



VARIANCE STAFF REPORT

OFFICE OF PLANNING & ZONING

Tab Number: 2

Public Hearing Date: November 5, 2025

Case No. and Project Name: PZ2025-227, SECO Energy Round Lake Communications Tower

Commissioner District: District 4 – Leslie Campione

Applicant(s): Logan Jarman

Owner(s): Sumter Electric Cooperative, INC.

Requested Action: A variance to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Section 3.13.09(B)(4), to allow a lattice design communications tower to be located closer than one-thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet from residential units located on adjacent parcels.

Case Manager: Meagan Bracciale, Planner I

Subject Property Information

Size: 18.75 +/- gross acres

Location: 34420 Riordan Road, in the unincorporated Eustis area

Alternate Key No.: 1039703

Future Land Use: Rural Transition (Attachment “A”)

Current Zoning District: Community Facility District (CFD) (Attachment “B”)

Flood Zone(s): “X”

JPA/ISBA: N/A

Overlay/Rural Protection Area: Wekiva Study Area (Attachment “C”)

Adjacent Property Land Use Table

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use	Comments
North	Rural	Agriculture Residential (AR) District	Residential	Single-Family Residence
South	Rural Transition	Agriculture Residential (AR) District	Vacant Residential	AG Exemption
East	Rural Transition	Agriculture Residential (AR) District	Vacant Residential	AG Exemption

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use	Comments
West	Rural Transition	Agriculture (A) District	Residential	Single-Family Residence

Summary of Request

The subject parcel is identified by Alternate Key Number 1039703 and contains approximately 18.75+/- acres. The subject parcel is zoned Community Facility District (CFD) by Ordinance 2021-12 and is designated with a Rural Transition Future Land Use Category (FLUC) by the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The subject parcel is currently developed with a concrete pad and monopole approved pursuant to a 2009 site plan. The 2009 monopole is set to be removed and that area of the subject parcel is designated for the future development of a Duke Energy substation, requiring the site of the communications tower to be relocated to the proposed location shown on the Plot Plan in Attachment “D”.

The subject parcel is situated within the Wekiva Study Area (WSA). All development shall be in compliance with Comprehensive Plan Policy I-3.4.5, *Development Design Standards*. Pursuant to Comprehensive Plan Policy I-3.4.1, *Surveys and Studies*, this project is exempt from the required soil analysis and site specific hydrogeologic and geotechnical reports due to the proposed development being on a parcel less than forty (40) acres in size and not resulting in a density greater than allowed within the Future Land Use Category.

GIS maps indicate that the subject parcel is located within flood zone “X” and there is no indication that wetlands exist on the site. On September 10, 2025, the requested action was sent to the Public Works Department and Fire Rescue Office for a determination of consistency with applicable regulations, including flood and stormwater requirements. Public Works and Fire Rescue did not have any concerns or comments regarding the requested variance.

The Applicant is requesting a variance to the following LDR Sections:

- Section 3.13.09(B)(4), to allow a lattice design communications tower to be located closer than one-thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet from residential units located on adjacent parcels. The proposed communications tower will be approximately five hundred and sixty-four (564) feet from the nearest residential unit.

For background purposes, on August 14, 2008, the Board of Adjustment approved with one condition a variance from LDR Section 3.13.07(B), *Wireless Antennas, Towers, and Equipment Setbacks*, to allow the existing tower to be located in an area that is not centered on the parent parcel and located closer than 400 percent from dwelling units on the contiguous parcel to the west, with the condition that the tower be placed in the location as shown on the submitted site plan (Attachment “E”). Per the 2008 site plan, the BOA approved a setback of three hundred and nine (309) feet from the nearest single-family residential unit (Attachment “F”). The variance from the required 400 percent of the tower height from any single-family or duplex residential unit was specifically for the 199-foot monopole design communications tower that was being proposed at the time. The newly proposed communications tower is a lattice design with greater setback distance requirements.

