

**Subject:** Request for Accountability and Explanation: Staff Oversight of Use Permit #73-0416-U in CTI Application #221049

**To:** Matt Machado, Planning Director  
Santa Cruz County Planning Department

**From:** Julie Cahill  
120 Summit Dr  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
summitdr2020@gmail.com

**Date:** May 12, 2025

Dear Mr. Machado,

I am writing to formally request an explanation for the Planning Department's failure to enforce the binding conditions of Use Permit #73-0416-U during the review and processing of CTI Tower's current application at 186 Summit Drive (Application #221049).

After reviewing the property permit file it is clear that both neighbors and the Bonny Doon Rural Association have a long history of objecting to any further development on this property. These concerns were acknowledged in the original permit, which placed conditions limiting future expansion. Approval of the original permit was granted only with the understanding that the facility would not grow in size, which was outlined in the conditions.

It is my understanding that these conditions remain fully binding on the current owner, CTI Towers, pursuant to **Santa Cruz County Code § 18.10.131**, which states:

"All permits or approvals granted pursuant to this chapter run with the land and continue to be valid upon a change of ownership of the site or structure to which they apply."

There is no language in Use Permit #73-0416-U that exempts it from this requirement, and I have found no additional permits that did away with these conditions. Therefore, CTI is legally obligated to maintain all conditions of that permit, and the County is legally obligated to enforce them.

Use Permit #73-0416-U, approved in 1973 and legally transferred to CTI Towers upon their 2016 acquisition of the site, includes several conditions that restrict future development—conditions that have not been met. These include:

- **Condition #1:** "All landscaping shall conform to submitted drawings by Roy Rydell (April 2, 1976) and must be permanently maintained."
- **Condition #7:** "The applicant agrees not to construct any future additions to the facility, with the exception of those that reduce the number, height, or area of existing antennae."
- **Condition #7 (continued):** "All antennae/towers/buildings not in use shall be promptly removed from the site."

CTI has failed to maintain the required vegetative screening, replace trees or fencing, and has retained obsolete and inactive equipment—all in direct violation of the permit.

The County's own consultation letter to CTI dated October 29, 2020 (PA201019) confirms that staff reviewed the parcel history and even noted that:

"Screening vegetation that was required by earlier Permit approvals appears largely to have not survived and/or has been removed."

"Existing equipment appears poorly screened from the surrounding roads."

Despite this, the Planning Department accepted CTI's new application without requiring resolution of these longstanding violations, and advanced it through public review without applying the binding conditions of the existing Use Permit.

This failure to connect acknowledged violations with enforceable permit conditions suggests either:

1. Staff reviewed the permit history but failed to identify that Use Permit #73-0416-U was still in legal effect, or
2. Staff understood the permit's applicability but chose not to enforce its conditions.

Either scenario is deeply concerning and has cost our neighborhood a great deal of time and money amidst many residents battling their own permit process to rebuild after the CZU fire of 2020. The public has a right to know why there was a deviation from protocol. Accordingly, I request answers to the following:

1. **Who on staff was responsible** for reviewing past permits associated with 186 Summit Drive, and when was this review conducted?
2. **Why were the conditions of Use Permit #73-0416-U not enforced** during the application review process?
3. **What County policy, if any, allows Planning staff to disregard active permit conditions** when processing a new application?
4. **What corrective steps will be taken** to investigate this failure and ensure compliance with standard planning protocol in the future?
5. **Who is responsible for ongoing enforcement and oversight of CTI's maintenance obligations** under their permit conditions? Despite repeated violations—including failure to remove unused equipment, maintain screening or landscape—no department has taken responsibility. After Supervisor Cummings' office advised us to report violations to Code Compliance, Marcus Mendes called back to say that it was not his jurisdiction to enforce permit conditions and suggested I contact Zoning. While Zoning had acknowledged the failed state of the property at the Zoning meeting, no action was taken. This lack of enforcement has left a burden on the neighborhood and is unacceptable.

