APACHE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL WORKING SESSION
MINUTES FOR August 25, 2026

Commissioners

District I	District II	District III
Carey Dobson		Brad Peterson, Chair
Bobby Fite	Kay Hauser	Bob Pollock, Vice-Chair
Brad Jarvis		Travis Johnson

Alternate

Michael Bragiel

Staff Members in attendance

Matthew Fish, Director

Shanna Pearce, Project Manager
Roxanne Gillespie, Code Enforcement

WORK SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brad Peterson called the Apache County Planning & Zoning Commission Special Working Session to order at 12:03 p.m. MST.

RENEWABLE ENERGY ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

The Commission continued its discussion of proposed amendments to the Apache County Renewable Energy Ordinance. Chair Peterson introduced the item regarding the proposed amendments to the Apache County Renewable Energy Ordinance Sections 802-803. Chair Peterson stated that this session was for discussion and direction only and that no formal action would be taken and that invited resource persons are present to provide information and technical expertise and were not members of the Commission.

Community Development Director Matthew Fish clarified that the working document previously identified as Draft 8 had been redesignated Draft 9, with no substantive change associated with the renumbering.

Monica Boehning reviewed corrections and revisions intended to reflect matters discussed during the previous working session. These included corrections to Section 801, formatting changes, additional wording previously discussed by the Commission, and revisions to the definition of Project Boundary.

The Commission discussed requiring the Project Boundary description to identify all applicable townships, range, and section information within the project perimeter. The Commission also discussed identification of land ownership by general ownership category, such as private, State, or Federal, rather than identifying individual private landowners.

The Commission agreed with requiring the type of ownership; State, BLM, Private, Federal, etc., without naming names of private landowners.

Section 802 – Definitions

The Commission reviewed proposed additions and revisions to definitions in Section 802.

Agri-Voltaics: Monica Boehning proposed a definition addressing the integration of photovoltaic solar-energy facilities with agricultural production. The Commission discussed changing the proposed language from facilities that "are integrated" to facilities that "may be integrated" with agricultural production.

The Commission supported adding the definition and changing "are integrated" to "may be integrated".

Alternative Energy Storage: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing energy-storage technologies other than battery energy storage systems, including mechanical, electrochemical, electrical, thermal, and chemical systems.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Biomass Energy Production: The Commission discussed a proposed definition addressing energy production from woody material associated with forest, woodland, and grassland restoration activities and dead-tree salvage. Malena Hannah recommended terminology consistent with State and Federal natural-resource agencies.

Director Fish indicated he would work with the resource persons to develop revised language for consideration at a future working session.

Communications Impact Analysis: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing assessment of potential radio-frequency communication interference associated with renewable-energy facilities. Discussion included whether the person performing the analysis should be described as "qualified" or "certified." Director Fish and Chair Peterson indicated additional research would be conducted regarding

applicable professional certifications. The Commission favored retaining the term "thorough assessment" in the proposed definition.

Cumulative Impacts: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing the combined effects of a proposed project with known past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Decibel A-Weighting (dBA): Donald Maxwell proposed a definition describing A-weighted decibel measurements. Discussion included the need for baseline sound information in connection with renewable energy projects.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Fall Zone: Donald Maxwell proposed a definition describing the area surrounding a wind turbine that could be affected by debris resulting from structural or component failure. The Commission discussed that the applicable fall-zone distance could be addressed later through project standards or individual Conditional Use Permit review.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Hazardous Materials: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition of hazardous materials and discussed adding compliance with applicable State and Federal regulations. The Commission also discussed broadening the description of potentially affected organisms to include "all other life forms."

The Commission agreed to adding "all other life form" to the definition.

Hybrid Renewable Energy Storage System: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing facilities combining renewable-energy generation and energy-storage systems.

The Commission supported the proposed definition.

Project Boundary: The Commission confirmed its earlier discussion regarding a comprehensive legal description of the project area and identification of general land-ownership categories within the project boundary.

Repowering: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition distinguishing substantial upgrades or replacement of project components from minor repairs or replacement of identical equipment.

The Commission supported the proposed definition.

Shadow Flicker: Monica Boehning and Donald Maxwell presented alternative definitions. The Commission favored the shorter definition describing the repetitive alternation of light and shadow caused by sunlight being interrupted by rotating wind-turbine blades and recognizing turbine height and sun angle as factors.

The Commission supported Monica's definition.

Storm-Water Runoff and Erosion Control Plans: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing site-specific drainage, retention, stormwater-control, and erosion-control planning.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Substantial Modification: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition addressing changes to project location, number, size, generating capacity, technology, or equipment that could increase impacts or require different mitigation. The proposed definition distinguished micro-siting adjustments of 100 feet or less, subject to identified limitations, from substantial modifications.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Total Wind Turbine Height: The Commission reviewed proposed language expanding the definition to include the topmost extent of alternative wind-energy collection designs that may not use conventional rotating blades.

The Commission supported the revision.

Linda Weiland presented additional proposed definitions and revisions.

