

**APACHE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR September 4, 2025**

**Commissioners**

**District I**

Carey Dobson  
Bobby Fite  
Brad Jarvis

**District II**

Kay Hauser  
Dan Muth, Chair

**District III**

Brad Peterson, Vice-Chair  
Bob Pollock  
Travis Johnson

**Alternate**

Michael Bragiel

**Staff Members in attendance**

Matthew Fish, Director  
Christopher Resare, Chief Deputy Attorney

Shanna Pearce, Plan Reviewer  
Serafina Farb, Permit Tech

**Assessor's Office**

Roxanne Gillespie, Appraiser III

**Working Lunch Session**

**Call to Order**

Chair Dan Muth called the working lunch session to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Update on Alpine commercial rezone**

Planning Director Matthew Fish reported that following the Alpine Community July meeting, it was determined that updating the Alpine Community Plan should occur prior to pursuing a commercial rezone. From that community meeting approximately 125 signatures were collected in support of updating the plan, and several individuals expressed interest in serving on a subcommittee.

Mr. Fish proposed forming a subcommittee of 6–12 members, including representation from full-time and part-time residents, property owners, business owners, Alpine DWID, and other stakeholders. Meetings would be held in Alpine with the option for remote participation. He recommended that Commission Member Fite and the Chair be involved in finalizing the subcommittee membership.

Commissioners discussed ensuring a balanced mix of long-term residents and newer property owners and suggested using a questionnaire to identify interested participants. Staff will prepare the questionnaire and work with Commissioners' Fite and Muth to finalize recommendations.

Commission agreed that staff should proceed with developing the questionnaire, soliciting participation, and coordinating with Commissioners Fite and Muth to finalize the subcommittee membership for the Alpine Community Plan update.

### **Comparative review of Navajo County's ordinance and Apache County's ordinance.**

Planning Director Matthew Fish provided a review of Navajo County's recently adopted Renewable Energy Ordinance for comparison with Apache County's ordinance. He noted key provisions relating to jurisdiction, pre-application requirements, road standards, road use agreements, environmental and cultural reports, citizen participation, and coordination with Arizona Game and Fish. Discussion included decommissioning requirements, bonding, setbacks, noise standards, and the use of waivers for certain conditions.

The Commission discussed the value of including "preferred criteria" for siting renewable energy projects rather than establishing an overlay district, noting that such criteria may be sufficient when combined with updates to the comprehensive plan. Setbacks for solar and wind projects, cost recovery and fee structures, and the role of decommissioning bonds were also addressed. Staff emphasized the need for a pre-application checklist and coordination with engineering and public works.

The Commission agreed that staff should prepare draft recommendations, incorporating Navajo County provisions and other sources, for presentation at the October meeting. Fee structures for renewable energy permits will be scheduled for discussion at a future meeting.

Due to time constraints, the applicants presentation for Juniper Springs was moved to present during the public meeting.

### **Discussion regarding the Greer Article 6 Ordinance**

Planning Director Matthew Fish reported that county leadership requested clarification of Article 6 following a recent plat amendment. Staff recommended amending the ordinance to require that condominium, timeshare, and fractional developments in Greer be located only within the Greer Commercial Resort (GCR) zone and operated in conjunction with resort-type facilities (e.g., hotel, lodge, or motel) that provide a central amenity such as a restaurant or similar resort activity.

A definition of "resort" was proposed for inclusion in the ordinance. Commissioners discussed applicability to existing versus future developments, whether condominiums

could be sold individually, and the types of facilities that would qualify as resort activity (e.g., restaurant, bar, pool, or community facility).

Chair Dan Muth recessed the working lunch session at 1:05p.m.

Chair Dan Muth reconvened the working lunch session at 2:25 p.m.

**Discussion regarding the proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Juniper Springs Solar and Storage project**

**Discussion on any future Agenda Items**

Chair Dan Muth adjourned the working lunch session at 2:27 p.m.

**Public Meeting**

**Call to Order**

Chair Dan Muth called the public meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

**Roll Call/Determination of a Quorum**

Mr. Muth determined a quorum was present by roll call. There were five (5) Commissioners in attendance; Bobby Fite, Dan Muth, Bob Pollock, Mike Bragiell, and Carey Dobson.

**Review and Approval of the minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission working lunch session and public hearing held on August 7, 2025**

**MOTION:** Mr. Pollock moved to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2025 Working Lunch Session and Public Hearing as drafted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fite.

There was no discussion.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously with four (4) ayes, zero (0) nays, and one (1) abstention. Mr. Muth, who was not present at the August 7, 2025 meeting.

