



City of Prescott Board of Adjustment

November 21, 2024 | 9:00 AM
201 N. Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lamerson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Jim Lamerson, Chair
Tony Teeters, Vice Chair
Tom Davis, Member
Mary Frederickson, Member
Miriam Haubrich, Member (Excused)
Mark Hokeness, Member
Tom Hutchison, Member

3. CALL TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION BY CHAIR LAMERSON TO CONVENE EXECUTIVE SESSION; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR TEETERS: PASSED (6-0)

4. LEGAL MATTERS

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the Prescott City Council and to the general public that the Prescott City Council will hold a Meeting at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, in the Executive Conference Room for the purpose of deciding whether to go into executive session. If authorized by a majority vote of the Prescott City Council, the executive session will be held immediately after the vote and will not be open to the public. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

A. **CUP24-004** – Conditional Use Permit to Allow the Inclusion of a Helicopter Landing Pad at the North Side of the Hospital Site Adjacent to State Route 69 in a BR (Business Regional) Zoning District. Location: 4822 E State Route 69, APN: 103-15-160A encompassing 9.2 Acres. Property Owner: EHC Prescott LP. Applicant/Agent: BMH As-Built USA.

5. ADJOURNMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION & RECONVENING OF A REGULAR PRESCOTT BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS MEETING FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Community Planner Tammy DeWitt introduced the topic for discussion and clarified that this will be a designated helistop. She showed the location of the project with maps and photos and stated that it is surrounded by residential properties. Additionally, she stated that the helipad meets Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) requirements and staff reviewed the project based on the Conditional Use Permit guidelines. Staff recommends the board move to approve or deny CUP24-004 per the site plan with or without conditions.

- Screening fence or wall to be placed on the North and West property line.
- Additional landscaping beyond the approved landscaping.
- All conditions must be completed prior to final of the building for the helipad and initiation of use.

Don Nicolini Vice President of Real Estate Development Exceptional Healthcare introduced his team members and invited Bruce McVay Chief Operating Office (C.O.O) to provide information on the helipad.

Bruce McVay C.O.O Exception Healthcare stated that Exceptional Healthcare is an emergency-based hospital that performs emergency and inpatient care. He stated that this is the fourth Exceptional Healthcare hospital in Arizona. He gave examples of the types of patients and care performed at their facilities.

Member Frederickson asked if the facility was coded as a trauma center.

Mr. McVay responded they are not but can handle trauma cases.

Member Frederickson stated the helicopter transport appears to be inpatient and outpatient.

Mr. McVay replied it will be mostly for transporting out with an average of 1 trauma patient going out a week.

Member Frederickson asked if there was an arrangement with Dignity Health for incoming patients.

Mr. McVay stated there will be transfer agreements set up with all hospitals in the area.

Member Frederickson asked if patients would be transported to Flagstaff or Phoenix.

Mr. McVay stated most patients would be transported to Phoenix and it is all about saving lives and they will land a helicopter wherever needed.

Member Frederickson asked how long transporting a patient out will take.

Mr. McVay responded approximately 7-10 minutes.

Member Hokeness asked if moving patients out is a scheduled activity and how far in advance that happens.

Mr. McVay stated yes, and it could be immediate, but it depends on the patient and is unpredictable.

Member Hokeness asked if there would be a helicopter stationed on site.

Mr. McVay replied there will not be.

Mr. Nicolini introduced Dr. Paul Gilbert, Medical Director, to provide information.

Dr. Gilbert provided scenarios for helicopter transportation to occur.

Member Hutchison asked what would happen to patients if there was not a helicopter.

Dr. Gilbert stated that patients would be transported via ambulance, and it is a significant delay.

Member Hutchison asked if he could provide information on the golden hour.

Dr. Gilbert stated that there is one hour to provide care to the patient in order to save their life.

Member Frederickson asked if the helistop was denied would they be able to transport the patient to a nearby hospital with a helipad in the area.

Dr. Gilbert stated it would be a significant delay to transport the patient, and a new landing zone would be created resulting in closing off roads.

Chair Lamerson asked if there was another site in the area where the helicopter pad could be placed without it going in a residential neighborhood.

Dr. Gilbert replied he is unfamiliar with the area but does not believe there is.

Member Hokeness asked if there was no helipad who would be contacted to use their parking lot as a landing zone.

Dr. Gilbert stated that dispatch would be contacted, and the closest designated landing zone is near Costco on State Route 69.

