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Board of County Commissioners
Holly Williams, District 1
Carrie Geitner, District 2
Stan VanderWerf, District 3
Longinos Gonzalez, Jr., District 4
Cami Bremer, District 5

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING RESULTS (UNOFFICIAL RESULTS)

Planning Commission (PC) Meeting
Thursday, February 2, 2023
El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department
2880 International Circle – Second Floor Hearing Room
Colorado Springs, Colorado

REGULAR HEARING, 9:00 A.M.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: BRIAN RISLEY, TOM BAILEY, JAY CARLSON, TIM TROWBRIDGE, BECKY FULLER, AND ERIC MORAES.

PC MEMBERS VIRTUAL AND VOTING: NONE.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND NOT VOTING: NONE.

PC MEMBERS ABSENT: SARAH BRITTAIN JACK, BRANDY MERRIAM, JOSHUA PATTERSON, BRYCE SCHUETTPELZ, AND CHRISTOPHER WHITNEY.

STAFF PRESENT: MEGGAN HERINGTON, JUSTIN KILGORE, CHRISTIAN HAAS, LUPE PACKMAN, CARLOS HERNANDEZ, MIRANDA BENSON, AND EL PASO COUNTY ATTORNEY LORI SEAGO.

OTHERS VIRTUAL AND SPEAKING: COMMISSIONER VANDERWERF.

1. REPORT ITEMS

A. Planning Department. Next PC Hearing is Thursday, February 16th, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

Ms. Herington thanked the board members for their time over the last few weeks, meeting with herself and Mr. Kilgore, either individually or in pairs, to get to know likes and dislikes of how things are working. She stated those meetings were very valuable to them both. Changes will be implemented as soon as they can be. This may include ongoing trainings. Some changes are happening this morning. Mr. Kilgore is sitting at a different table. PCD staff will also be trying a new presentation style.

Mr. Risley thanked both Ms. Herington and Mr. Kilgore for hosting those meetings with the board members. He also found them to be very productive and helpful. He appreciates the interest in improving processes in place.

Ms. Herington added that there may be interest in a combined meeting of the PC with the BOCC, and PCD staff will work to get that established. The meeting may be quarterly or semi-annually, it has not yet been decided.

Mr. Risley agreed that a meeting between PC members and County Commissioners would be very helpful so they know what their priorities are and what their emphasis is for the PC.

B. Call for public comment for items not on hearing agenda.

Mr. VanderWerf, who joined online, introduced himself as the new PC liaison. He hopes to join in some PC meetings. He will not be offering comments or input on specific items heard by the PC. He thinks meetings between the PC and BOCC would be a great idea. He encourages the PC members to join the BOCC hearings as well.

Mr. Risley thanked Commissioner VanderWerf for joining the meeting and offered gratitude from the entire PC for his support.

2. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Adoption of Minutes of meeting held January 19, 2023.

PC ACTION: THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT (6-0).

B. P2221

PARSONS

**MAP AMENDMENT (REZONE)
PITMAN LIVING TRUST REZONE**

A request by Pitman Living Trust for approval of a map amendment (rezoning) from A-35 (Agricultural) to RR-5 (Residential Rural). The 37.86-acre property is located approximately 0.25 miles southwest of the intersection Walker Road and North Meridian Road and within Section 18, Township 11 South, Range 64 West of the 6th P.M. (Parcel No.41000-00-426) (Commissioner District No. 1).

PC ACTION: TROWBRIDGE MOVED / BAILEY SECONDED FOR APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEM 2B, P-22-021, FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONE), PITMAN LIVING TRUST REZONE, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT, WITH TWO (2) CONDITIONS AND TWO (2) NOTATIONS, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED (6-0).

DISCUSSION

Mr. Carlson asked the applicant to clarify differing information from the application and what is declared in PCD's staff report. The application states approximately 3 lots will be created, but the staff report says 4 (3 lots and one non-buildable tract).

Mr. Watts, representing the applicant, answered that the original intent was to have a 4th parcel (non-buildable tract) serve as a driveway or area to pull over.

Mr. Carlson asked if that was the tract that was 1,000 square feet or so?

Mr. Watts affirmed. It was adjacent to Meridian Road.

Mr. Carlson asked if the applicant is living on the 20-acre parcel?

Mr. Watts answered that the owner lives on all three of the parcels. There are different houses out there now, which is why they are subdividing three lots. Each house will have its own lot.

Mr. Moraes asked PCD staff for clarification regarding the recommended condition number 2. Is the wording correct if this application will approve rezoning to RR-5?

Mr. Kilgore responded that the wording is correct.

Mr. Bailey pointed out that the resolution is correct as well.

Mr. Carlson asked if any responses from the public had been received, either in objection or support?

