



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

June 11, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0528/ Franchise – Extenet Systems, Inc.

For the purpose of granting a franchise to Extenet Systems, Inc., to construct, install, maintain, repair, operate, relocate, replace and remove certain facilities relating to the provision of a distributed Antenna Systems services in and across certain streets and public ways, subject to certain terms and conditions; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Amendment and Approval, with the following amendment:

- That on page 11, in line 34, insert before the period: “, to include design review by the Department of Planning”

STAFF: Eric Tiso

PETITIONER: The Administration, on behalf of the Department of Transportation (DOT)

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this form of franchise.

ANALYSIS

Proposal: Extenet Systems, Inc. (Extenet) provides services to third-party wireless carriers by providing the infrastructure that those carriers can use to provide additional wireless connectivity and capacity to their systems. This request for a franchise will allow Extenet to attach Distributed Antennas Systems (DAS) equipment to publically owned infrastructure, such as street light poles, that are connected to conduit that links several of these individual nodes to a service hub in a building that connects to the wireless carrier’s system. Extenet explains that they are in essence, a “carrier for wireless carriers.”

Staff understands that the Franchise will be for a ten year period, with three five-year renewals at \$100 per year. Each installation will require a separate attachment agreement, conduit lease agreement, and that all costs will be borne by Extenet (to include working directly with BGE for power). Additionally, an application fee of \$500 per attachment will be required, as well as a per-pole fee of \$2,400 for the first 25 poles, on a sliding scale down to \$1,200 per pole for 451+ poles.

Design: The DAS installations will most typically look like two boxes attached to the light pole, with an antenna at the top of the light pole. One of the boxes is a battery back-up, and the other is a control box for the antenna. Each individual installation will require a separate attachment agreement between Extenet and DOT. DAS is helpful when towers or rooftop installations are not practical, and in areas where additional capacity is required, such as major venues with large crowds.

While each of these installations will need to have a separate attachment agreement, and recognizing that the City has sovereign control over the rights-of-way, staff is still concerned about the visual appearance of these DAS nodes. Since Extenet can provide infrastructure for more than one tenant company, the engineering requirements for each one can be different. For example, staff understands that there is an option used in other cities that has the equipment in an oversized base of the light pole. Staff strongly preferred that option, since it visually minimizes clutter on the poles. However, in this case, the first 20 nodes will be for Sprint Wireless, and their equipment's cooling requirements do not allow that style of installation. Since there can be a degree of variation in a particular installation, and since impacts to surrounding property owners can vary based on where in the City they are to be located, staff recommends an amendment to the Franchise agreement that will require design review by the Department of Planning. In this way, we can provide feedback for DOT to consider about any potential impacts and/or on design options that may make the installations less obtrusive.

Community Notification: The Department of Planning hosted a public information session with the Department of Transportation and Extenet Systems, Inc. on June 3, 2015 at 6 pm. Notice of that public information session, and of this presentation to the Planning Commission were delivered to approximately 5,100 e-mail addresses.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director