On April 27, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners approved a rezoning request to amend CFD Ordinance 2006-76 and replace it with Ordinance 2021-12, which granted an unconditional waiver to LDR Section 3.10.09(B)(1), allowing for a communication tower to be off centered within the boundaries of the subject parcel. Ordinance 2021-12 also increased the allowable height of the communications tower from 199-feet to 300-feet. Ordinance 2021-12 does not specify that the tower design is limited to a particular design style (i.e. monopole, lattice, guyed), however the tower elevation plans submitted with the rezoning application were for a lattice design style tower and no variances to the setbacks were requested by the Applicant as part of Ordinance 2021-12.

The Applicant provided a Project Narrative as shown on Attachment “G”.

Should the Board of Adjustment approve this variance request, the Applicant will be required to obtain zoning and building permits to comply with Lake County Land Development Regulations.

Staff Analysis

LDR Section 14.15.02 states that variances will be granted when the person subject to a Land Development Regulation demonstrates that the purpose of the Land Development Regulation will be or has been achieved by other means, and when application of a Land Development Regulation would create a substantial hardship or would violate principles of fairness.

1. The purpose of the Land Development Regulation will be or has been achieved by other means.

The intent of LDR Section 3.13.00, entitled *Wireless Antennas, Towers, and Equipment Facilities*, is to protect existing land uses from potential adverse visual impacts through sound planning, careful review of applications, proper permitting and adherence to appropriate regulations and to preserve and enhance radio communications throughout Lake County in times of emergencies that threaten the life, safety and welfare of Lake County residents, businesses and properties to include the establishment of easements, covenants and agreements necessary to address issues, such as fiber-optic cabling, associated with the provisions of emergency communication(s).

These regulations are intended to accomplish this goal through careful design, siting, landscape screening and the encouragement of innovative camouflaging techniques.

Ordinance 2021-12 requires that the Applicant install a 50-foot buffer on the east and south sides of the property; and canopy trees shall be installed on the east and south sides of the property. This required landscape screening is intended to assist in accomplishing the intent of LDR Section 3.13.00, *Wireless Antennas, Towers, and Equipment Facilities*.

The Applicant provided the following statement, within the Project Narrative (Attachment “G”), as evidence that the intent of the Land Development Regulations will be or has been achieved by other means, “*SECO cannot meet this setback requirement on this particular parcel. No matter the location on this parcel, the proposed tower would be closer than the required 1320 feet setback requirement from a residential unit. The only way to meet this requirement is to have an extremely large parcel or construct towers that are not in the vicinity of residential units.*”

Also, “*SECO is not constructing towers as a profit venture but for its own needs to ensure communication to its critical assets for the benefit of the public it serves. It is SECO’s hope that in the best interest of the public it serves, some of whom are tax payers, residents, and constituents of Lake County, and whom heavily depend on safe, reliable, resilient, and affordable electric power service...*”

In addition, the Applicant has provided a letter (Attachment “H”) from tower engineering firm Valmont Industries, Inc., asserting that the proposed Self Supporting Communications Tower has a “*theoretical failure point at the tower midpoint or above. The predicted mode of wind induced failure would be a buckling of the tower legs at or above the tower midpoint with the top sections of the tower folding over on to the intact base sections. This would then affect a “zero fall zone” at ground level.*”

2. The application of a Land Development Regulation would create a substantial hardship or would violate principles of fairness. For purposes of this Section, "substantial hardship" means a demonstrated economic, technological, legal, or other type of hardship to the person requesting the variance. For purposes of this Section, "principles of fairness" are violated when the literal

application of a Land Development Regulation affects a particular person in a manner significantly different from the way it affects other similarly situated persons who are subject to the Land Development Regulation.

