

**MEETING MINUTES OF
THE CITY OF ELOY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
6:00 p.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Brown called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

*One or more members of the Planning and Zoning Commission may attend by telephonic means.

Members present:

- Chairperson Larry Brown
- Vice-Chairperson John Peterson
- Commissioner Allen Crawford
- Ex-Officio Sara Curtis
- Commissioner Steven Paulson
- Commissioner Conrad Tolson

Members Absent:

- None

Staff present:

- Jon Vlaming, Community Development Director
- Belinda Lopez, Planner
- Jeffrey Fairman, Economic Development Specialist

Others present:

- Mrs. Tolson

III. INVOCATION

Chairperson Brown led the Invocation and requested a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Brown led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 18, 2021 MEETING MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.

Chairperson Brown asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve the August 18, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Paulson seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote 5-0.

VI. OLD BUSINESS: POSSIBLE DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS: POSSIBLE DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

A. CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE REQUEST BY THE CITY TO SUBMIT AND CONSIDER A MAJOR AMENDMENT OF THE EXISTING ELOY GENERAL PLAN BY ADDING AGGREGATES (SAND AND GRAVEL RESOURCES) SOURCES, AND POLICIES TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT (CASE NO.: GPA2021-015).

Mr. Vlaming introduced the case and mentioned that in the meeting packet was the draft text information of the proposed text amendment that would include information on aggregates to the Land Use Element. This information would make the element in compliance with the Arizona Revised Statutes as it does identify the need to locate and discuss our aggregates (i.e. sand and gravel) within our community. This information has been out for its 60-day review, and staff did not receive any comments. There was an Open House meeting identified and held on Wednesday, October 6, 2021 and there were no attendees. There are no other additional changes to the text, other than those received from Commissioner Tolson. Staff incorporated those minor changes. With the Commission's review and consideration, the next step would be presenting this amendment to the City Council on Monday, November 22, 2021. If approved, it would make the Land Use Element in compliance with the Arizona Revised Statutes and complete the major amendment process for this calendar year.

Mr. Vlaming explained that this information was a component to the General Plan and its inclusion was fostered by the Arizona Rock Products Association. They wanted to make sure that each community would identify where their aggregates are coming from and where potential resource extractions would occur and provide policies that would help identify where the resource extraction can occur as well as potential protections for adjacent existing and proposed developments. He indicated that these potential activities/extraction may create glare, noise, and dust which are not conducive, in particular, to adjacent residential uses. Its inclusion serves a twofold use, one, to show it exists in our community and two, to show and demonstrate how we would protect adjacent sensitive uses from these activities. For the record, it was noted there was not anyone from the public present for the subject case to provide any comment/input on the aggregate extraction in the community.

Turning the corner in 2022, Mr. Vlaming indicated that he expected to have at least one major general plan amendment case for the calendar year.

Chairperson Brown asked if anyone from the Commission had any comments. Commissioner Tolson commented and said he sent his minor comments and once again, he was reviewing the map. He added that he is a Robson Ranch resident and commented that he noted that Robson Ranch at one point did have some aggregate extraction activities. He commented about the fourth bullet point that reads “There may exist sand and gravel deposits in Eloy, but they have not been documented” and right after that it reads, “Community Development staff used aerial photographs to identify the locations of existing aggregate operations...” He indicated that the text sounded like it was conflicting. He suggested we might need to modify it. Jon responded there are some discrepancies and commented on the north side of Robson Ranch appeared to be an extraction area. So there should be a revision that should state...”there may exist additional sand and gravel deposits in the City of Eloy but have not been documented”. Commissioner Tolson suggested the following: One existing sand and gravel documented and others have not been documented or identified. Chairperson Brown asked if Newman Mountain was within Eloy City limits. Mr. Vlaming pointed to the Land Use Map and it was confirmed that the northern part of Newman Mountain is not in the Eloy City limits. Ex-Officio Curtis suggested replacing operation to deposit and there was not any other revision by the Commissioners. Mr. Vlaming concurred with that revision. Hearing no other questions, Chairperson Brown closed the public hearing.

B. COMMISSION TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL, APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS, OR DENIAL FOR CASE NO.: GPA2021-015.

