DATE: April 5, 2006

SUBJECT: U-2823-94-4 USE PERMIT REVIEW for panel antennae and equipment cabinets on water tower located at 2400 N. Wakefield St. (Sprint PCS/Lee Pumping Station) (RPC #05-005-072)

Applicant:
APC Realty and Equipment Company, LLC/Sprint PCS

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:
Defer the use permit review for three (3) months to July 2006.

ISSUES: The required electromagnetic emissions report has not been submitted.

SUMMARY: This is a use permit review for the operation of six panel antennas and two equipment cabinets located at the Lee Pumping Station along the borders of the Old Dominion and Donaldson Run neighborhoods. The applicant has not submitted an up-to-date emissions report as required by the approved conditions, but has agreed to submit the report by June 1, 2006. Therefore, staff recommends the use permit review be deferred for three (3) months to July 2006.

BACKGROUND: The use permit was originally approved by the County Board in 1995. The original applicant, Sprint PCS, sold several of the antennas to Voicestream LLC in 2000. In March 2003, both applicants agreed to the conditions of the use permit and continued their leases with Arlington County to use the Lee Pumping Station for five (5) additional years.

The use permit was last reviewed in early 2005. During that review, the required annual emissions report had not been submitted and two neighbors had raised an issue about electronic interference in the area. The applicant responded by submitting the report and conducting field measurements to determine that the antennae were not the cause of the interference.

DISCUSSION: In March 2006, Sprint submitted a mathematical assessment of potential human exposure to radiofrequency fields emanating from the antennae. However, the report required by Condition #2 is an annual field measurement, not an assessment of potential exposure. The applicant has agreed to conduct the appropriate field measurements and submit the report as required by condition by June 1, 2006 (see attached). A deferral will allow time for staff and the community to review the emissions report and to incorporate comments from that review into the staff report for the July 2006 County Board meeting.

County Manager: 

Staff: Lorrie Pearson, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4309