WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §31H-2-2

§31H-2-2. Permitting process for small wireless facilities.

(a) The provisions of this section shall apply to the permitting of small wireless facilities by a wireless provider in or outside the right-of-way as specified in subsection (b) of this section and to the permitting of the installation, modification, and replacement of utility poles by a wireless provider inside the right-of-way.

(b) Small wireless facilities that meet the requirements of §31H-2-1(f) through §31H-2-1(j) of this code shall be classified as permitted uses and not subject to zoning review or approval if they are collocated:

(1) In the right-of-way in any zone; or

(2) Outside the right-of-way in property not zoned exclusively for single-family residential use.

(c) An authority may require an applicant to obtain one or more permits to collocate a small wireless facility that meets the requirements of §31H-2-1(f) through §31H-2-1(j) of this code or to install, modify, or replace a utility pole and associated small wireless facilities that meet the requirements of §31H-2-1(f) through §31H-2-1(j) of this code, provided that the permits are of general applicability. An authority shall receive applications for, process, and issue permits subject to the following requirements:

(1) An authority may not directly or indirectly require an applicant to perform services unrelated to the collocation for which approval is sought, such as in-kind contributions to the authority, including reserving fiber, conduit, or pole space for the authority on the wireless provider's utility pole;

(2) An applicant may not be required to provide more information to obtain a permit than communications service providers that are not wireless providers, provided that an applicant may be required to include construction and engineering drawings and information demonstrating compliance with the criteria set forth in this subsection;

(3) An authority, other than the Division of Highways, may not require the placement of small wireless facilities on any specific utility pole or category of poles or require multiple antenna systems on a single utility pole nor the underground placement of small wireless facilities;

(4) An authority, other than the Division of Highways, may not limit the placement of small wireless facilities by minimum separation distances;

(5) An authority may require an applicant to include an attestation that the small wireless

WV Legislature

facilities will be operational for use by a wireless provider within one year after the permit issuance date, unless the authority and the applicant agree to extend this period or delay is caused by lack of commercial power or communications transport facilities to the site;

(6) Within 10 days of receiving an application, an authority must determine and notify the applicant in writing whether the application is complete. If an application is incomplete, an authority must specifically identify the missing information in writing. The processing deadlines in this subsection are tolled from the time the authority sends the notice of incompleteness to the time the applicant provides the missing information. That processing deadline also may be tolled by agreement of the applicant and the authority;

(7) An application shall be processed on a nondiscriminatory basis and deemed approved if the authority fails to approve or deny the application within 60 days of receipt of the application for a collocation of a small wireless facility and 90 days for an application for the installation, modification, or replacement of a utility pole in the right-of-way;

(8) An authority may deny a proposed collocation of a small wireless facility or installation, modification, or replacement of a utility pole that meets the requirements of this section only if the proposed application:

(A) Materially interferes with the safe operation of traffic control equipment;

(B) Materially interferes with sight lines or clear zones for transportation or pedestrians;

(C) Materially interferes with compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or similar federal or state standards regarding pedestrian access or movement;

(D) Fails to comply with reasonable and nondiscriminatory spacing requirements of general application adopted by legislative rule or ordinance that concern the location of ground-mounted equipment and new utility poles. Such spacing requirements may not prevent a wireless provider from serving any location;

(E) Fails to comply with applicable codes, legislative rule, and generally applicable standards that are consistent with this chapter and adopted by an authority for construction and public safety in the rights-of-way, including reasonable and nondiscriminatory wiring and cabling requirements, grounding requirements, and abandonment and removal provisions;

(F) Fails to comply with applicable design guidelines adopted under §31H-2-1(g) of this code; or

(G) Fails to attest that a small wireless facility will comply with relevant Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations concerning:

(1) Radiofrequency emissions from radio transmitters; and

(2) Unacceptable interference with the public safety spectrum and CII spectrum, including

WVLegislature

compliance with the abatement and resolution procedures for interference with the public safety spectrum and CII spectrum established by the FCC set forth in 47 C.F.R. 22.970 through 47 C.F.R. 22.973 and 47 C.F.R. 90.672 through 47 C.F.R. 90.675;

(9) The authority must document the basis for a denial, including the specific code provisions on which the denial was based, and send the documentation to the applicant on or before the day the authority denies an application. The applicant may cure the deficiencies identified by the authority and resubmit the application within 30 days of the denial without paying an additional application fee. The authority shall approve or deny the revised application within 30 days. Any subsequent review shall be limited to the changes made in the resubmission;

(10) An applicant seeking to collocate small wireless facilities within the jurisdiction of a single authority shall be allowed at the applicant's discretion to file a consolidated application and receive a single permit for the collocation of multiple small wireless facilities; the denial of one or more small wireless facilities in a consolidated application may not delay processing of any other small wireless facilities in the same batch;

(11) Installation or collocation for which a permit is granted pursuant to this section shall be completed within one year after the permit issuance date unless the authority and the applicant agree to extend this period or a delay is caused by the lack of commercial power or communications facilities at the site. Approval of an application authorizes the applicant to:

(A) Undertake the installation or collocation; and

(B) Subject to applicable relocation requirements and the applicant's right to terminate at any time, operate and maintain the small wireless facilities and any associated utility pole installed by the wireless provider or authority utility that is covered by the permit for a period of not less than 10 years, which must be renewed for equivalent durations so long as the small wireless facilities and utility pole are in compliance with the criteria set forth in this subsection;

(12) An authority may not institute, either expressly or de facto, a moratorium on filing, receiving, or processing applications or issuing permits or other approvals, if any, for the collocation of small wireless facilities or the installation, modification, or replacement of utility poles to support small wireless facilities.

(d) An authority may require a permit to work within a right-of-way for any activities under this chapter, if applicable, and may prohibit access when a road is closed or its access is limited to the public: Provided, That except for this permit, and the other actions explicitly authorized by this chapter, an authority may not require an additional application, approval, or permit, or require any fees or other charges from a communications service provider authorized to occupy the right-of-way, for:

(1) Routine maintenance;

WV Legislature

(2) The replacement of wireless facilities with wireless facilities that are substantially similar, the same size, or smaller; or

(3) The installation, placement, maintenance, operation, or replacement of micro wireless facilities that are suspended on existing cables that are strung between existing utility poles in compliance with applicable safety codes and the pole owner's construction standards and engineering practices.

(e) An authority may revoke a permit at any time if the conditions of the permit required pursuant to this article are no longer being satisfied.

WV Legislature