The Applicant provided the following statement, *“SECO is requesting a variance in the Lake County LDC Section 3.13.9(B)(4) that requires lattice towers to be setback 1320 feet from a residential unit. Due to the size and shape of the SECO parcel, achieving this setback is not possible. SECO has located the tower such that it does not interfere with the other development on this parcel and is approximately 580’ from the nearest residential unit. Given the heavy tree growth between the residential unit and the proposed tower location coupled with the fact that the proposed tower has been engineered to have a “zero fall zone” radius SECO believes that the proposed location of this tower will not be an issue.”*

Attachment "A" – Future Land Use Map

CURRENT FUTURE LAND USE

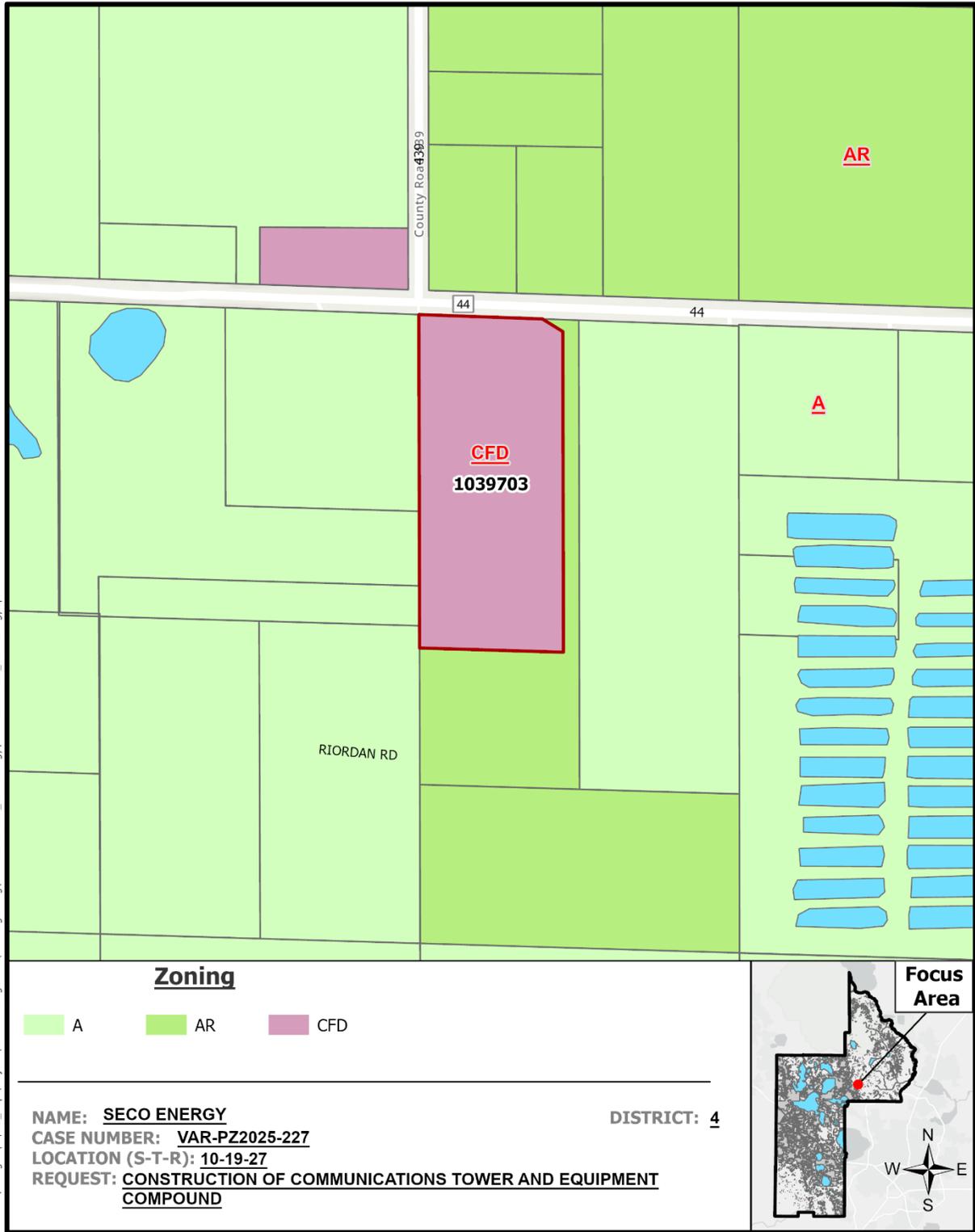


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9/12/2025

Attachment "B" – Zoning Map

CURRENT ZONING



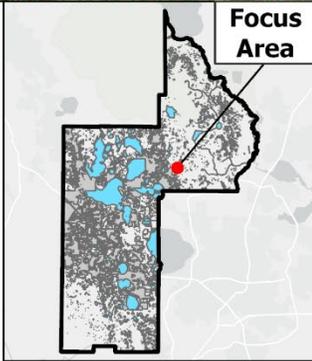
Attachment "C" – Overlay District Map

VAR-PZ2025-227
SECO Energy



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Construction of communications tower and equipment compound



9/12/2025

Attachment "E" – BOA 41-08-02 (1 of 3)

CFN 2008110774
Bk 03680 Pgs 1574 - 1576f (3pgs)
DATE: 09/23/2008 01:07:53 PM
NEIL KELLY, CLERK OF COURT
LAKE COUNTY
RECORDING FEES 27.00

ORDER OF THE LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

OWNER: Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CASE NO.: BOA #41-08-2

LAKE COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereby grants a variance(s) from the Lake County Land Development Regulations, as amended, for the property legally described in EXHIBIT "A" requesting a variance(s) as outlined and approved in EXHIBIT "B".

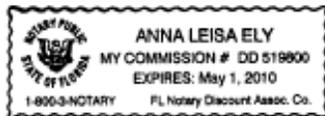
This Order hereby incorporates by reference, the Board of Adjustment Minutes, Hearing Exhibits, and Lake County Staff file. These items are located at 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida 32778, and may be acquired through a public record request.

