

City of Zion

Planning and Zoning Commission

Meeting Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Thursday, May 1, 2025 7:00pm
ZION CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Opening Protocol

- Call to Order
Chairman Riley called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
- Attendance
Present: Commissioners Champine, Johnson, Massey, Quinn & Chairman Riley.
Absent: Commissioners Heffelman & Smith.
- Approval of meeting minutes from April 3, 2025
It was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the meeting minutes as presented.
Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Johnson, aye; Massey, aye; Quinn, aye; Chairman Riley, aye. Motion passes.

At this time, Chairman Riley swore in all audience members that would be speaking towards any of the dockets.

II. Public Hearings

1. Docket 25-Z-7

Petitioner: Diane Cooper

Request: seeking a Special Use permit to operate a daycare center at 2730 Sheridan Road.

Ms. Cooper is seeking a special use permit to operate a daycare center at 2730 Sheridan Road. She has been running a licensed daycare for 20 years and plans to move her operation from her home into the new location. The facility will have an indoor play area and staff will bus children to a nearby park for outdoor activities. The building requires revisions to meet code, including a sprinkler system with CO2 detection. Ms. Cooper's staff has been with her for a long time.

Martha Salazar, owner of Martha's Nursery located at 2719 Elisha Avenue, emphasized the need for a private playground due to DCFS regulations, as public parks are not suitable for daycare use.

After further discussion and review of the Findings of Facts, it was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to recommend approval of the Petitioner's application.

Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Johnson, aye; Massey, aye; Quinn, aye; Chairman Riley, aye. Motion passes.

2. Docket 25-Z-8

Petitioner: Christian Khayat – Khayat Enterprises/Green Fig Solar

Request: Seeking to remove existing Planned Unit Development and approve new Planned Unit Development with a Special Use Permit to allow a solar farm & residential subdivision at the property located at 40375 Kenosha Road.

Glenn Christensen, on behalf of Khayat Enterprises and Green Fig Solar, presented a plan to develop a 35.99-acre site at 40375 Kenosha Road into a ground mounted solar farm and residential subdivision. The proposed ground mounted solar farm development will cover about 14 acres. The solar panels will be no higher than four feet off the ground and will include a small staging area, equipment pad, and service driveway that will take access directly from Kenosha Road.

The residential subdivision will have 50 single-family lots, with an average lot size of 10,708 sq. ft. The size of the proposed lots were based on the size of the lots in the two subdivisions that abut the subject property. The project will offer four different ranch style models varying in size from 1200 to 2000 square feet.

Commissioner Massey asked if the residential subdivision would benefit directly from having the solar farm in close proximity. Bernardo Urdaneta of Green Fig Solar, stated that the solar facility is a community solar project where the power output will go into the common grid. Residents in the area can subscribe to the power output and receive it at a discount to standard electricity rates, but the solar panels are not specifically tied to or powering the new residential homes.

Chris Khayat, a Zion native, expressed pride in bringing the proposed development to his hometown. He described plans for distinctive homes featuring full basements and optional basement finishings. Highlighting a partnership with Cultivated Power, he emphasized the project's environmentally friendly solar component and argued that combining solar and housing is essential for the project's economic viability, as housing alone would not be financially sustainable.

Rob McLaughlin, of 2619 Mark Avenue, raised several concerns about the proposed development. He warned that increased traffic along the currently low-volume Mark Avenue could pose safety risks for children in the neighborhood. He also pointed out that there are already 16 to 20 unsold lots in the nearby Cypress Park subdivision and suggested that the addition of a solar farm with a black fence might further discourage potential buyers. Mr. McLaughlin questioned how construction would take place without direct road access, expressing concern that construction traffic could disrupt surrounding neighborhoods. He also noted that the

existing road has not been replaced in 20 years and may not be equipped to handle increased usage. Concluding his remarks, he argued that one meeting was not enough to make decisions about a development plan of this scale and duration, calling for more thorough discussion.

Christopher Williams, 2617 Mark Avenue, voiced several concerns about the proposed development, particularly regarding its potential impact on the neighborhood. He noted that he personally maintains the deteriorating tree line along the property, as the existing landscaping has been neglected. He expressed worries that the introduction of smaller, lower-cost homes could reduce existing property values and questioned whether a retirement-focused development was suitable for an area so close to schools, suggesting that family homes would be more appropriate. Additionally, he highlighted traffic and safety issues on Mark Avenue, where children have previously been hit by cars. Mr. Williams also emphasized the community's commitment to maintaining its appearance and quality of life, warning that the development could jeopardize both. He concluded by urging for more meetings and thorough consideration before any decisions are made.

Commissioner Quinn noted he was generally supportive of sustainability and green initiatives but expressed strong reservations about supporting a solar farm combined with residential development.

After further discussion, Chairman Riley suggested continuing the hearing to the next board meeting to allow both the developers and community members more time to address the concerns raised during the discussion. It was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Quinn to continue the meeting until Thursday June 5th at 7:00pm. Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Johnson, aye; Massey, aye; Quinn, aye; Chairman Riley, aye. Motion passes.

III. Old Business

There was none.

IV. Docket Updates

Director Ianson stated that the Commission's recommendations for Dockets 25-Z-4, 25-Z-5 and 25-Z-6 were approved by City Council.

V. New Business

Presentation: Residents in support of allowing chickens to be kept in Zion

Jason Carlin & Jessica Clinton advocated for allowing residents to keep up to six chickens per household, highlighting benefits such as fresh eggs, pest control, sustainable food, and low-maintenance companionship. They also

proposed regulations that would limit chicken ownership to homeowners, ban roosters, and require proper coop structures along with a permit system.

Commission members raised concerns about staffing and enforcement. No action was taken.

VI. Public Participation

There was none.

VII. Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the Commission it was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Quinn to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 pm. All in favor. Motion passes.

Minutes recorded by: Sonolito Bronson