

Albany County Planning and Zoning Commission
Script—REGULAR MEETING of February 12, 2020
Minutes

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL (Time: 2:00p)

Chairman: The Regular Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission will come to order.

Chairman: Will the secretary call the roll.

Vote: Mr. Cunningham: Present

Mr. Miller: Present

Mr. Kennedy: Absent

Mr. Spiegelberg: Absent

Chairman Moore: Present

Note: Mr. Kennedy called in and was present from the Wind Energy Discussion until the end of the meeting.

III. Excuse Absent Members:

Chairman: The Chair will entertain a motion to excuse absent members Spiegelberg and Kennedy of the Planning and Zoning Commission from this meeting.

So moved by Commissioner Cunningham

Seconded by Commissioner Miller

Motion carried

IV. Approval of Agenda

Chairman: Are there any additions or deletions to the agenda for February 12, 2020?

Chair will entertain a motion to accept the agenda for February 12, 2020, as presented.

So moved by Commissioner Miller

Seconded by Commissioner Cunningham

Motion carried

Approval of Minutes

Chairman: Are there any corrections to the minutes for the January 8, 2020 meeting?

Chair will entertain a motion to accept the minutes for the January 8, 2020 meeting as presented.

So moved by Commissioner Miller

Seconded by Commissioner Cunningham

Motion carried

Elections

Mr. Cunningham nominated Mr. Moore as Chairman. Mr. Miller seconded the nomination and Mr. Moore was reelected as Chairman. Mr. Moore nominated Mr. Miller as Vice Chair. Mr. Cunningham seconded the nomination and Mr. Miller was reelected as Vice Chair.

V. DISCLOSURES:

Chairman: The Chair calls for any disclosures to be known.

No disclosures.

Chairman: The discussion will be conducted in accordance with the State Statutes, the Rules of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other applicable laws. I would ask the individuals who address the Commission to approach the lectern, identify yourself, and state your address.

VI. PUBLIC APPLICATIONS

VII. CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTS

A. Platting and Subdivision Regulations Update

David Gertsch presented the updates to the regulations and had a brief discussion with the Planning Commission.

B. Natural Resource Plan

Chris Van Aken explained the Natural Resource Plan formulation process and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Motion to support the creation of a Natural Resource Plan by Mr. Cunningham; motion seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carried.

C. Wind Energy Discussion

Mr. Cunningham said that the meetings that the energy company put on were a surprise. Not sure what all the company has planned. This is a lot for how early in the process everything is, but the current regs should be made to reflect modern technology.

Mr. Gertsch explained how the regulations in Albany County came to be and pointed out that they reflect the regulations adopted elsewhere in Wyoming.

Mr. Cunningham expressed concern about all the unknowns with this project. He wants a moratorium on wind energy projects.

Peggy Trent explained that a moratorium would have to be justified. You can't hold one without reason. This needs to be vetted. DEQ may be changing their regs soon as well.

Evan Brand – is in favor of green energy but is not convinced that this project is beneficial to the community. This project won't help the community grow. A view of the turbines would drive people away from moving here.

Stewart Webster – president of the Buttes HOA. Requesting a moratorium. There has been a lot of technological advancement since the regulations were first penned. Concerned about there being no specific overlay zone for wind projects.

Paul Montoya – requesting a moratorium. The impacts of larger turbines should be addressed. Address tourism and air safety impacts. Compare tourism dollars vs. wind energy dollars.

Tom Wolfe – representing Vista Grande Estates. Step back and take a moment to evaluate this. Don't make Laramie an undesirable place to live.

Brett Wadsworth – submitted petition. Expressed concerns with emergency response and wildlife impacts. There may be some benefit, but locals will bear the brunt of any impacts from this project.

Curt Richardson – opposes the wind farm. Views will be heavily impacted. Small parcels in the area don't deserve to be negatively impacted. Also expressed concerns about road maintenance and cheatgrass issues.

Karen Schertz – representing Hidden Hills. There are three stages to this project. These decisions will affect our children. We should enact a moratorium to evaluate if this would actually benefit Albany County.

Andrew Grant – representing Fish Creek Ranch HOA. The HOA unanimously supports a moratorium. 287 is already very dangerous. Think about trucks hauling turbines coming in. Take time to make sure regulations are appropriate. Address water, emergency response, etc.

Anne Brand – this would be economically devastating to local businesses. We are proud to have green energy but we should plan to mitigate negative impacts from wind farms. People want to visit Laramie and we shouldn't ruin that.

Jennifer Kirchhoefer – presented a petition from Summer Rain Ranch. This would be permanently damaging if we can't slow down and ask the right questions about wind development. Don't set a bad precedent. Also expressed concerns about land values and reclamation issues.

Matt Peterson – representing Harney Creek HOA. Presented petition for moratorium. Expressed concern over economic impacts.

Larry James – representing Park Meadows. Presented petition for moratorium. In favor of renewable energy but don't want to see giant turbines.

Claudia Hemp – supports the moratorium. There are already three wind projects approved in Albany County. We left California to get space and not have neighbors. People live here because it's beautiful.

Bill Dorsey – what's in it for us? If Colorado wants power, let them build it on their side of the border.

Zach Johner – disposal of the wind turbines should be addressed. How much should it cost?

Al Meneer – community members should be allowed to review these applications for completeness. Studies should be done on this project. There should be a public road setback for more than just 287.

Carol Wiles – this is an industrial project, not a wind farm. We would like opportunities to refute false information.

Lisa Sherrod – Laramie is a destination. This could negatively affect businesses.

Leland Schertz – there are around 300 elk up there. This is a wildlife corridor.

Ace Annanson – the technology in wind energy is for making money, not for wildlife protection. These turbines could be a lot smaller.

Jeff Lang – proper setbacks should be established.

Donna Lang – the commissioners have a lot to think about and should put county residents first.

Kira Poulson – look at the impact this could have on the county.

Loretta Annanson – we buy our land with expectations. It's frustrating that a company has the power to take what we love away.

Sue Ann Dow – we've seen a lot of boom and bust from energy. Companies don't take good care of the land after they've made their money.

Mr. Cunningham thanked the public for their input. Mr. Moore recommended that they make their voices heard at the upcoming Board of County Commissioners meeting as well.

IX. OTHER ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

XI. CITIZEN COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Related Topics

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman: There being no further business to conduct, the Chair would entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

So moved by Commissioner Miller

Seconded by Commissioner Cunningham

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 3:58p.