ELMORE COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Public Services Building #1, 2280 American Legion Blvd,

Mountain Home, ID 83647

MINUTES

Wednesday September 2, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

Chairperson Patti Osborn called the meeting to order. Members of the Elmore County Planning and Zoning Commission present, KC Duerig, Mitch Smith, Jeff Blanksma and Sue Fish. Also, present were Attorney of Record Abbey Germaine, Contract Planner Mitra Mehta-Cooper, Contract Planner Michelle Barron, Contract Planner Elizabeth Allen, Director James Roddin and Staff Planner I David Abrahamson, and Administrative staff members, Kacey Ramsauer and Eden Smith. Commission Member Ed Oppedyk was not in attendance at this meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC HEARING – ACTION ITEMS:

1. Conditional Use Permit, CUP-2024-01 with Master Site Plan, to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a 695-megawatt (MW) renewable energy generation and storage facility for Desert Ridge Power, LLC.

Staff Presentation:

Elizabeth Allen, Contract Planner, gave staff report and presentation via PowerPoint for proposed CUP-2024-01 with Master Site Plan. She gave an overview and a timeline of the project. Elizabeth identified outstanding technical data and analyses that have not been submitted to the Department as requested by the Department and affected agencies for this large-scale project. She stated that due to the scope of this project and the lack of critical technical information, the application has been deemed incomplete by the Department. She noted that Hillside Development and Private Road applications were submitted with required fees the day before the hearing, but they have not been reviewed by staff due to short timeline. Based on the information presented in the staff report and agency comments, the Department finds that CUP-2024-01 and Master Site Plan findings cannot be satisfied at this time, and the Department recommends denial of CUP-2024-01 with Master Site Plan.

Applicant Presentation:

Rick Koebbe is with PowerWorks Inc and is the applicant on this project. Applicant gave their presentation via PowerPoint. Applicant spoke about the history of this project and the benefits that

will come to Elmore County from it. Applicant noted that this project's landscape is like existing energy projects in this area. Applicant objected to the requirements being requested of Staff and the proposed conditions of approval.

Evan Helmich is a project engineer for the Applicant. He spoke about submitting Hillside Development and Private Road applications.

Public Testimony:

In Support:

Kelly Riggs is a landowner of parcels associated with this project. Mr. Riggs has owned property in Elmore County for over one hundred years. He said that his private property rights are being infringed upon by allowing government agencies to conduct studies on his land.

Paula Riggs landowner of parcels associated with this project. She addressed public comments that have been submitted regarding wildlife migration and hunting and asked that any public comments that come in for these subjects be disregarded as they are from a disgruntled citizen. She submitted a statement for the record that she read at a Planning and Zoning meeting on April 20, 2026.

The applicants proposed conditions of approval were submitted by the applicant and entered as Applicant Exhibit #1.

The statement read by Kelly Riggs is entered as Exhibit # 2.

The statement read by Paula Riggs was entered as Exhibit # 3.

Rocky Trail is a landowner of parcels associated with this project. He spoke of regulations being waived by the federal government due to the building of the border wall because of national security. He spoke about federal government waiving requirements for historical sites, National Parks, rivers, and endangered species and plants. For him, and most of the country, the top national security threat is food production, and Idaho farmers do a great job of producing food. This increased need for electricity to irrigate farmland will be supported by the project.

In Neutral:

Theresa McCallum lives directly north of these parcels. She is concerned that she was told that the applicants were decommissioning the current towers that are on the parcels only to replace them with much taller towers. She is concerned about losing her view and destroying the landscape. She has another project in Elmore County, and the wildlife mitigation requirements are a huge part of that approval. As a land developer, she is all for private property rights; but given the opportunity to save the natural landscape and preserve wildlife habitats, she is starting to change her way of thinking to require more protections.

In Opposition:

Craig Pangborn said he moved to this area to get away from large buildings and structures. He currently sees up to twenty-five wind towers from his front door. The proposed project will have up to 684-foot towers which is like a sixty-story building. He is concerned about the military jets and crop dusters running into them.

Applicant's Rebuttal:

Evan Helmich gave rebuttal to the public testimony. He said they did conduct a viewshed assessment and the impacts were minimal as there are currently 94 wind turbines in the area. They have been in contact with the Mountain Home Air Force Base regarding their flight operations and there are no issues there.

Rocky Trail reported that there are no concerns regarding the wind towers and cropdusting operations in the area. However, power lines may pose a greater challenge for crop dusters due to their lower flight altitude and proximity to the ground.

There was no further testimony.

Chairperson Osborn closed the public hearing.

Commission Deliberation:

Commission went through the 11 required findings for a conditional use permit and the 4 required findings for a master site plan to evaluate this proposal.

1. **Chairperson Osborn stands for a motion to reopen the public hearing and to continue the hearing on CUP-2024-01 to a date certain of October 22, 2026, to review revised and additional conditions of approval.**

Commissioner Duerig – So Moved

Commissioner Blanksma – Second

All in favor; Motion carries unanimously.

2. Continuation of Zoning Ordinance Amendment, ZOA-2026-01, an update to the existing Zoning Ordinance text and map to establish compliance with the adopted 2026 Comprehensive Plan.

Michelle Barron, Contract Planner discussed updates to the existing Zoning Ordinance text at Title 7 Chapter 1 and 2. These proposed revisions are to ensure that the adopted 2026 Comprehensive Plan is implemented in a seamless manner as development applications continue to come through Elmore County.

Michelle Barron, Contract Planner presented additions and changes that have been made to the Zoning Ordinance since the last public hearing via PowerPoint.

Staff and the Contract Planners went over the Planning and Zoning Commission and Agency Meeting feedback related to Title 7 Chapter 1 as well as reviewing and discussing the proposed changes and additions to Title 7, Chapter 2.

Chairperson Osborn stands for a motion to continue the public hearing on ZOA-2026-01 to a date certain of October 22, 2026.

Commissioner Blanksma – So moved

Commissioner Duerig – Second

All in favor; Motion carried unanimously

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC:
None

INFORMATIONAL & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

The Commission conformed the next Regular September Commission Meeting – September 24, 2026, time 5:00 p.m., Elmore County Public Services Building #1, 2280 American Legion Blvd., Rocky Bar Conference Room.

MEETING ADJOURN- **8:38 p.m.**

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Patti Osborn, Chairperson Date:

Attest: _____

James Roddin, Director Date: