

Columbia County
Board of Adjustments
July 23, 2026 @ 05:30 P.M.

The Columbia County Board of Adjustments met at a scheduled meeting held at 971 West Duval Street, in the Tourism Development Council Conference room. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mike McKee, at 05:42 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call remained the same and was done by the Deputy Clerk, Melissa Williams

Members Present:

Mike McKee, Chairman

Gerry Solenski, Vice Chair

Walt Graham

Jeff Todd

Dalphus Johnson

Others in Attendance:

Seth Lane, County Planner

Melissa Williams, Deputy Clerk

Patrick Krechowski, Attorney for the Planning and Zoning Board

Quasi-Judicial Hearings:

Seth Lane, County Planner

SE251202 (SPECIAL EXCEPTION) A petition by VB BTS III LLC C/O Law Office of Mattaniah S. Jahn, P.A, agent for Robert Arsua and Bonnie Kate, requesting a Special Exception to construct a 195' AGL monopole style telecommunication tower and support facility on the land described as follows: Parcel # 11-5s-16-03576-000. Located at 202 SW William Young LN Lake City, Florida. Legal Description: SW ¼ of NW ¼ of SW ¼ ex 50 ft off end & EX 25 off W end & EX 25 off N side & ex.1.01 AC desc. In ORB 835-1103. 657-491.

Patrick Krechowski, Attorney for the Planning and Zoning Board made a comment that if you signed in and plan to speak to the Board you will need to be sworn in and asked if everyone would rise.

Melissa Williams, Deputy Clerk sworn everyone in at one time

Seth Lane, County Planner stated that this was brought back after being tabled back from 03/26/2026. He spoke about the effects on property value. He stated that the reports remain the same as the land is zoned agriculture. He spoke about Kimley- Horn confirmed the land is zoned agriculture and not residential zone. He spoke about that it will not affect EMS and does qualify under special exceptions.

- **Case Introduction:** Staff summarized a petition by BB BTS Third LLC (Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn) for a 190-foot AGL monopole tower for T-Mobile at 202 SW William Young Lane. The case was previously tabled to address concerns about tower location criteria, property value impacts, and generator noise. Staff and a third-party consultant recommended approval.
- **Applicant's Presentation:** Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn detailed the request for a 195-foot monopole designed to fill a T-Mobile coverage gap affecting an estimated 3,000 people. The structure meets all setback requirements and would improve unreliable service, as shown on coverage maps. In response to prior concerns, the applicant is willing to use a quieter propane generator or a "gen plug." An expert, David Taulbe with T-Mobile presented a study concluding that cell towers do not negatively impact property values, citing the county property appraiser's history of never reducing assessments due to a tower's proximity.
- Staff self-exception and zoned agriculture with a 195-communication tower and meets and exceed the proposed for T-Mobile.
- Max Shoeman, T-Mobile spoke about the Starling Data Map- real data from your cell phone. Talking about the green on the map for T-Mobile. The red on the map is not being able to use indoors or car it will drop.
- Walter Graham made a comment about what color would be on the proposed tower; will it be green.
- Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn spoke about reliable service going to 3000 people.
- Jeff Todd made a comment about this only concerns T-Mobile.
- Max Shoeman, T-Mobile stated that only if other carriers want to pay T-Mobile to roam.
- Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn made a comment about picking your carrier and federal requirements.
- **(See attached documents)**
- **Opposition Arguments:** Attorney, Guy Norris with Norris & Norris, P.A. and several residents argued for denial based on multiple points:
- Attorney Guy Norris presented a package with 8 exhibits, representing 3 different families which are the Sparks, Luker and the Hare family.