Chairperson Brown asked for a motion to recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, or denial for Case No.: GPA2021-015. Commissioner Tolson made a motion to approve with the proposed amendments to read as follows: “*There is one existing sand and gravel deposit in Eloy, and there may exist sand and gravel in the area but have not been documented*” and was seconded by Commissioner Paulson. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

Mr. Fairman gave an update to the Commission members and those present on the economic development activities. A PowerPoint presentation was shown. He stated they have had a very good year in the City of Eloy and it has come after a long drought. He added, new industries and new business in Eloy have been slow to call Eloy home. The economic development strategic plan has been put in place, as it is a tool that helps those individuals who have interest in the Eloy area to be educated on our desired industry targets. Jeff noted that for a long time, Eloy was able to get leads/prospects from other agencies such as APS and the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA).

However, over time and spending time to get the City's name out there (with city newsletters and advertising), staff is now able to attract a better blend of prospects and leads that the City is generating itself. He noted that the City has a good working relationship with the Arizona Commerce Authority. He commented that he is working with an incredible team not just in the City, but also the individuals who now work for ACA who used to work for him, so they are able to work together very well. He added he has a team of individuals including APS, Southwest Gas, and ED4 and City staff. All of the different entities are working closely with him to make this happen. He continued that part of the reason why Eloy is so successful is that the City is located midway between Lucid Motors and Nikola. Lucid Motors is doing really well as they are getting ready to roll cars out, they have a waiting list, and the car itself is gorgeous. He mentioned that there are a couple of homes being built in the Toltec area that have been purchased by Lucid Motors' employees, which is a positive as it is a short driving commute to their work.

Nikola, which is located at the northeastern boundary of Eloy, is approximately two miles from Downtown. So, there is a share of home building being driven by Nikola as they are about to hire approximately two-thousand employees and the next year they might be up to five-thousand to ten-thousand employees and that is going to take a lot of housing. In addition, when housing starts to be built, then retail would shortly follow. He explained that his goal is working the industrial side of it, as he likes the jobs that are created that would support a family. That, to him, is more important to see as they come to work and live in the City. He indicated with the efforts to attract these people has been a fulfilling part of his career.

Mr. Fairman also provided an update on some of the companies who have an interest in locating in the City of Eloy. Maverick is a C-mart interested in located at the southwest corner of Interstate 10 and Toltec Road; their team had a pre-application meeting to meet with staff. Vext Science is a Canadian company that purchased a 71,000 square foot building and are doing approximately five-million dollars of tenant improvements to grow medical marijuana. It will be hiring 40 – 60 employees and will be open in March of 2022. Owens Corning has an existing building in the Eloy Industrial Park and seven months ago, they initiated a national search to either re-open one of their existing facilities or build a new one in this market. Jeff noted that was great news that they decided to re-open their doors in Eloy. They will be manufacturing an insulation product, which is new to the facility as well as hiring. He indicated the starting wage for unskilled workers would be nineteen dollars per hour with full benefits.

The other prospect is Arizona Trailer. They will be located within the Eloy Industrial Park as well. He noted that mainly they conduct their sales online, but they will also allow for the on-site purchase of a utility trailer or horse trailer. He said the good thing is that there will be sales taxes generated from these sales where the City would benefit. The company is now in the process in working with their design team to prepare their site plan, which may include outdoor RV storage for the larger upscale fifth wheels and motor homes.

Freepoint Bio Systems is another employer that is a clean recycler who will transform end-of-life plastic waste into a recycled feedstock product. This is a company based in Connecticut, who made contact directly with the City of Eloy. This company will use the adjacent rail spur. They are also looking into expand to a site of 75 acres, so that they can expand to allow for a seven-hundred and fifty to a million square foot building. Jeff indicated that they might be operational by the third quarter of 2023. He added that the property is in escrow and the project looks very favorable.

Mr. Fairman commented that he has been working with the Project Batman prospect for the last six months and mentioned he has never worked with a company who required so much information. He just found out that the City of Eloy made the shortlist with three other sites. This user is primarily a greenhouse, it is horticultural, and they grow vegetables and process them on-site to serve their southwest market.