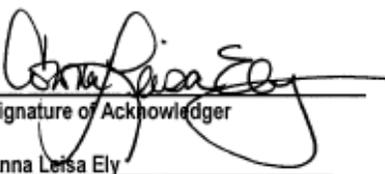
LAKE COUNTY, A Political Subdivision
of the State of Florida


Donald Schreiner, Chairman
Lake County Board of Adjustment

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF LAKE

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this September 11, 2008 by DONALD SCHREINER,
who is personally known to me.




Signature of Acknowledger
Anna Leisa Ely
Name of Acknowledger (Typed or Print)

Public Hearing Coordinator
Title or Rank

DD 519800
Serial Number, if any
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: May 1, 2010
(SEAL)

R – LCBCC Admin Bld Growth Mgmt. Rm 510 – A Ely

Attachment "E" – BOA 41-08-02 (2 of 3)

EXHIBIT "A"
LEGAL DESCRIPTION
BOA #41-08-2
Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.
August 14, 2008

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: FROM SW COR OF N 3/4 OF W 1/2 OF SE 1/4 RUN N 00DEG 16MIN 30SEC W 565 FT FOR POB, RUN S 88DEG 26MIN 46SEC E 594.45 FT, N 00DEG 14MIN 42SEC W 1326.46 FT, N 57DEG 53MIN 51SEC W 99.31 FT TO S R/W LINE OF SR 44, N 88DEG 06MIN 21SEC W ALONG SAID S R/W LINE 511.34 FT TO W LINE OF W 1/2 OF N 3/4 OF SE 1/4, S 00DEG 16MIN 30SEC E 1380.02 FT TO POB – SEC 10- TWP 19 – RGE 27

Attachment “E” – BOA 41-08-02 (3 of 3)

EXHIBIT “B”
APPROVED VARIANCE
BOA #41-08-2
Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.
August 14, 2008

On Thursday, August 14, 2008, the Board of Adjustment approved with one condition the variance request from the Lake County Land Development Regulations, 3.13.07(B) Wireless Antennas, Towers, and Equipment Setbacks to allow the proposed tower to be located in an area that is not centered on the parent parcel and located closer than 400 percent from dwelling units located on the contiguous parcel to the west, with the condition that the tower be located in the location as shown on the submitted site plan.