**Review, discussion and possible recommendation for approval of the proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Juniper Springs Solar and Storage project. Tabled from the August 7, 2025 meeting**

Planning Director Matthew Fish recommended tabling the item until October to allow staff to complete a report and receive final input from Arizona Game and Fish and the applicant.

Commission discussion included coordination with Game and Fish, ranching and grazing agreements, and state trust land issues. Mr. Dobson noted a letter from Commissioner Johnson confirming an agreement between the applicant and rancher.

John Gillespie, Rose Law Group, on behalf of EDF Renewables, presented project updates including progress on environmental studies, road use and maintenance agreements, decommissioning plan, and ongoing coordination with Game and Fish. Dr. Joel Diamond, Westland Resources, presented biological studies and mitigation measures.

Commissioners raised questions regarding subsurface mineral rights and potential conflicts with oil and gas development. The applicant agreed to follow up with additional coordination and provide more information by the October meeting. Water access for ranching and wildlife was also discussed.

**MOTION:** Mr. Pollock motioned to table this item to the October meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fite.

There was no discussion.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously with five (5) ayes to zero (0) nays.

### **Call to the Public**

**Marcus Clarke** spoke about Greer Article 6 concerned about the ambiguity in the definition of “resort,” emphasized resorts should serve short-term visitors with amenities, not condominiums.

**Mayor Spence Udall** urged caution in decision-making, citing long-term economic impacts, external pressures, and the importance of flexibility to avoid negative outcomes like past industry losses.

**Hoss Plumley**, a nearby landowner, expressed concern that water use for solar panel cleaning could lower groundwater levels and affect domestic wells. He questioned how the project benefits nearby property owners, citing potential impacts on property values. He noted his family relocated to the area in 2020 to homestead and avoid large energy developments and asked that impacts on local residents be considered in addition to ranching and environmental concerns.

**Boss Plumley** raised concerns about impacts on wildlife, hunting, and the rural environment. He warned that lithium battery fires would exceed local firefighting

capacity, especially with delayed access. Additional concerns included visual impacts, lack of community water benefits, and roads potentially being left in poor condition after construction.

**Carol Plumley**, yielded her time to Boss Plumley.

**Carlos Vazquez** had to leave the meeting; no comments were provided.

**Thomas Frazer** expressed concern about fire safety and response times, noting that access roads from the power plant could provide more direct routes than those currently planned. He questioned road maintenance, emphasized the need for accurate response time estimates, and suggested considering a nearby fire station. He urged the commission to provide stronger protections and guarantees for local residents.

**Linda Weiland** said the Juniper Springs project shows the need for an updated alternative energy ordinance to address large-scale impacts and give developers clear guidance. She recommended using model ordinances such as Yavapai County's 2024 Solar Ordinance and a 2019 APA Planning Advisory Service article with model ordinances and conditions. She urged P&Z involvement at both preliminary and final plan review stages.

**Mr. Muth** suggested that staff address the key points of the Yavapai County ordinance along with ordinances from neighboring counties.

**Monica Boehning** argued the Juniper Springs CUP application was incomplete and should not have been accepted. She cited requirements in Article 4, Section 442(B)(5) and Section 439(A), noting the application lacked both an approved fire prevention plan and a proposed road plan. She warned that how P&Z handles this first CUP will set a precedent for all future renewable projects. She strongly disagreed with the August 7th staff report recommending it move forward and urged the commission to adopt a detailed review checklist to ensure applications are at least 90–95% complete before acceptance.

There were no other public comments.

### **Report from Staff to the Commission**

**Mr. Fish noted that with changing schedules and job commitments among** commissioners, it may be necessary to adjust the timing of P&Z meetings starting in January 2026. He explained that noon meetings are difficult for members who work or ranch, and that Mr. Muth has had to use leave time from his Forest Service job to attend. Staff recommended moving meetings to approximately 4:00 p.m. to better accommodate commissioners' schedules. Mr. Fish suggested placing the matter on a work session agenda in October to discuss times and dates.

Mr. Muth noted consensus and directed staff to move forward with the agenda item.

An attendee asked about live streaming meetings; staff will follow up outside the meeting.

Mr. Fite reported that the second Verizon tower in Alpine has been completed and camouflaged with tree-like limbs, similar to the first tower.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Dan Muth adjourned the public meeting at 2:25 p.m. (MST) and reconvened the working lunch session.

With no further discussion noted, Chair Dan Muth adjourned the working lunch session at 2:27 p.m.