Mr. Kilgore responded that no responses were received that he is aware of.

IN FAVOR: RISLEY, BAILEY, CARLSON, FULLER, MORAES, TROWBRIDGE.

IN OPPOSITION: NONE.

COMMENT: NONE.

3. CALLED-UP CONSENT ITEMS. NONE.

4. REGULAR ITEMS

A. U224

HAAS

**APPROVAL OF LOCATION
COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES BROADBAND EXPANSION PROJECT**

A request by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) for an approval of location to allow for the development and construction of a fiber distribution network expansion within the boundaries of Colorado Springs Utilities. The project proposal includes a 2,000-mile expansion of the existing fiber distribution network underground and overhead on existing electric distribution poles, which as designed will be contained within existing easements and public rights-of-way. Work done within these locations will include hydraulic directional drilling to supply 2" and 3" conduit needed to deploy the fiber infrastructure. Underground construction and installation will be performed via new boring and new trenching as well as utilizing existing conduit where available. (All Commissioner Districts).

DISCUSSION

Mr. Carlson asked if the situation that recently happened with Xfinity, a fiberoptic breach that caused half of the city to be without service for approximately 18 hours, is something CSU can anticipate and plan to avoid?

Mr. Wortinger referred to an overview slide of the conceptual network. Resiliency of the network was critical in the way it was designed. He explained that each of the 12 fiber huts connects to the backbone ring (the bold red line seen on the slide). The smaller, spider web lines going out into the neighborhood connect to the individual addresses. By being in a ring formation around the city, any one break (like what occurred with Comcast/Xfinity), the traffic would automatically reroute to the other direction around the ring. It is depicted in the conceptual drawing that there will be multiple redundancies in the ring as well. Another thing they did to increase resiliency of that backbone ring is to co-locate that backbone ring with the CSU's transmission lines. When the fiber lines are located near 115,000-230,000 volts, people don't mess with them.

Mr. VanderWerf asked for clarification on the comment during the presentation that Ray Nixon Power Plant will be closed by 2030. Does that mean coal gets converted to natural gas by 2030 or did that mean everything fossil fuel related will be closed by 2030?

Mr. Wortinger answered that from what he understands of the integrated electric energy plan, in order to meet the emissions targets that are required, all coal production needs to be shut down, meaning the Ray Nixon Power Plant will be closed. The Front Range Power Plant is co-located with the Ray Nixon Plant, but that one is natural gas-fired. That plant will continue to operate.

Mr. VanderWerf thanked Mr. Wortinger for the clarification that there are two separate facilities at that location.

Mr. Wortinger added that there will also be 6 natural gas-fired engines with fuel oil back-up located on the Martin Drake Power Plant site for the next 5 years while CSU rebuilds their transmission network. After 5 years, those can be relocated to other parts of the city to provide for micro-gridding, islanding, and power resiliency. In particular, they are looking at the military customers so they can have dedicated, islandable power available in the event of a large natural disaster or grid failure elsewhere in the state or country.

Mr. Trowbridge asked how many CSU customers are part of the unincorporated areas of El Paso County?

Mr. Wortinger answered that they do not have that figure at this time. He clarified that they are not building the entire service territory for Colorado Springs Utilities. They have to talk about multiple service territories because water, gas, wastewater and electric are all slightly different. The current project scope is the external boundary of the City of Colorado Springs and the enclaves of unincorporated El Paso County within that area.

Mr. Carlson mentioned he thought he saw a graphic within the presentation that 196,000 people were included.

Mr. Wortinger mentioned that may have been in the PCD staff presentation.

Mr. Risley stated that it is his understanding that CSU will not be the service provider, but is just building the backbone on which other providers will provide the service?

Mr. Wortinger responded that is correct for commercial internet service, but CSU will be operating the network for their own IT and OT purposes. For clarification, when CSU runs their own information technology system via ZOOM, TEAMS, etc., that is IT traffic which touches the internet. Their operational traffic is what runs the power plants, gas systems, and water systems. This project will enable them to physically segregate these systems to run and operate on different fibers, making it that much harder to be attacked by foreign state agents. He stated they are attacked 100's to 1,000's of times per day by other actors. They are going to physically segregate that traffic, limiting where it touches the internet, so that resources are better managed, including customer data and customer information.

PC ACTION: FULLER MOVED / MORAES SECONDED FOR APPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 4A, U-22-004 FOR APPROVAL OF LOCATION, COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES BROADBAND EXPANSION PROJECT, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT, WITH FOUR (4) CONDITIONS AND ONE (1) NOTATION. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED (6-0).

IN FAVOR: RISLEY, BAILEY, CARLSON, FULLER, MORAES, TROWBRIDGE.

IN OPPOSITION: NONE.

COMMENT: NONE.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:36 A.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Miranda Benson