At the May 6 Board of Supervisors meeting, I raised this issue publicly and received no response. I followed up with an email to our Board of Supervisor after the meeting with no response. I now request a written explanation and formal acknowledgment that Use Permit #73-0416-U remains in full legal effect and that enforcement action will be taken before any further advancement of CTI's application is considered at the upcoming meeting on June 10th, 2025.

Under Santa Cruz County planning protocol and **SCCC § 13.10.240**, previously issued permits must continue to be administered according to their existing terms, and any change in use or expansion must be handled by amending or revoking the original permit before new development permits are issued. That has not happened.

The County's decision to advance CTI's new application without first:

- Acknowledging the active and legally binding conditions of the original permit,
- Addressing the applicant's noncompliance,
- And requiring either formal revocation or amendment of Use Permit #73-0416-U

...constitutes a procedural violation and a breakdown in enforcement integrity. This action sets a dangerous precedent that undermines lawful permit administration across all zoning districts in the County.

I request that the Planning Department immediately suspend any further processing of this application until CTI fully complies with the existing Use Permit.

The County has a duty to uphold its land use laws. Public trust depends on consistent, lawful application of those standards. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,  
Julie Cahill  
120 Summit Dr  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
summitdr2020@gmail.com

OF SANTA CRUZ  
U S E  
**-PERMIT-**

NUMBER 75-1097-U

ISSUED TO

TELEPROMPTER of SANTA CRUZ

1376 Soquel Avenue

Santa Cruz, CA 95062

PARCEL NO.(S) 80-062-02

**LOCATION OF USE** East side of Summit Drive, about 800 feet north of Empire Grade, Bonny Doon Area.

**PERMITTED USE** Use Permit to amend Use Permit No. 4581-U by installing an earth receiver station and to construct a cyclone fence enclosure.

APPROVED, subject to the following nine (9) conditions:

1. All landscaping shall conform to submitted drawings by Roy Rydell, revised April 2, 1976. All landscaping must be permanently maintained.

2. The proposed antenna shall be recessed fifteen feet below grade level per submitted grading plan by Bowman and Williams, dated April, 1976. An earth berm shall be developed from fill material covered with a minimum of six inches of top soil, and located per above submitted drawing. The earth berm shall be planted to maintain its stability and reinforce its screening effect. The combination earth berm, plantings and a fence shall be equal in height to the top of the proposed antenna, which may not extend more than 20 feet above the level of natural grade. This screening combination shall extend as close as possible to the present dish antenna without interfering with their line of sight. All grading, filling and drainage shall be subject to the grading permit.

3. The generator and air conditioner units shall be equipped with a sound muffling device. The proposed antenna shall not increase the noise level on site.

4. The entire facility shall be painted as completely as technologically possible with a muted earth tone to blend with the natural area.

5. Conditions 1 through 4 shall be fully accomplished to the satisfaction of the County Planning Department with consultation of the Rural Bonny Doon Association, prior to electrical connection to the proposed antenna operation, required testing excepted. Any other landscaping, in addition to that contained in the

(Continued on Next Page)

THIS PERMIT WILL EXPIRE ON MAY 11, 1977 IF IT HAS NOT BEEN EXERCISED.

NOTE: APPLICANT MUST SIGN,  
ACCEPTING CONDITIONS, OR PERMIT  
BECOMES NULL & VOID

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

submitted drawings and previous Use Permit requirements, which may be required by the County Planning Department after consultation with the Rural Bonny Doon Association, shall be completed by Teleprompter within thirty days.

6. The proposed antenna shall not interfere with local reception, emit harmful radiation, or otherwise be a detriment to the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood.
7. By accepting this Use Permit, Teleprompter agrees not to construct any future additions to the facility, with the exception of those that would reduce the number, height, or area of the existing antenna. Normal maintenance and repairs are permitted. All antennae/towers/buildings not in use shall be promptly removed from the site.
8. Any violation to the conditions of this permit shall be grounds for revocation.
9. This permit shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator 18 months after the final approval date to insure faithful compliance.