Attachment “G” – Project Narrative (1 of 3)



Office of Planning and Zoning

Project Narrative Variance

1. What is the substantial hardship in meeting the specific code requirement?

SECO is requesting a variance in the Lake County LDC Section 3.13.9 (B) (4) that requires lattice towers be setback 1320 feet from a residential unit. Do to the size and shape of the SECO parcel achieving this setback is not possible. SECO has located the tower such that it does not interfere with the other development on this parcel and is approximately 580' from the nearest residential unit. (Continued Below)

2. Describe how the purpose of the Land Development Regulation will be or has been achieved by other means:

SECO cannot meet this setback requirement on this particular parcel. No matter the location on this parcel the proposed tower would be closer that the required 1320 feet setback requirement from a residential unit. The only way to meet this requirement is to have an extremely large parcel or construct towers that are not in the vicinity of residential units.

(Continued From Above #1)

Given the heavy tree growth between the residential unit and the proposed tower location couple with the fact that the proposed tower has been engineered to have a "zero fall zone" radius SECO believes that the proposed location of this tower will not be an issue.

Attachment “G” – Project Narrative (2 of 3)

ABOUT SUMTER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SECO) is an incorporated, member-owned, not-for-profit electric power supplier, democratically organized and controlled by those it serves. Formally organized in 1938, the co-op has traditionally been known for its excellent service. In 2015 SECO received the JD Power Award for “Highest Customer Satisfaction among Midsize Utilities in the South” and consecutively in 2016 and 2017 SECO received the JD Power Award for “Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Cooperatives.” As a not-for-profit company, the co-op provides service at cost. Its rates are among the most competitive in Florida, and margins above operating costs (referred to as Capital Credits) are refunded to its member-owners. The co-op is also a Touchstone Energy cooperative - a national alliance of local, member-owned electric cooperatives committed to high standards of service. Headquartered in Sumterville, Florida, the electric co-op is the third largest electric co-op in the state of Florida and the seventh largest in the United States. There are four district offices (Ocala, Sumterville, Groveland, and Eustis) strategically located to serve its member-owners.

The service area consists of seven different counties and is divided into nine trustee districts with one member representing each district on the cooperative’s board of trustees. Members are elected to the board at the co-op’s annual meeting. Serving on the board are: Richard Dennison (President) of Ocala, District 4; Jerry Hatfield (Vice President) of Umatilla, District 9; Gerald Anderson (Secretary/Treasurer) of The Villages, District 3; Scott Boyatt of Clermont, District 1; Joyce Anderson of Sumterville, District 2; Ray Vick of Inverness, District 5; Mike Muffett of Summerfield, District 6; Joseph Kusiak of Dunnellon, District 7; and William James of Leesburg, District 8.

Purpose Statement: To provide exceptional service to our members, co-workers and communities.

SECO Values: Safety, Member Commitment, Honesty & Integrity, Strong Work Ethic, Teamwork, Open Communication

MEMBERS SERVED IN LAKE COUNTY

MEMBER	TOTAL SERVED
Commercial/Industrial	6,544
Residential	63,395
Total	69,939

Attachment “G” – Project Narrative (3 of 3)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF NEED

SECO’s current communication systems, in general, are in good working condition. However, there are many areas that need attention and fail to meet the current and future needs of SECO. Some of these issues were made evident during the last hurricane event when communication systems failed to perform as needed and presented challenges in our restoration management efforts. To address these issues, SECO has developed a multi-year communication infrastructure modernization plan to meet its current and foreseeable future needs. SECO’s largest issue is a shortage of communication towers. To effectively cover SECO’s large service area, allow for a loop protected licensed microwave backhaul network, wide area LMR voice and data networks SECO will have to build four (4) new major towers, two (2) of which are planned to be in Lake County.

The current lowband VHF voice radio system is functioning as designed but falls short of providing the required coverage due to lack of tower sites. The current lowband VHF system also is “segmented” and does not provide wide area connectivity. The fact that wide area connectivity is not available on the current lowband VHF system, SECO is not able to maximize the use of the resources that are available.

