

# **City of Zion**

## **Planning and Zoning Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes**

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:00pm

ZION CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

#### **I. Opening Protocol**

- Call to Order  
Chairman Riley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Introduction of Dr. Jennifer Smith  
Chairman Riley welcomed Dr. Jennifer Smith to the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- Attendance  
Present: Commissioners Champine, Heffelman, Quinn, Smith & Chairman Riley  
  
Also present: Director Rich Ianson and City Attorney Garrigan
- Approval of meeting minutes from May 1, 2025  
It was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Quinn to approve the meeting minutes as presented.  
Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Heffelman, aye; Quinn, aye; Smith, pass; 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-9**

**Petitioner:** Veronica Martinez

**Request:** Seeking a Variance from Zoning Ordinance Section 102-239(a)(3) to allow a 22.7 foot setback instead of a 30ft and Zoning Ordinance Section 102-32(b) to allow a 0.5 foot setback instead of a 3foot for the property located at 2903 Gilead Avenue.

Director Ianson said that the property at 2903 Gilead Avenue, recently purchased by Veronica Martinez, required city inspection and rehabilitation to meet current codes. The house, built in the early 1900s, falls under the old zoning code. In order to move forward with the rehab, the property must be brought up to the current code.

After reviewing the Findings of Facts, it was motioned by Commissioner Quinn and seconded by commissioner Champine to recommend approval of the Petitioner's application. Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Heffelman, aye; Quinn, aye; Smith, aye; Chairman Riley, aye. Motion passes.

### III. Old Business

#### 1. **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, discussed a proposal to redevelop a vacant parcel in Cypress Park, originally intended for 82 homes, into a 50-lot subdivision and a solar farm.

Andrew Hartigan, an appraiser with Cohn Reznik, discussed the impact of solar developments on property values, referencing a study by Loyola University in 2024. Commissioner Heffelman raised questions about the statistical methodology used in the property value study. Specifically, she wanted clarification on what percentage of sales were excluded from the study and was concerned that by removing distressed sales, the numbers might be skewed.

Yolanda Dorsey, 4000 Cypress Drive, questioned the credibility of the property value study and challenged the developers' motives, suggesting that if solar farms were truly beneficial, more would be built in areas like Wadsworth with ample farmland.

Mark Gershon, an attorney for Green Fig Solar, explained that the solar farm would be backed by a city-held decommissioning bond, generate tax revenue without burdening community services, and follow state-mandated tax depreciation rules. Acknowledging limited community outreach, he proposed a public meeting and supported the idea of donating land to the park district to ease local concerns.

Feltus Sterling, 2702 Mark Avenue, is the Cypress Park HOA president. He stated that he believes the project will increase traffic, noise and taxes.

Maurice Jones, 2703 Mark Avenue, shared his concerns of increased traffic in the neighborhood.

Marcus Dorsey, 4000 Cypress Drive, said he was not in support of the project due to the increased traffic and potential increase in criminal activity.

Ray Gilmore, 4109 Cypress Drive, sought clarification on how the proposed roads would link to existing subdivisions and how the solar panels would integrate with the electrical grid, including whether usage would be mandatory or limited to new construction. Mr. Christensen explained that the proposed Flagstone subdivision will have three road connections to Cypress Park, which were intentionally designed years ago to avoid long cul-de-sacs and promote neighborhood connectivity. He noted that the street stubs in Cypress Park were included for future development to the north and will now help distribute traffic, even though some residents may see increased traffic near their homes. Additionally, he clarified that an independent road extension to Kenosha Road isn't possible due to Lake County's restrictions on new access points along collector roads. Bernardo Urdaneta, Green Fig Solar, stated that the power will be go to the ComEd distribution grid.

After hearing public concerns, Chris Khayat noted that traffic from new roads—not the solar farm—is the main issue. To address this, he proposed donating the residential portion to the park district, avoiding additional roads and allowing the solar farm to operate without disrupting nearby neighborhoods. Commissioner Quinn asked what led to this decision. Mr. Khayat said it was due to the objections raised at the last meeting.

Kevin Pool, 4017 Cypress Drive, raised concerns about poor communication regarding the solar panel project, noting that neither he nor his nearby neighbors received any direct information or outreach. He suggested the neighborhood's no-solicitation policy may have limited contact, but felt the community was not adequately informed about the project's risks and benefits.

Mr. Gershon acknowledged concerns about limited community outreach and clarified that previous discussions were mainly with those who attended the last meeting or approached the property owners directly. He requested a continuance to hold a community meeting, share information more widely, and gather feedback on the proposed development and alternatives.

After further discussion, it was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Quinn to continue the meeting until July 3, 2025. Vote: Commissioners Champine, aye; Heffelman, aye; Quinn, aye; Smith, aye; Chairman Riley, aye. Motion passes.

**IV. Docket Updates**

Director Ianson stated that the City Council tabled Docket 25-Z-7.

**V. New Business**

None

**VI. Public Participation**

None

**VII. Adjourn**

With no further business to come before the Commission it was motioned by Commissioner Champine and seconded by Commissioner Heffelman to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm. All in favor. Motion passes.

Minutes recorded by: Sonolito Bronson