Chair Lamerson stated that the helicopter will land wherever it needs to and a helicopter pad is not a necessity.

Dr. Gilbert responded yes, but a faster response time can be the difference between life or death.

Chair Lamerson stated the board must look at the appropriateness of the site for the helicopter pad.

Member Hutchison asked if the facility would be at a disadvantage without the helicopter pad.

Dr. Gilbert replied yes, and it would delay patient care.

Member Hutchison asked if there will be an M.R.I Machine and if it affects the navigation of the helicopter.

Dr. Gilbert stated there is no M.R.I but there is a Cat Scan, but it does not affect navigation.

Member Davis asked why this was not submitted for a zoning change to have a permitted use of a helipad.

Ms. Dewitt stated that staff was unaware there would be a helipad. She added that the BR zoning allows for a helistop with a Conditional Use Permit and rezoning was not necessary.

Nikola Crim Senior Account Executive Native Air, Kaylee Lamberson Regional Aviation Director Native Air, and Andrea Carter Field Operations Manager provided a noise abatement procedure document to the board members.

Member Hokeness asked for a general operating procedure and what type of operator they are.

Ms. Lamberson stated they are a part 135 for air methods and are a national company. She added that they are not based at this location but are based in Prescott and Prescott Valley.

Member Hokeness asked if they are stationed at nearby hospitals or the airport.

Ms. Lamberson replied Prescott and Prescott Valley hospitals and provided information about the noise abatement document provided to the board members.

Member Hokeness asked if the noise abatement procedures are proposed or approved.

Ms. Lamberson stated they are approved for their company's air methods.

Member Hokeness asked if this is a voluntary noise abatement procedure their crews will follow.

Ms. Lamberson replied that is correct.

Member Hutchison asked if the additional landscaping and fencing will be obstructive.

Ms. Lamberson stated that the landing area will be 100ft by 100ft and the landscaping will not encroach.

Member Frederickson stated that the focus of this meeting should be for the conditional uses placed on this proposal if approved.

Mr. Crim stated that it is important to have a helistop to patient care and that blocking a landing zone in the road would take police and fire away from other services they could be performing.

Member Hokeness asked how long it takes to get a patient in the air.

Ms. Crim replied the average time is 10 minutes.

Member Hokeness asked why this will not be an FAA designated landing site.

Ms. Lamberson stated it is FAA approved.

Member Hokeness asked what types of helicopters are operated.

Ms. Lamerson responded that they operate AS-350 (A-Star) helicopters.

Member Hokeness asked if any other operators will be allowed to land at their facility.

Ms. Lamerson stated that any operator in Arizona will be allowed to land.

Member Hutchison stated that an additional helipad would be beneficial in case of a natural emergency.

Member Davis asked if hospital development requires a helipad.

Ms. Crim responded that it should be included, and they are pushing for new hospitals to require a helistop.

Member Davis asked if the helipad is not approved, could a helicopter be landed in the flat area for emergencies.

Ms. Crim replied yes, they could.

Member Hokeness asked if they were involved in the site selection.

Ms. Lamberson stated they were not included in the site selection.

Ms. Carter provided information that a fly-in test was performed for safety and to provide recommendations for landscaping to keep dust and noise mitigated.

Member Hokeness asked if there will be landing lights.

Ms. Carter replied there will be landing lights.

Member Hokeness stated that this will be a helipad not a helistop.

Ms. Carter stated that it will be a helistop as they are permanently on site.

Robert Donaldson Director of Architecture BMH provided handouts to the board members addressing the concerns of landscaping and fencing. He provided that there will be a 6-foot-tall wood fence with steel posts covering the North and West property lines.

Member Frederickson asked if the fence would be a solid fence with slats.

Mr. Donaldson stated yes.

Member Hutchison asked how tall the fence will be.

Mr. Donaldson said it will be 6 feet tall.

Member Hutchison asked how far it away from the center of the helipad it is.

Mr. Donaldson stated that it is at least 200 feet from the helipad.

Member Frederickson asked if it would be a security fence around the helipad.

Mr. Donaldson said yes, and it will meet FAA requirements.

Member Frederickson asked if there will be access to the water tank.

Mr. Donaldson said there will be access.

Member Davis asked if this would be a screening fence and not for sound continuation.

Mr. Donaldson stated it would mostly be screening but would provide sound continuation.

Member Davis stated that he does not believe a wood fence would not be sound mitigation.