The current licensed microwave network is operational as designed. However, the existing microwave radios are nearing end of life so support and spare parts for these radios will become more and more scarce. The current licensed microwave network is also a hub and spoke design which does not provide the same level of redundancy that a loop protected network will provide. Finally, the available throughput of the network falls far short of what is required for optimal backhaul for SECO’s requirements.

SECO is in the process of upgrading/replacing all the systems previously mentioned. To successfully implement these new systems will require the construction of four new communication towers located in two different counties across north Florida. Specifically the communications tower at the Mt. Dora Site will support the implementation of the new licensed and unlicensed microwave radio networks and the 800 MHz wide area voice radio network. SECO currently has a 190’ monopole tower at the Mt. Dora Site that will be completely dismantled and removed from the site once the new tower is constructed. The existing tower does not provide the required height to meet the needs of the new proposed communications systems.

SECO has included with this submission the proposed construction drawings, a point by point response to Lake County’s Land Development Code Section 3.13.00 Wireless Antennas, Towers and Equipment Facilities along with the required supporting documentation.

SECO is not constructing towers as a profit venture but for its own needs to ensure communication to its critical assets for the benefit of the public it serves. It is SECO’s hope that in the best interest of the public it serves, some of whom are tax payers, residents, and constituents of Lake county, and whom heavily depend on safe, reliable, resilient, and affordable electric power service, that this CUP permit be approved.

Attachment "H" – Engineering Letter

**Florida Tel-Con
APPROVED**



March 26, 2021

Communications Tower Group

Attn: To Whom It May Concern

SUBJECT: Valmont File # 508052-02
Model U-32.0 X 300' Self Supporting Tower
Site Name: Mt. Dora - Eustis, FL

Thank you for your inquiry concerning tower design codes and practices as they relate to your requested tower designs.

Valmont Structures has been designing and building guyed and self-supporting towers and monopoles since the early 1950's. During this time, we have sold thousands of towers ranging in height from as little as 50' high to in excess of 1400'. These towers were individually engineered to accommodate the loading requirements imparted by the design wind speed, ice considerations, antenna loading, and other factors dictated by the national code requirements existing at the time the tower was built.

The ANSI/TIA-222-H Standard represents the latest refinement of specific minimum requirements for tower engineers and manufacturers to help assure that the tower structure and its foundations are designed to meet the most realistic conditions for local weather while assuring that the tower is designed to stringent factors of safety. This tower is designed to 140 MPH Ultimate Wind Speed (no ice) per ASCE 7-16 per ANSI/TIA-222-H with Structure Class III, Exposure Category C, Topographical Category 1, and a Crest Height of 0 feet.

We are aware of few documented instances of a self supporting tower or monopole failure. Self supporting towers and monopoles can be designed such that the most common mode of failure is in the upper middle region of the tower, with the upper portion of the tower remaining connected and "bending and bowing over" against the base of the tower or pole. The fact that the wind is normally greater on the upper portion of the structure contributes to the likelihood of this type of failure. This particular tower has a theoretical failure point at the tower midpoint or above. The predicted mode of wind induced failure would be a buckling of the tower legs at or above the tower midpoint with the top sections of the tower folding over on to the intact base sections. This would then affect a "zero fall zone" at ground level.

Valmont Structures is an AISC approved shop. All Valmont Structures welders are AWS and CWB qualified. Our total design, engineer and build process has been quality audited by our customers including public utilities, telephone companies, government agencies, and of course AISC.

