



WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Members

Jim Barnes
R. Michael Flick
Linda Kennedy
Daniel Lazzareschi – Vice-Chair
Kate S. Nelson
Amy Ownes
Rob Pierce - Chair
Secretary
Trevor Lloyd

Tuesday, May 6, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Washoe County Administrative Complex
Commission Chambers
1001 E 9th Street, Building A
Reno, Nevada 89512

and available via
Zoom Webinar

The Washoe County Planning Commission met in a scheduled session on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada and via Zoom teleconference.

The meeting will be televised live and replayed on the Washoe Channel at: <https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> also on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>

1. *Determination of Quorum

Chair Pierce called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following Commissioners and staff were present:

Commissioners present:

- Jim Barnes
- R. Michael Flick
- Linda Kennedy
- Daniel Lazzareschi, Vice Chair
- Kate S. Nelson
- Amy Owens
- Rob Pierce, Chair

Staff present:

- Trevor Lloyd, Secretary, Planning and Building
- Courtney Weiche, Senior Planner, Planning and Building
- Tim Evans, Planner, Planning and Building
- Julee Olander, Planner, Planning and Building
- Jennifer Gustafson, Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney's Office
- Adriana Albarran, Office Support Specialist, Planning and Building
- Brandon Roman, Recording Secretary, Planning and Building

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Nelson led the pledge to the flag.

3. Ethics Law Announcement

Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Gustafson provided the ethics procedure for disclosures.

4. Appeal Procedure

Secretary Trevor Lloyd recited the appeal procedure for items heard before the Planning Commission.

5. General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof

Chair Pierce opened the Public Comment period.

Public Comment:

There was no response to the call for public comment.

6. Approval of May 6, 2025, Agenda

Chair Pierce indicated Agenda Item 8.A. will be continued to the June 2025 meeting.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi moved to approve the agenda for the May 6, 2025, meeting as amended. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of seven for, none against.

7. Approval of April 1, 2025, Draft Minutes

Vice Chair Lazzareschi moved to approve the minutes for the April 1, 2025, Planning Commission meeting as written. Chair Pierce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of seven for, none against.

8. Planning Items

- A. Appointments to Parcel Map Review Committee – Recommendation that the Chair of the Washoe County Planning Commission appoint Rob Pierce as the member of the Planning Commission to serve as representative to the Washoe County Parcel Map Review Committee with a term retroactive from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026; and appoint Kate Nelson as the member of the Planning Commission to act as an alternate in the event the regular representative is absent with a term effective July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026.**

This item was continued until the June 2025 meeting.

9. Public Hearings

- A. Abandonment Case Number WAB24-0006 (JC Investment LLC Series V) [For possible action] – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve an abandonment of Washoe County's interest in a 144.86-foot long, 33-foot-wide government patent access and utility easement traversing north-south and bisecting the property, as well as a 231.21-foot-long, 13-foot-wide portion of the**

33-foot-wide government patent access and utility easement along the southern property line.

- Applicant/Property Owner: JC Investment LLC Series V
- Location: 15850 Fawn Lane
- APN: 150-242-15
- Parcel Size: 2.002 acres
- Master Plan: Suburban Residential (SR) and Rural (R)
- Regulatory Zone: Low Density Suburban (LDS) and General Rural (GR)
- Area Plan: Forest
- Development Code: Authorized in Article 806, Vacations and Abandonments of Easements or Streets
- Commission District: 2 – Commissioner Clark
- Staff: Tim Evans, Planner
Washoe County Community Services Department
Planning and Building
- Phone: 775.328.2314
- E-mail: tevans@washoecounty.gov

Planner Tim Evans conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Vicinity Map; Request; Site Plan; Reviewing Agencies; Public Notice; Findings; and Motion. He noted the public comment received on this matter was from the property owner to the east expressing concern with him retaining access to his property. Because of that comment, the initial abandonment was amended to retain 20 feet of the access easement.

Darryl Miele, future owner of the property, pointed out the east-west easement only goes halfway through the property. Because of that, he felt the entire easement should be abandoned.

Public Comment:

Via Zoom, Vicki Conley agreed the easement does not access the parcel to the east, only existing homes, so she was unsure why the public commenter inquired about access.

