). In addition, the land south and west of our property is higher and naturally creates a visual barrier for the lights of Gilbert, and Ames, and Nevada. As such, we have excellent star gazing capabilities and have hosted multiple gatherings for such purposes. CUP03-20 in its current proposed location would eliminate our ability to view the night sky due to the light pollution from the red lights on the tower.
- (e) Page 11: "Not adequately safeguard the health, safety and general welfare of persons residing or working in adjoining or surrounding property."
  - a. Our response: We feel that our welfare has been completely disregarded in determining the proposed tower site. Not only will the tower be an obnoxious visual impairment, but our neighbors to the south were consulted early on with regards to on where to place the tower. As such, the tower was moved north slightly to take

advantage of their trees to block the view. We received no such consultation from the StoryComm team.

(f) Page 11: “Diminish or impair established property values on adjoining or surrounding property.”

a. Our response: We feel that our property value will be impacted. In fact, the completion of our construction loan into a 30 year mortgage is based on the premise that the final value of our house is the same as the original estimates prior to construction. If the private independent assessor hired by our bank determines that the tower will lower our property value, it will impair our ability to secure final mortgage financing at the conclusion of construction.

(g) Page 12 “The applicant indicates that “towers greater than 1 mile would require a total redesign of the system and would likely result in a loss of coverage”

a. Our response: The original location for this tower (CUP03-20) was to be in the City of Gilbert by the middle school. Due to line-of-sight obstructions, it was moved 2 miles NE to the current proposed site. None of the other tower locations were moved during this change. As such, we reject the claim that the tower cannot be moved more than 1 mile to avoid a system redesign, since the tower proposed location has already moved 2 miles.

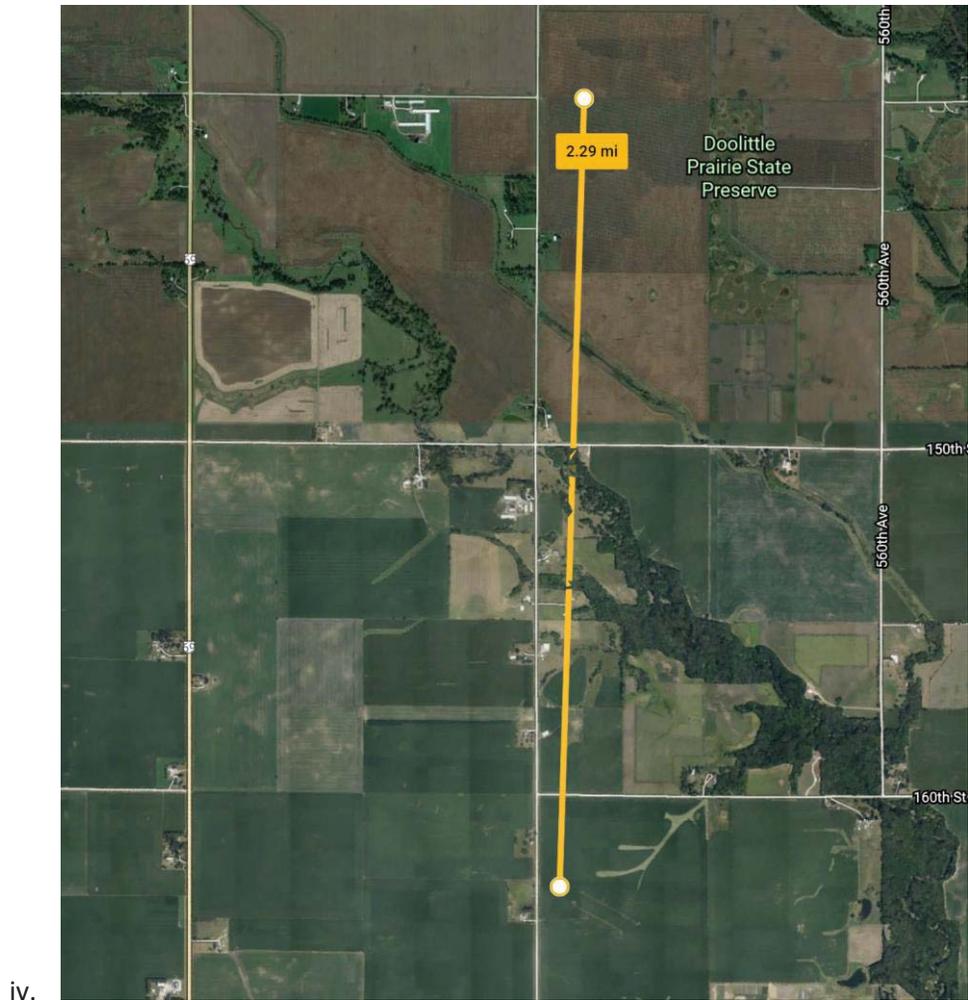
b. Our proposal: We feel that there are a number of better locations for this tower (CUP03-20) that could benefit both the public, nearby dwellings, and StoryComm other than the proposed site. Below are a few possible examples:

i. Just west of the intersection of 175<sup>th</sup> and 550<sup>th</sup> Ave.



ii.

iii. Near the intersection of 140<sup>th</sup> and 550<sup>th</sup> Ave.



- iv.
- (h) Pg 14: Point to Consider Section: “The tower requested as part of CUP03-20 is on a parcel adjacent to three dwellings. One is 800 feet northwest of the tower site, one is 600 feet southwest of the tower site, and one is over 2,000 feet from the tower site. This location was selected to minimize the interference with the line of site from dwellings located to the west of the tower across 550th Avenue.”
    - a. Our comment: Our house was completely ignored in the comment above. We would have a complete and clear line of site view to the proposed tower location.
  - (i) Pg 17: “Also, we selected this location as we feel it will have the minimal adverse visual impact on the surrounding area. The location is in a sparsely inhabited area and any residential structures close to the tower are screened by the existing trees and vegetation.”
    - a. Our response: As discussed above, there are no trees blocking the line of site from our house to the tower. The quoted statement above is completely false for our dwelling.

## Conclusion

We believe that our property was unfairly overlooked during the planning of the location for tower CP03-20. It will be an obnoxious site from our property, impairs our views of the Skunk River valley, eliminate our star gazing abilities at night, and jeopardize our financing of a 30 year mortgage. We

strongly believe the tower can be moved to a nearby location that does not impair other dwellings while satisfying the needs of the StoryComm system.

**Call Action**

We urge the Story County Planning and Zoning Commission to remand the Conditional Use Permit for the StoryComm Communications Tower as put forth in case CUP03-20, to send it back to the applicant for review and modifications, and to direct staff to place this item on a future Story County Planning and Zoning Commission agenda. In addition, we wholeheartly invite every member of the planning commission to sit on our front porch with us to see the impact firsthand that the proposed tower (CUP03-20) will have on our property and on the views to the east and southeast.

Sincerely,

Andrew & Naomi Friend