We trust the above and the attached will be helpful to you. If you should need anything else, please let us know at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mandeep Singh | Engineering Supervisor
Valmont Industries, Inc. | 1545 Pidco Dr | Plymouth, IN 46563
Phone +1 (574) 936-4221, ext. 5315 | Cell +1 (574) 210-0360
mandeep.singh@valmont.com | valmont.com



Digitally signed by Nathan A. Ross
Date: 2021-03-29 08:20:07 -05

Map of Subject Property



Path: G:\Workgroups\GIS_Dept\Projects\GrowthManagement\Planning\Zoning\VAR-PZ2025-227_SECOEnergy\VAR-PZ2025-227_SECOEnergy.aprx

9/12/2025

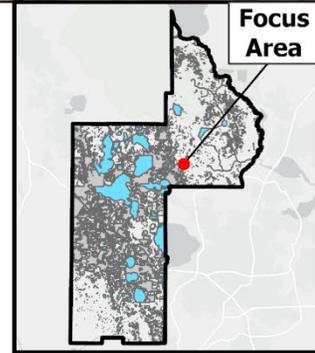
Aerial Map of Subject Property

VAR-PZ2025-227
SECO Energy



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Construction of communications tower and equipment compound



9/12/2025

FINAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER

(PZ2025-227 / AR 6152)

WHEREAS, Logan Jarman (the “Applicant”) requested a variance on behalf of Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (the “Owner”), to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Section 3.13.09(B)(4), to allow a lattice design communications tower to be located closer than one-thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet from residential units located on adjacent parcels; and

WHEREAS, the subject property consists of approximately 18.75 +/- acres located at 34420 Riordan Road in the unincorporated Eustis area in Section 10, Township 19 South, Range 27 East, identified by Alternate Key Number 1039703, and more particularly described in Exhibit “A”; and

WHEREAS, after giving notice of a hearing on a petition for a variance to the Lake County Land Development Regulations, including notice that the request for a variance would be presented to the Board of Adjustment of Lake County, Florida, on November 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Adjustment reviewed the petition, staff report and any comments, favorable or unfavorable, from the public and surrounding property owners at a public hearing duly advertised.

DONE AND ORDERED by the Board of Adjustment of Lake County, Florida, that:

1. **Variance Granted**: A variance to Section 3.13.09(B)(4), to allow a lattice design communications tower to be located closer than one-thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet from residential units located on adjacent parcels is hereby granted. The communications tower shall be no closer than five hundred and sixty-four (564) feet from adjacent residential units.
2. **No Estoppel**: Approval of this variance cannot be relied upon to assert a claim of estoppel against the County if the property identified herein cannot be developed as proposed due to the inability to meet other requirements under the applicable Land Development Regulations. The Owner is solely responsible for performing any necessary due diligence to ensure the property will appropriately support future development.

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**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Bea Meeks, Chairman

**State of Florida
County of Lake**

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this 5th day of November 2025, by Bea Meeks, as Chairman of the Lake County Board of Adjustment.

**Personally Known OR Produced Identification
Type of Identification Produced _____**

(SEAL)

Notary Signature

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if any person desires to appeal any decision with respect to a matter considered at a public meeting or hearing of the Board of Adjustment, such person will need a record of the proceedings, and such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record for such purpose is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based.

A final administrative order of the Board of Adjustment may be appealed to the Circuit Court in Lake County, Florida. Such an appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days of the execution of this Order. Those filing an appeal of an administrative order must comply with all applicable Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Exhibit "A" – Legal Description

From the Southwest Corner of the North ¼ of the West ½ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 10, Township 19 South, Range 27 East, Lake County, Florida, run North 00°16'30" West, along the West line of the West ½ of the North ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of said Section 10, a distance of 565.00 feet for a POINT OF BEGINNING; thence run South 88°26'46" East, parallel with the South line of the North ¼ of the West ½ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 10, a distance of 594.45 feet; thence run North 00°14'42" West, parallel with the East line of the West ½ of the North ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of said Section 10, a distance of 1326.46 feet; thence run North 57°53'51" West, 99.31 feet to a point on the South Right-of-Way line of State Road No. 44; thence run North 88°06'21" West, along said South Right-of-Way line 511.34 feet to a point on the West line of the West ½ of the North ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of said Section 10; thence run South 00°16'30" East, along said West line, 1380.02 feet to the Point of Beginning.

