



**MINUTES OF THE WORK STUDY MEETING OF THE QUEEN CREEK
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 6:00 P.M.

Council Chambers, 22350 S. Ellsworth Road, Queen Creek, AZ 85142

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Vice-Chairman Ingram.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Present

Vice-Chairman Steve Ingram
Commissioner Jason Gad
Commissioner Debbie Reyes
Commissioner Kyle Robinson
Commissioner Alex Matheson arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Absent

Chairman Steve Sossaman
Commissioner Ryan Nichols

Staff Present

Planning Administrator Wayne Balmer
Senior Planner Dave Williams
Town Engineer Chris Dovel
Engineer Marc Palichuk
Development Services Assistant Laura Moats

Absent

3. **Discussion on RZ11-040/SP11-070/CU11-041, "Siete Solar Facility"**, A request by Ralph Pew of Pew and Lake, PLC on behalf of Juwi Solar, inc. to rezone approximately 160 acres from R1-43 Residential to I-2 Industrial and C-2 General Commercial, in addition to Site Plan and Conditional Use Permit approval for a solar power generation facility. The project is located in the vicinity of the northeast corner of Crismon and Queen Creek roads.

Mr. Williams provided information on the applicant's request, noting the subject property is currently zoned R1-43. Staff is in support of the applicant's request to rezone the property to Neighborhood Commercial, C-2 and Employment Type A & B because it protects the interest of the Town's General Plan in the future.

Mr. Williams illustrated the General Plan Land Use Map, showing the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport over flight area. He explained the applicant's requested PAD deviations from the following requirements: Open Space, 25 percent landscaping, and the number of trees required along Merrill Road. Mr. Williams brought the Commission's attention to a stipulation amendment pertaining to the planting of trees along Merrill Road. Mr. Williams stated there is a 50-foot Bureau of Reclamation easement located in this area; therefore trees cannot be

planted here due to irrigation pipes. The landscaping in this area will consist of bushes and shrubs. Staff is in support of the applicant's PAD amendments due to the fact that the applicant has agreed to install an eight-foot solid masonry wall along the perimeter of the site. Mr. Williams noted the stipulations on the staff report call for an eight-foot masonry wall along the *entire* perimeter of the site; however, the applicant is now requesting they be allowed to install a seven-foot tall chain-link fence adjacent to the commercial uses, and solid masonry on the Queen Creek Road frontage, the Crismon alignment frontage and 660 feet north of Queen Creek Road on Merrill Road.

Commissioner Gad asked what the surrounding industrial uses are. Mr. Williams responded the Barney Sports Complex is to the east, a greenhouse is located immediately north, residential is located to the south and to the west.

Commissioner Robinson stated he prefers to have at least part of the site visible to the public to showcase the solar project.

Commissioner Gad asked what staff's position is to the applicant's request to install seven-foot high chain link fence in the northeast section of the site. Mr. Williams responded staff is neutral on this request.

In response to questions from the Commission about power supply, Mr. Williams explained the power output of this project, and the conversion equipment. Mr. Williams also illustrated pictures of the new Copper Crossing Solar Ranch in Florence to give the Commission an idea of what this project will look like.

Commissioner Matheson asked if the masonry wall would be similar to the walls surrounding SRP substations. Mr. Williams responded the SRP substation walls are taller (about 10 feet), and not decorative.

Commissioner Gad asked if any roadway improvements would be borne by the current zoning. Mr. Williams explained the improvements for which this applicant would be responsible and the cash-in-lieu they would provide for the Crismon Road alignment. In response to questions from the Commission about how much cash-in-lieu would be provided, Town Engineer Chris Dovel stated it will be approximately \$4 million; a more exact number will be known after an Engineer's Cost Estimate has been completed.

Vice-Chairman Ingram questioned the benefits or loss to the Town through the course of the solar facility's construction. Mr. Williams responded the construction phase will employ approximately 130 people, which is estimated to take about 9 months. There will be one to two employees after construction. The tax benefit is estimated to be just under \$100,000.

Commissioner Robinson stated he feels this project will provide benefits in the form of natural, clean energy, electricity, jobs, and water.

Commissioner Gad asked about site security, and whether staff has any concerns about this. Mr. Williams deferred to the applicant to answer this during Regular Session.

There were no further questions from the Commission.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

5. **Review** of next month's agenda items.

Mr. Williams reviewed the Current Applications Spreadsheet, and answered questions from the Commission regarding projects listed on the spreadsheet. He noted there are currently no projects scheduled for the December meeting; therefore, that meeting **may** be canceled.

6. **Report** on Town Council Action

Town Council minutes were provided in the agenda packets that were emailed to the Commissioners. No verbal report was given at the meeting.

7. **Summary of Current Events** from members of the Commission.

There was no discussion under this item.

8. **Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner Gad, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, to adjourn.

All ayes. Motion carried 5-0 (Sossaman and Nichols absent). The Work Study meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Steve Ingram, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Laura Moats, Development Services Assistant

I, Laura Moats, do hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the November 9, 2011 Work Study of the Planning and Zoning Commission. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 9th day of November, 2011

Passed and Approved this 11th day of January , 2012.