



WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Members

Jim Barnes
R. Michael Flick
Linda Kennedy
Kate S. Nelson (Chair)
Amy Owens
Secretary
Kat Oakley

Tuesday, July 7, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Washoe County Administrative Complex
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, July 7, 2026, 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 Nelson 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 (Zoom)
Kate S. Nelson, Chair
Amy Owens

Commissioners absent: Daniel Lazzareschi, Chair (term expired June 30, 2026)
Rob Pierce, Vice Chair (Term expired June 30, 2026)

Staff present: Kat Oakley, Secretary and Planning Manager, Planning and Building
Tim Evans, Planner, Planning and Building
Beth Hickman, Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney's Office
Iryna Wilcox, Office Supervisor, Planning and Building
Brandon Roman, Recording Secretary, Planning and Building
Cristy Fink, Recording Secretary, Planning and Building

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Nelson led the pledge to the flag.

3. Ethics Law Announcement

Deputy District Attorney Elizabeth Hickman provided the ethics procedure for disclosures.

4. Appeal Procedure

Secretary Kat Oakley recited the appeal procedure for items heard before the Planning Commission.

5. General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof

Chair Nelson opened the Public Comment period.

Public Comment:

Mr. Rob Pierce stated via Zoom that serving on the Planning Commission was an honor, and he discussed how he made his decisions while on the Commission. Planning was about people, and he was aware of the responsibility of making decisions that impacted homes and businesses. He thanked the Commissioners for respectful discussions, staff for their professionalism and preparation, and the public for their engagement. He recognized that growth came with challenges and said his commitment to serving Washoe County was not over.

Ms. Veronica Cortes said that she sat on the Sun Valley/District 3 Citizens Advisory Board but was not speaking in that capacity. She thought resident-owned businesses in Sun Valley were being victimized by the County through planning and development, the Health Department, and business fees. She expressed concern about voter fraud. Two people were hit by vehicles in a crosswalk at a recent event in Sun Valley, she noted, but the County did not address similar concerns in the past. She hoped that a new District 5 Commissioner would place an item on an agenda that has been requested since November.

6. Approval of the July 7, 2026, Agenda

There was no public comment on this item.

Commissioner Owens moved to approve the agenda for the July 7, 2026, meeting as written. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of five for, none against.

7. Approval of June 2, 2026, Draft Minutes

There was no public comment on this item.

Commissioner Kennedy moved to approve the minutes for the June 2, 2026, Planning Commission meeting as written. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of five for, none against.

8. Public Hearings

A. Abandonment Case Number WAB26-0005 (VanHoose) – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve an abandonment of Washoe County's interest in a 13-foot-wide portion of a 33-foot-wide road and utility easement coterminous with the northern property line of Parcel 1 on Parcel Map 4615. This application is submitted by Points West Survey on behalf of VanHoose Family Trust. The subject property is located at 5399 Mountain Ranch (APN 150-250-47) and consists of approximately 2.47 acres.

The proposal is being reviewed under Development Code Article 806, Vacations and Abandonments of Easements or Streets, and is situated within Commission District 2 - Commissioner Clark. The site is currently governed by the Rural Residential land use designation and the High Density Rural (HDR) zoning district, falling within the boundaries of the Southwest Truckee Meadows Planning Area.

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 indicated that the public comment that was received was in opposition to the abandonment. However, in response to comments from the Engineering Department and that comment, the initial request to abandon the entire easement was modified to only abandon a 13-foot-wide portion.

Public Comment:

There was no response to the call for public comment.

MOTION: Commissioner Owens moved that Abandonment Case Number WAB26-0005 for the VanHoose Family Trust 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 five for, zero against.

B. Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC26-0008 (NV Energy) for WSUP23-0032 (NV Energy) – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve an amendment of conditions for Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP23-0032 (NV Energy Transmission Line). The request is to amend condition 1(d) for the approved special use permit in order to grant an additional 2-year extension of time to obtain building permits for the construction of the project until May 7, 2028. WSUP23-0032 was approved for a major public facility use type by NV Energy to construct, operate, and maintain a new 10.8-mile long (11.9-miles including California and Nevada portions), 120 kV overhead transmission line connecting the California substation near Verdi to the Bordertown substation. This application is submitted by NV Energy. The subject project location traverses parallel to the California-Nevada boundary, north of Highway 80 and south of Highway 395 (APNs 038-822-01; 038-821-20; 038-042-20; 038-043-05; 038-044-06; 038-045-46; 038-060-37; 038-280-43; 238-320-04;

038-010-07; 038-010-05; 081-170-10; 081-070-06; 081-070-29; 081-050-46; 081-010-01; 081-010-05; 081-010-06; 558-010-08; 081-010-18; 081-110-06; 081-110-05; 081-110-04; 038-550-44; 081-070-20; 081-050-11) and consists of approximately 3.33, 10.01, 0.70, 0.71, 1.03, 1.21, 12.16, 1.22, 59.93, 80.00, 643.88, 320.00, 320.00, 1506.08, 2928.64, 160.00, 80.00, 80.00, 60.91, 474.99, 65.36, 159.20, 56.38, 326.02, 40.00, and 40.00 acres.