Mr. Donaldson stated it would be more visual than for sound mitigation.

Member Frederickson asked about the landscaping along State Route 69.

Mr. Donaldson stated that an additional 10 oak trees would be provided to screen the helipad from State Route 69.

Member Frederickson asked if the hump North of the helipad will be shaved down.

Mr. Donaldson said it will stay in place and hydro mulch will be added to provide a natural landscape and the addition of rock to remove concerns about dust and debris.

Member Hokeness asked if the applicant was familiar with the helicopter pad at Yavapai Regional Medical Center.

Mr. Donaldson stated that he was not familiar.

Ms. Carter stated there is landscaping and safety security fencing and referenced a similar design used with their other locations.

Member of the public Kathy O'Boyle stated that Prescott has excellent paramedic services. She referenced the helipads at Yavapai Regional Medical Center being on flat surfaces. She has concerns with the location of the helipad being located in a hole and the precision needed by pilots to land safely in this area. She believes that there are still a lot of unanswered questions with this facility.

Member of the public Barry Golden asked if this landing pad was proposed in your neighborhood, how would you respond. Additionally, he questioned if this was really necessary for this location.

Member of the public Stephanie Bragg believes this will affect living conditions due to noise. She questioned the need for the helicopter pad due to the level of care provided at Exceptional Healthcare. She believes that the low hanging electrical lines in the area will be dangerous for helicopters landing and taking off. Additionally, she believes that an ambulance could make the trip in the same amount of time as a helicopter arriving at the site.

Member of the public Jeannette Westmoreland believes this helipad will affect her vacation rentals properties and her business. She stated that helicopters hovered over her property during test flights. She believes the applicant will land helicopters on site regardless of the outcome. She is not in favor of this location for this helipad.

Member of the public Logan Westmoreland believes a location should have been selected that can have a helipad. Additionally, he believes that helicopters will land in this area regardless.

Members of the public Jake and Glenda Vandergalien stated that helicopters will be within 80 feet of their home. They are concerned about the impacts this helipad will have on their vacation rentals. They do not believe that additional fencing will eliminate the noise impact and would like to see a real wall that can effectively mitigate the increase in noise if this project is approved.

Member Hutchison asked if this facility provides competition to Dignity Health and helps improve their care. He said that the purpose is to stabilize patients and get them the care they need quickly. He believes that the hospital and helipad are interconnected.

Member Davis expressed frustration with the process and believes this should have been reviewed with the original site plan approval by City Council. Additionally, he believes the fence should be a masonry wall.

Member Hokeness provided conditions he believes CUP24-004 should comply with in order for a motion.

Matt Podracky Deputy City Attorney stated that FAA rules and regulations have to be complied with and it is not need as a condition.

Ms. Dewitt stated that staff cannot enforce FAA rules and regulations.

Chair Lamerson asked if the FAA approval was conditional with the landing pad.

Ms. Dewitt said yes, it was for this site.

Member Hutchison stated that there will be heavy rip-rap around the site.

MOTION BY MEMBER HOKENESS TO APPROVE CUP24-004 WITH NO CONDITIONS; SECONDED BY MEMBER HUTCHISON (DENIED 5-2).

Roll Call for approval of CUP24-004 with no conditions

Member Frederickson – Deny

Member Hutchison – Approve

Chair Lamerson – Deny

Vice Chair Teeters – Deny

Member Hokeness – Approve

Member Davis – Deny

MOTION BY MEMBER HUTCHISON TO APPROVE CUP24-004 WITH CONDITIONS NOTED REPLACING SCREEN FENCE OR WALL WITH MASONRY WALL ON NORTH AND WEST PROPERTY LINES, ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING BEYOND APPROVED LANDSCAPING, ALONG FRONTAGE (SR-69) ADJACENT TO THE HELIPAD, CONSISTENT WITH THE PLAN PROVIDED BY THE DEVELOPER, THE ABOVE CONDITIONS ARE TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO FINAL OF THE BUILDING PERMIT FOR THE HELIPAD AND INITIATION OF USE; SECONDED BY MEMBER HOKENESS (PASSED 5-1).

4. UPDATES

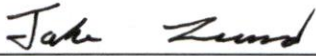
None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lamerson adjourned the meeting at 10:52 a.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James Lamerson", written over a horizontal line.

Jim Lamerson, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jake Lund", written over a horizontal line.

Board Secretary