Mr. Brian Arnold discussed STA patent easements, referencing a Supreme Court decision that they are not to be used as access by anyone other than owner of the easement. He spoke about his own ongoing patent dispute. He did not oppose the abandonment, but if this consideration was made, he felt it needed to be made for everyone on STA patent easement. He indicated he would request the same abandonment.

Discussion by Commission:

Commissioner Kennedy requested more information about patent easements.

Secretary Trevor Lloyd responded that Congress established a number of patent easements to ensure that access and utilities are provided, though this happened long before the properties were developed. When staff reviews these abandonments, they try to ensure there will be access to neighboring properties.

Commissioner Nelson asked how Mr. Scott Spittler accesses his property to the east.

Mr. Evans replied he accesses it through the 20-foot portion of the easement that is being retained.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi asked whether the written request was for a partial or total abandonment.

Mr. Evans stated the initial proposal was for a complete abandonment, but that was revised to a partial abandonment after a discussion with the land surveyor. The partial abandonment request is in writing.

Commissioner Flick inquired about any other easements under the patent.

Mr. Evans did not believe there were any. He confirmed that any senior easements would be in effect if they did exist.

MOTION: Vice Chair Lazzareschi moved that Abandonment Case Number WAB24-0006 for JC Investment LLC Series V be approved with the conditions included as Exhibit A to this matter, having made all three findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.806.20.

Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of seven for, zero against.

B. Development Code Amendment Case Number WDCA25-0002 (Article 904)
[For possible action] - For hearing, discussion and possible action to initiate an amendment and approve a resolution to amend Washoe County Code Chapter 110 (Development Code), Article 904 Nonconformance, to revise the timeframe to obtain building permits for nonconforming uses of a structure and nonconforming structures that have been partially or totally destroyed; and to clarify the requirement for bringing a nonconforming use of land or nonconforming use of a structure into compliance with current development code provisions; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto.

If the proposed amendments are initiated, the Planning Commission may recommend approval of the proposed ordinance as submitted, recommend approval with modifications based on input and discussion at the public hearing, or deny the proposed amendment if approval is recommended, the Planning Commission is asked to authorize the Chair to sign a resolution to that effect.

- Development Code: Authorized in Article 818, Amendment of Development Code
- Commission District: All Districts

- Staff: Julee Olander, Planner
Washoe County Community Services Department
Planning and Building
- Phone: 775.328.3627
- E-mail: jolander@washoecounty.gov

Planner Julee Olander conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Request; Proposed Amendments (2 slides); Community Meeting & Public Notice; Findings; and Possible Motion. Because this is a proposed Code change, the County is both the applicant and the representative.

Commissioner Kennedy asked about the requested change from a 6-month to a 24-month permitting period.

Ms. Olander said staff originally contemplated changing it to 12 months but considered things like fires, unexpected delays in obtaining insurance, and potential changes to the request once things like damage are assessed. 24 months should address all scenarios, she said.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed concern about a potential eyesore remaining in the community for 24 months.

Secretary Trevor Lloyd pointed out architects and residential designers tend to be in short supply following catastrophic events further necessitating the need for the additional time to obtain a permit.

Public Comment:

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Discussion by Commission:

Commissioner Flick wondered if any of these delays are caused by staff.

Mr. Lloyd said corrections are often needed, and it can take several iterations for plans to be approved and permits to be issued. He echoed Ms. Olander's point about insurance delays. This is why the 24-month period is being recommended.

MOTION: Chair Pierce moved that the Washoe County Planning Commission initiate and recommend approval of WDCA25-0002, to amend Washoe County Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Article 904 Nonconformance. He further moved that the Chair be authorized to sign the resolution contained in Attachment A on behalf of the Washoe County Planning Commission and staff be directed to present a report of this Commission's recommendation to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners within 60 days of today's date. This recommendation for approval is based on the ability to make at least one of the four findings, in this case Consistency with Master Plan, in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e). He further indicated he could make all four findings.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi, himself able to make all four findings, seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of six for, one against, with Commissioner Kennedy voting nay.

C. Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP25-0006 (Sunseeker Solar) [For possible action] – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve a special use permit for: 1) the establishment of a 250MW photovoltaic generation facility and a 200MW battery energy storage system, which is an energy production, renewable use; 2) construction of a 345 kV substation to connect to the previously approved 345 kV generation tie line (WSUP23-0003 – “Praana Transmission Line”), which is a utility services use; 3) major grading for 1,108 acres of ground disturbance; 4) a request to vary all parking design requirements; and 5) a request to vary landscaping design requirements. This project meets the standard for a project of regional significance because it will generate more than 5 MW of electricity and requires construction of a substation. It will require approval by the regional planning authorities before any approval at the county level would take effect. This project also requires a recommendation to amend the Regional Utility Corridor Map of the 2019 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan from the Board of County Commissioners to identify the location of the new substation. This project will also need to comply with all federal and state approvals before any approval at the county level would take effect.

- Applicant: Ultreia Group LLC, on behalf of Shreem Brzee Solar, LLC
- Property Owner: UES
- Location: 4 miles north of Fish Springs Road on Rainbow Way
- APN: 074-462-19, -18, -15, 14, -05, -03, -02, 074-461-24, -18, -17, -15, -13, -11, -07, -04, -03, -02, 074-432-01, 074-431-08, 074-161-14 and 074-162-06
- Parcel Size: 40ac, 40ac, 80ac, 10ac, 80ac, 139.7ac, 20.8ac, 20ac, 30ac, 40ac, 90ac, 40ac, 10ac, 10ac, 10ac, 10ac, 241ac, 160ac, 10ac, 8.8ac, 47.6ac
- Master Plan: Rural
- Regulatory Zone: General Rural
- Planning Area: High Desert
- Development Code: Authorized in Article 810, Special Use Permits
- Commission District: 5 – Commissioner Herman
- Staff: Courtney Weiche, Senior Planner
Washoe County Community Services Department
Planning and Building
- Phone: 775.328.3608
- E-mail: cweiche@washoecounty.gov

Senior Planner Courtney Weiche conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: 4 miles north of Fish Springs Road...; Vicinity Map; Requests; Specific Code Sections; Uses: Energy Production, Renewable (2 slides); Uses: Utility Services; Site Plan; Article 410 – Parking and Loading; Article 412 – Landscaping; Article 438 – Grading; Article 812 – Projects of Regional Significance; 2040 Master Plan Consistency; Neighborhood Meeting; Reviewing Agencies; Public

Notice; Findings; Additional findings per 110.810.35; and Possible Motion.

Ms. Weiche pointed out that the staff report includes an error; there is no request to increase the maximum height. She noted the battery electrical storage system (BESS) will be located within a 10-acre area on the western side of the project lease area. Any BESS structures resembling cargo containers will be required to meet all applicable design standards. She noted the ownership of the solar project has changed, but the entitlement to construct the transmission line is still valid.

Ms. Weiche indicated the applicant requests that all parking lot requirements be waived because the facility is in a rural area without paved roads, and staff agrees the design features do not fit the surrounding environment. Similarly, staff supports waiving landscaping standards because the facility is located a great distance from any development, public viewshed, and water for irrigation. She said the Washoe County Engineering Division provided a condition of approval requiring a grading and drainage plan. The applicant, she noted, responded to questions at the neighborhood meeting regarding the permitting process, construction timeline, potential noise and light impacts, and the positive impacts of the project.

Commissioner Kennedy asked about the proximity of the project to tribal lands.

Ms. Weiche relayed the applicant's belief that the site is located approximately 14 miles from tribal lands.

Commissioner Kennedy wondered whether power stability in Palamino Valley will be increased once this project is complete.

Mr. Brent Moore with Shreem Brzee Solar, LLC confirmed it will make service more reliable. He spoke about issues with the power generation in Nevada, which he described as vital for ongoing land use and industrial growth. He commented that data centers need about 150 to 200 megawatts of power, which is how much this project will produce. He brought up an interconnection study which illustrated the need for upgrades to support the grid system.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi wondered whether the allotted four years will be enough time to pull all permits on this project.

Ms. Weiche said she was unsure, but staff proposed a longer time frame for this project based on similar projects' requests for extensions.