The proposal is being reviewed under Development Code Article 810, Special Use Permits and is situated within Commission District 1 – Commissioner Hill and Commission District 5 – Commissioner Herman. The site is currently governed by the Suburban Residential, Rural, and Open Space land use designations and the Low Density Suburban (LDS), Public Semi Public Facilities (PSP), General Rural (GR); and Open Space (OS) zoning districts, within the boundaries of the Verdi and North Valleys Planning Areas.

Planner Tim Evans conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Background; Request; Site Plan; Reviewing Agencies; Public Notice; Findings; and Possible Motion. He clarified that 18 public comments were received, 9 of which came after the presentation was finalized. Each comment was in opposition to the project as a whole, not the specific amendment of the condition being considered in this item.

Public Comment:

Mr. Kurt Gensheimer, Program Manager for the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, pointed out that the line would run through the Peavine Maze trail network, impacting it both visually and physically. He spoke about two grants he helped obtain totaling more than \$350,000 to maintain and improve the trails in the network. He saw nothing in the staff report addressing how the project would negatively impact existing recreational assets or detailing any consultation with Nevada State Parks or the Nevada Off-Highway Vehicles Program, both of which have considerable investment in the network. He disagreed that finding D could be made and wanted a stipulation added that would require the applicant to minimize impacts to recreational resources. He wondered who would pay to repair damaged assets.

Discussion by Commission:

Responding to Commissioner Kennedy's questions, Mr. Evans confirmed that this amendment of conditions pertained only to a two-year extension, allowing the applicant time to obtain building permits. It does not pertain to the approval for the original special use permit. The points made by Mr. Gensheimer were beyond the purview and scope of the amendment of conditions, he remarked.

Mr. Evans replied to Commissioner Owens' query by stating that no part of this project had begun at this point.

Commissioner Kennedy wondered when the project was initially approved.

Mr. Evans corrected the information in his presentation by stating the project was

approved on May 7, 2024, not 2023.

MOTION: Commissioner Owens moved that Amendment of Conditions Case Number WAC26-0008 for NV Energy 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.

Chair Nelson seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of four for, one against, with Commissioner Kennedy voting no.

C. Development Code Amendment Case Number WDCA26-0003 (Equine Business Code Update) – For hearing, discussion and possible action to initiate an amendment and approve a resolution to amend Washoe County Code Chapter 110 (Development Code) within **Articles 300, 302, 304, 342, 400, 410, 412, and 809**. These updates include: adding sections to establish a purpose for Article 342 Agricultural Uses, establish applicability for the same, establish development requirements for equine facilities, and allow incorporation of a director's modification of standards request with an administrative review permit. These updates also include amending various sections to: add Article 342, Agricultural Uses to the Division Three table of contents; remove the commercial stables use type from Table 110.302.05.03; add small, medium, and large equine facility use types to Table 110.302.05.5; update the key to Table 110.302.05.5 to reference administrative review permits, to remove reference to Planning Commission special use permits, and to include a note; remove the commercial stables definition from Article 304, Use Classification System, modify certain definitions to clarify their applicability to equine uses, and add definitions for small, medium, and large equine facilities; update the list of tables in the Division Four table of contents; remove off-street parking requirements for commercial stables and add them for equine facilities; update language related to accessible parking spaces and related development requirements; allow unpaved all-weather surfaces for agricultural uses with 20 or less parking spaces; add reference to agricultural uses in Section 110.412.00 Purpose; exempt equine facilities from Article 412, Landscaping except for parking and loading areas; specify that parking area screening is only required adjacent to the parking or loading area; update time frames for the processing of an administrative review permit; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto.

The proposal is being reviewed under Development Code Article 818, Amendment of Development Code and is applicable to All Districts.

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 recommend denial. If approval is recommended, the Planning Commission is asked to authorize the Chair to sign a resolution to that effect.

Planning Manager Kat Oakley conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Background; Process; Current Regulations; Proposed Changes; Article 342; Other Amendments; Identified Barriers/Challenges; Public Engagement (2 slides); Findings; and Motion – Approval.

Ms. Oakley explained that the administrative review option was discretionary and allowed both site-specific consideration and the addition of conditions of approval without requiring a full public hearing process. Before this revision process, she remarked, the County had no chapter in its code addressing regulations or allowances for agricultural uses, and the proposed equine section would fall under that section.

Public Comment:

Ms. Katherine Yriarte expressed support for the amendment. She said she became aware of the limitations of the County's equine code after receiving a violation notice in 2023. In response, she founded the Nevada Equine Council to give business owners a voice in the process. She brought up collaborative efforts with various County and regional stakeholders to identify how the County Code affected equine business owners. She felt that the equine community would benefit from the proposed changes and noted that the equine industry added \$1.77 billion to the United States economy in 2023 and supported 2.2 million jobs. She requested that the Commission support the amendment.