Renewable Energy: The Commission reviewed a proposed general definition encompassing power generated from naturally renewing resources, including solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, and biomass.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Renewable Energy Research Facility: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition for facilities focused on research, testing, and development of renewable-energy generation or storage systems.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Scenic Travel Corridor: The Commission discussed Linda's proposed definition and proposed list of specific highways and routes. Discussion addressed potential interaction with transportation funding, economic corridors, other infrastructure projects, the

Comprehensive Plan, and project-specific review. The Commission indicated specific routes could be addressed elsewhere in the ordinance if appropriate.

The Commission supported retaining a definition of Scenic Travel Corridor while not including the proposed list of specific routes in the definition at this time.

Setback Distance: The Commission supported adding "measured" clarifying that setback distance is a measured distance and retaining the proposed measurement points for wind and solar facilities.

Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Production Facility: The Commission reviewed proposed revisions incorporating renewable-energy storage systems and associated infrastructure.

Utility-Scale Solar Energy Project: The Commission reviewed proposed language addressing associated substations, electrical infrastructure, and related energy-storage systems.

Utility-Scale Wind Energy Project: The Commission reviewed proposed language addressing substations, meteorological towers, and related energy-storage systems.

Meteorological Towers

The Commission discussed whether meteorological towers used to evaluate potential wind-energy projects should require separate Conditional Use Permits. Director Fish stated that the County had not historically required Conditional Use Permits for meteorological towers.

The Commission discussed applying the County's existing 35-foot height threshold to towers, with an exception for agricultural windmills. Commissioners expressed support for requiring a separate Conditional Use Permit for meteorological towers before development of a subsequent utility-scale wind project.

Director Fish indicated that appropriate language could be developed for consideration as an amendment to Article 4 and potentially presented to the Commission before referral to the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission supported retaining meteorological towers within the renewable-energy definitions under discussion.

Wind Turbine: The Commission reviewed proposed revisions expanding the definition to recognize alternative wind-energy collection technologies. The Commission discussed the exclusion of small wind systems used primarily for on-site residential, institutional, commercial, or agricultural purposes.

The Commission favored retaining commercial within the list of on-site uses.

Visual Resource: The Commission discussed proposed revisions to the existing Visual Resource definition.

The Commission supported language recognizing scenic travel corridors as may be identified in the Apache County Comprehensive Plan.

Glare: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition of glare applicable to solar facilities. Discussion addressed modern solar-panel design, reflection, and the potential need for glare standards elsewhere in the ordinance.

The Commission supported retaining a glare definition.

Micro-Siting: The Commission reviewed a proposed definition allowing limited adjustments to approved project-component locations to address site conditions or sensitive resources discovered during pre-construction review. The proposed definition generally limited micro-siting adjustments to 100 feet and prohibited adjustments that would increase component height, increase visual or auditory impacts on sensitive receptors, or encroach into required setbacks.

The Commission discussed the basis for the 100-foot limitation, including FAA review considerations and flexibility within approved infrastructure corridors.

The Commission supported adding the definition.

Infrasound: Susan Maxwell requested that the Commission consider adding a definition of infrasound. Discussion included available scientific and medical research and whether peer-reviewed medical information should be considered.

Chair Peterson requested that a proposed definition of infrasound be prepared for a future working session. He stated that supporting research concerning potential impacts could be considered when the Commission reaches substantive standards such as setbacks.

FUTURE ORDINANCE REVIEW

Chair Peterson stated that the Commission had completed the definitions under consideration and that the next special working session would focus on Sections 803 and 804.

Director Fish recommended limiting the next session to those sections.

Linda Weiland proposed reorganizing portions of the ordinance to separate general development or performance standards, setbacks, application procedures, and application

requirements. She referenced the organizational structure used elsewhere in the County's zoning ordinance.

The Commission supported the proposed organizational approach and requested that Director Fish work with Mrs. Weiland on potential revisions.

The Commission also discussed obtaining renewable-energy ordinance provisions from other Arizona counties for comparison, including standards used by Navajo and Coconino Counties. Director Fish agreed to gather comparative information.

NEXT SPECIAL WORKING SESSION

The Commission discussed scheduling due to anticipated commissioner absences.

The Commission agreed to skip the September 8, 2026, special working session and resume the special working sessions on September 22, 2026.

The Commission discussed allowing up to three hours for the September 22 session, with the option to conclude earlier at an appropriate stopping point.

The Commission discussed inviting or obtaining information from resource persons concerning fire protection and emergency response, FCC matters, and FAA matters for the September 22 discussion.

Director Fish stated that proposed edits for the September 22 working session should be submitted by September 15, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Peterson adjourned the Planning & Zoning Commission Special Working Session at 2:17 p.m. MST.

No formal motions or votes were taken. Direction was provided by discussion and indicated consensus during the working session.

Approved this 7th day of October 2026.

/s/ Brad Peterson	/s/ Matthew Fish
Chairman of the Commission	Planning & Zoning Secretary

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended as a summary of discussions held and are not intended to be a verbatim transcript.