- o **Legal Standing:** The application's validity was challenged, as the original landowner who signed the agreement is deceased, and her power of attorney is now void.
- o **Neighborhood Incompatibility:** The area is residential, with 54 homes and a daycare within a half-mile radius. Residents argued that an industrial tower is incompatible with the neighborhood's character and would cause a 10-20% loss in property values, totaling over \$1.7 million for the community.
- o Showing home in this area, William Young on Sherlock Terrace, there is an alternative area that would be Firestation.
- o **Lack of Need:** Opponents presented T-Mobile's own website data showing the highest level of "5G Ultra Capacity" coverage already exists at the site, contradicting the applicant's claim of a service gap. Several residents with various carriers reported adequate service.
- o **Safety and Environmental Concerns:** Concerns were raised about the tower falling and blocking the main exit, sinkholes, noise, light pollution, and the presence of endangered gopher tortoise nests on the proposed site.

Public Comments: Special Exception SE 251202

Public Hearing was opened:

- 1.) Diane Hare – offered a comment.
- 2.) Anthony Hare – offered a comment.
- 3.) Mercelyn McGrea – offered a comment.
- 4.) Cheryl Luker – offered a comment.
- 5.) Kelly Luker - offered a comment.
- 6.) Ben Sparks – offered a comment.
- 7.) Annie Sparks – offered a comment.

Public Support: The deceased landowner's daughter Barbara Norris explained that their mother at 83 years old initiated the agreement due to having no cell service (AT&T) for emergencies. A local first responder and T-Mobile customer confirmed having dropped calls in the area, including during an emergency response. Others noted the area is a known "dead zone" for most carriers except Verizon.

The deceased landowner's daughter Pam Davis spoke about her mom Bonnie Ward making this deal and did not try to hurt anyone. She had a landline and had to go outside to make a call. She explained that she is the executive of the estate and there is a process to recorder the deed.

- 8.) Johnny Handy – offered a comment.
- 9.) Jonathan Sluss – offered a comment.
- 10.) Larry Saucer – offered a comment.

11.) John and Jan Cole- offered a comment

12.) James Truesdale – offered a comment

13.) Susan Bauer- offered a comment

14.) Adrien Garcia – offered a comment

15.) Kaylee Powell – offered a comment

(See the attached attendance sign-in roster sheet.)

Public Hearing was closed

Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn made a request for another 6 minutes for a rebuttal.

Rebuttal: The applicant's representative Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn stated that any gopher tortoise burrows would be mitigated through the proper state process, the tower is designed to collapse on itself, and the project is part of a federal requirement to bring service to rural areas.

Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn made a comment about the generator and the noise impact and meets the building code. Additional signs 3 miles away have met the burden. T-Mobile meets the Federal requirements. EMS made a comment and the public about the drop calls. Made a comment about the Starling Map.

David Taulbe with T-Mobile spoke about study that was done on the Towers over 25 years over property. The study was done on urban, rural and suburban areas, no data that it impacted the property value. Not once has a property appraiser had to reduce the value due to a tower. This tower will not have an impact.

Attorney, Mattaniah S. Jahn made the comment to comeback to law, recommendation to approve.

There were no questions.

Public Hearing was closed:

Gerry Solenski asked to hear from our lawyer.

Patrick Krechowski, Attorney for the Planning and Zoning Board, made the comment that the evidence is for the Board to evaluate.

No discussion.

MOTION by Dalphus Johnson to approve SE251202 (SPECIAL EXCEPTION). SECOND by Walter Graham. The motion carried with a vote of 4-1 with Jeff Todd voting in opposition.

Roll Call Vote was done:

Mike McKee - yes

Gerry Solenski - yes

Walt Graham - yes

Jeff Todd – no

Dalphus Johnson – yes

New Business:

I. Introduction of new member, Dalphus Johnson

II. Staff Matters/ Reports:

June 25, 2026, Board of Adjustments Meeting Minutes Approval:

MOTION by Gerry Solenski, Vice Chair to approve the minutes from the Board of Adjustments Meeting June 25, 2026. SECOND by Dalphus Johnson. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Other matters to be added at the Discretion of the Chair/ For the Good of the Order.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 07:00 P.M.

ATTEST:

Mike McKee, Chairman

Seth Lane, County Planner