Mr. Moore believed four years would be sufficient, though some elements like interconnections are outside of his company's control. He explained the process for interconnection, the expectations a company must deliver on once an agreement is signed, and how decisions are made regarding who funds upgrades to the system. He contrasted those elements with power purchase agreements. Regarding additional queries, he said he did not believe reliability issues in the North Valleys were solely a problem of transmission capacity, and there are good transmission systems in the area. However, one problem was that the two energy companies who served this area did not plan to incorporate each other, though the new Greenlink program will help tie the north and south together to achieve better reliability.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi inquired about the breakers that will be used in the project.

Mr. Moore confirmed this project will use 345 kV breakers to match the transmission line and equipment at Fort Sage Substation. A lower voltage line could have been used, but electrical engineers felt increasing the voltage at Fort Sage Substation was not a cost beneficial option. He explained that orders for the transmission line and equipment need to be submitted eight to ten months in advance.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi pointed out the lead time on 345 kV breakers is 36 months from the time of order.

Mr. Moore felt that, in that case, five years would be a better project timeline. He stated a 345 kV line typically carries 1,200 megawatts (MWs) of power. PRANA SOLAR's project was a 100 MW project while Shreem Brzee Solar's project is 250, and a nearby future project will be between 250 and 300 MWs. It has not yet been determined whether a general indemnity agreement will be sought to share a terminal at Fort Sage. He discussed a hypothetical situation wherein a builder offers to take over PRANA's project and how his company would coordinate with his firm in accordance with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulations. He noted with the owners of a neighboring project, so he did not see any issue with coordinating on the substation.

Responding to additional questions, Mr. Moore felt there will be no problem keeping the 345 kV substation under the 35-foot height restriction. He thought the utility poles would not be much higher than that, though he did not believe County Code regulates utility poles.

Mr. Lloyd corrected Mr. Moore, saying the Code limits utility pole height to the same height as any structure in the regulatory zone, which in this case would be 35 feet.

Mr. Moore replied that 345 kV lines are required to be a certain distance off the ground, or the utility poles would have to be bunched together to eliminate sway in the line.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi indicated the PRANA project received a waiver of the 35-foot height limit.

Mr. Moore confirmed the substation would be shorter than 35 feet, though the utility poles would need to be taller.

Public Comment:

Mr. Charles Hooper, controller of the PRANA transmission line, expressed support for this project via Zoom. The project would bring power and reliability to Washoe County residents. He discussed efforts to contact other parties regarding the PRANA transmission line and the 150 MW Cal Neva project. He said NextEra Energy would be a great partner for PRANA since they dedicate 55 percent of their power production to solar.

Discussion by Commission:

Ms. Weiche indicated the recommended motion includes a reference to the previous applicant; the correct motion should say Ultreia, not UES.

Vice Chair Lazzareschi opined this project will likely come back as he did not believe it will be completed in the time allotted. He also thought a height waiver would be needed.

MOTION: Vice Chair Lazzareschi moved that Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP25-0006 for Ultreia Group, LLC, on behalf of Shreem Brzee Solar, LLC be approved with the conditions included as Exhibit A to this matter, having made all five findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.810.30 and the additional Development of Natural Resources findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.810.35. He further moved that the development code standards for parking specified in WCC Section 110.410.25(a) and (c)-(g) be varied, and the industrial landscaping standards of WCC Section 110.412.45 and the civic landscaping standards of WCC Section 110.412.40. be waived.

Chair Pierce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of seven for, zero against.

10. Chair and Commission Items

A. Future agenda items

There were no items.

B. Requests for information from staff

Chair Pierce requested that the County explore defining "dark sky" since the Code does not currently contain a definition.

11. Director's and Legal Counsel's Items

A. Report on previous Planning Commission items

Secretary Trevor Lloyd stated the Board of County Commissioners adopted changes to Article 610 regarding final subdivision maps at its April 8 meeting, as well as the Housing Package 2.5A.

B. Legal information and updates

There were no updates.

12. *General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof

There was no response to the call for public comment.

13. Adjournment

With no further business scheduled before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Derek Sonderfan, Independent Contractor.

Approved by Commission in session on June 3, 2025

Trevor Lloyd

Trevor Lloyd
Secretary to the Planning Commission