Ms. Deanna Newcomb indicated she has boarded horses and leased a barn to keep horses since moving to the area in 2008. She thanked Commissioner Clara Andriola for her support of the initiative, as well as Secretary and Planning Manager Kat Oakley and Division Director Kelly Mullin for compiling all public comments to help draft the proposed amendment. She thought the amendment would streamline the permitting and business startup procedures. She expressed concern that the new amendment would require homeowners in low-density suburban (LDS) areas to go through administrative reviews to board one or two horses when they do not currently need to do so. She proposed that the definition of small equine facility be changed from having up to eight horses to having between three and eight horses.

Ms. Landess Witmer applauded the work done for the equine community but expressed concern about the administrative review requirement for homeowners in LDS zones with boarded horses. She thought it would impact countless small family farms. She thanked Commissioner Andriola, staff, and the community for their work in updating the Code.

Discussion by Commission:

Commissioner Kennedy asked whether the change proposed by Ms. Newcomb could be made.

Ms. Oakley clarified that in the agricultural use section, a provision was added which would allow small equine facilities in LDS areas with less than three horses, keeping it consistent with current standards.

MOTION: Commissioner Kennedy moved that the Washoe County Planning Commission recommend approval of WDCA26-0003, to amend Washoe County Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Articles 300, 302, 304, 342, 400, 410, 412, and 809 as shown in Exhibit A-1. She 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 Planning Commission's ability to make all four of the following findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e): Consistency with Master Plan, Promotes the Purpose of the Development Code, Response to Changed Conditions, and No Adverse Affects.

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

D. MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT Case Number WMPA26-0001 (Heat Mitigation Plan) – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to amend Envision Washoe 2040 to create a heat mitigation plan and, if approved, authorize the chair to sign a resolution to this effect.

The proposal is being reviewed under **Development Code Article 820, Amendment of Master Plan** and is applicable to **All Commission Districts**.

Planning Manager Kat Oakley conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Background; Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan; Urban Heat; Urban Heat in Washoe County; Extreme Heat; Summary of Amendments; Heat Mitigation Plan Narrative; Adaption and Resiliency Policies (3 slides); Action Items; Public Outreach; Findings; and Motion – Approval.

Ms. Oakley indicated that extreme heat impacts rural areas as well as urban ones, prompting the County to add robust policies in their plan. She indicated that Reno was the fastest-warming city in the nation, experiencing the most days with above-average temperatures as well as the largest departure from average temperatures in the summer. Policy 4.2 was created in collaboration with the Cities of Reno and Sparks, she remarked, and staff believed that four of the five findings could be made, with the Compatible Land Uses finding being irrelevant.

In response to Commissioner Flick's questions, Ms. Oakley said that the County's Emergency Management Team utilizes and advertises spaces like libraries and community centers as cooling centers during extreme heat events. Regarding the future of water availability, she remarked that climate projections for the region anticipate higher temperatures and different precipitation patterns. Tree canopies help with heat but require water, so other sources of shade may be desired. She did not know how Nevada's water rights system might evolve as precipitation patterns change, but the Heat Mitigation Plan would help ensure the availability of water for people, address shade canopies, and help the County pursue opportunities to build resiliency with respect to water.

Commissioner Flick expressed concern about having enough water for residents in 20 years.

Ms. Oakley thought that having more robust policies addressing issues like water would provide more ways to consider them during the review process.

Public Comment:

There was no response to the call for public comment.

MOTION: Commissioner Kennedy moved that the Washoe County Planning Commission adopt the resolution contained at Attachment A of the staff report to amend the Master Plan as set forth in Master Plan Amendment Case Number WMPA26-0001, having made at least three of the five findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.820.15(d). She further moved that the resolution and the proposed Master Plan Amendments in WMPA26-0001 be certified as set forth in the staff report for submission to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, and the chair be authorized to sign the resolution on behalf of the Planning Commission.

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

9. Chair and Commission Items

A. Future agenda items

Chair Nelson indicated that Planning Manager Trevor Lloyd sent the Commissioners information about the Regional Transportation Commission.

B. Requests for information from staff

There were none.

10. Director's and Legal Counsel's Items

A. Report on previous Planning Commission items

Secretary Kat Oakley announced that WDCA26-0002, the Common Open Space Findings Amendment, had its first reading, with its second reading scheduled to take place at the July 14 Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. The Attainable Housing and Small Unit Density Incentive Development Code Amendments (DCAs) were adopted by the BCC on June 16. She said the Master Plan Amendment to add designations to parcels in the City's sphere of influence rollback was adopted by the BCC on May 26, to be considered by the Regional Planning Commission next.

B. Legal information and updates

There were none.

11. *General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof

Ms. Veronica Cortes felt that not requiring equine facilities to have parking lots would help with heat issues. She brought up her nonprofit organization, Valley Amigos, listing some of the events in which they participated. Reading past Planning Commission minutes, she brought up a past request for an item clarifying the desired pattern of growth in the Sun Valley area and relayed a Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) member's concern about the diminished influence held by CABs. She requested an agenda item to discuss the County's plan for growth in Sun Valley.

12. Adjournment

With no further business scheduled before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Derek Sonderfan, Independent Contractor.

Approved by the Commission in session on August 4, 2026

Kat Oakley
Secretary to the Planning Commission