National Gypsum Company (NGC) has owned its property in the City of Eloy since 2007. They have conducted a national search with a site selector and Eloy is their selected site. Currently NGC is working with their engineer and staff has worked with them to prepare the Economic Development Agreement. If they move forward, they would employ approximately 200 and their investment in the proposed plant would be approximately three-hundred million dollars.

Mr. Fairman commented all of this activity has been occurring in the past nine months. He indicated that he was surprised that, with the pandemic and other significant issues, that we would have this kind of interest in Eloy, which is exciting. He continued that staff continues to receive inquiries for other sites and noted that Jon and Belinda have been working with several different homebuilders. As of today, there have been approximately 493 building permits pulled over this calendar year overall. In 2020, approximately 128 new single-family permits were issued and this year, by the end of September 2021 there have been approximately 213. He noted that it represented a one-hundred percent increase for the City of Eloy with three months remaining this year. Mr. Fairman added that each of the Departments are doing an excellent job.

Commissioner Tolson commented about Interstate 10 and his travels going north and all the accidents. He continued that it seems to him that the City could lose businesses because of the weekly accidents that are occurring. He wondered if there was anything the City could do to speed up the process of the study and move to the shovel phasing. Mr. Fairman responded that there is a lot of activity. The three communities that are most affected are, Maricopa, Casa Grande and Eloy, are all working to get the widening to occur. He noted that Mayor Micah Powell recently attended a meeting with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Board of Directors and that everyone is lobbying to get this done. He continued that a lot of the heavy lifting has been done with the stakeholders and the Gila River Indian Community and now is it just a matter of funding and timing. He said, "Should it be expected to occur in the following year, no". A lot of the political pressure is coming from the Arizona State Senator, T.J. Shope and others. Jeff also added that Mr. Frank Pratt was a big supporter as well, and he will

be missed. Jeff believes that there will be some action within the next couple of years that would expand the three lanes all the way from the City of Phoenix/Chandler area through the City of Casa Grande. He concluded that it is a great project that many are working on. Mr. Vlaming added that currently they are in the design concept report phase, and the two additional lanes will be located within the center median. There is even congressional support. He is aware that there was some funds allocated for the Maricopa County segment, but only included 6 miles of the 28 miles. They are aware it is important to the area but most importantly to the economy of the State.

There were some additional announcements by Mr. Fairman:

- The City is updating its economic development marketing brochure, which would be completely different from the initial brochure prepared three years ago.
- Our Mayor, Micah Powell, and Vice-Mayor/new Chamber of Commerce Director Andrew Rodriguez will be attending the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) trade show in December of 2021 and they will be networking.
- Arizona @ Work, who is the statewide workforce development network that helps employers of all sizes and types recruit, develop, and retain the best employees for their needs, held a Job Fair on Wednesday, October 13 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. where over 29 Pinal County employers in the area were involved such as Nikola, Lucid, Vext Science, Owens Corning, Shuff Steel, Frito Lay, Core Civic, Republic Plastics, and many more. Approximately 100 people showed up and some individuals even were hired on the spot.
- Water is the most misunderstood resource in the region. For example, the City of Casa Grande depends on a private water company to supply their water. The City of Eloy controls their municipal water and is the primary water provide to the City residents. Eloy is in very good shape and is doing well.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ex-officio Curtis communicated the following:

- The USPA National Championships are happening at SkyDive Arizona. Skydivers from around the country are in Eloy to display their skills. This event is from October 15, 2021 – November 1, 2021
- Eloy Landfill-City staff is currently reviewing a contract agreement with Republic Services to lease the landfill and allow them to manage daily operations for up to 30 years. No decision has been made.

B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Vlaming communicated the following:

- Building permits have increased, as of this month; approximately 493 building permits have been issued for Single Family Homes.
- Esperanza subdivision (north of Battaglia Road and Main Street) is being evaluated.

- No Planning and Zoning meeting for November is being planned, next scheduled meeting would be on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- B&R Engineering on behalf of Robson Ranch has submitted a Preliminary Plat for Unit 20 E proposing 150 single-family homes and is tentatively scheduled for the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. COMMISSIONERS MAY SHARE INFORMATION OR INQUIRE ABOUT CITY RELATED ACTIVITIES.

- None.

X. MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Chairman Brown asked for a motion to adjourn. Vice-Chairperson Peterson made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Commissioner Paulson. The adjournment passed 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:57 p.m.