



Planning Commission Minutes

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • (805) 654-2662 • www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning

March 21, 2024

1. **8:31 A.M. HEARING CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

Commission:

Scott Boydstun	District 1
Charles Sandlin	District 2
Earl McPhail	District 3
Maggie Kestly, Vice-Chair	District 4
Veronica Garcia, Chair	District 5

County Staff

Jaclyn Smith, Assistant County Counsel
Dave Ward, Planning Director
Aaron Engstrom, Planning Manager, Area Plans and Resources
Donald Nielsen, Senior Planner
Luz Juachon, Recording Secretary

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Time set aside for comments by citizens on matters not appearing on the agenda.

Jeff Ketelsen comments on Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation's (CEDC) pending projects in Ojai Valley.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 15, 2024.**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve, as presented.

Motion: Approve the February 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

Moved by: Commissioner McPhail

Seconded by: Vice-Chair Kestly

Motion carried: 5-0

Yes: Commissioners Boydstun, Sandlin, and McPhail, Vice-Chair Kestly, and Chair Garcia

6. PROJECT

A. **CASE NUMBER:** PL24-0019

APPLICANT: County of Ventura

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project consists of a County-initiated proposed ordinance amending Articles 2, 5, 7, and 19 of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to (1) codify a Planning Director Use Equivalency Determination that finds battery energy storage as equivalent to the “energy production from renewable resource” use category (Exhibit 5) and clarifies that battery energy storage is allowed in Industrial M1, M2, and M3 zones with a Planned Development Permit; and (2) establishes a limitation of up to 100 acres for battery energy storage facilities located in the Agricultural Exclusive (“AE”), Open Space (“OS”), and Rural Agriculture (“RA”) zones.

PROJECT LOCATION: All non-coastal unincorporated areas of Ventura County.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) DOCUMENT: This proposed ordinance is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines as follows: (1) the project is exempt under Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the proposed ordinance may cause a significant effect on the environment; and (2) the project is categorically exempt under Section 15308 (Class 8, Actions By Regulatory Agencies For Protection Of The Environment) as a regulatory action to assure the maintenance and protection of the environment, and no unusual circumstances or other exceptions to the exemption apply.

CASE PLANNER: Donald Nielsen

EMAIL: donald.nielsen@ventura.org

Recommended Action

Approve staff recommendation.

Donald Nielsen, Senior Planner, presented the staff report. The following recommended actions were presented to the Planning Commission:

1. **CERTIFY** that the Commission has reviewed and considered this staff report and all exhibits hereto, and has considered all comments received during the public comment processes;

2. **ADOPT** a resolution (Exhibit 2) recommending that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions regarding the proposed amendments to the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NZCO):
 - a. **CERTIFY** that the Board has reviewed and considered the Board letter and all exhibits thereto, the Planning Commission staff report and all exhibits thereto, and has considered all other materials and public comments received during the public comment and hearing processes;
 - b. **FIND** on the basis of the entire record and set forth in Section B of the Planning Commission Staff Report, that the adoption of the proposed amendments to the NCZO (Exhibit 3) is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 and 15061 (b)(3) because the project consists of regulations for the benefit and protection of the environment and because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the proposed amendments may cause a significant effect on the environment; and **FIND** that no substantial evidence exists precluding the use of the above categorical exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15308) based on the presence of unusual circumstances or any other exception set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2;
 - c. **FIND** on the basis of the entire record and as set forth in Section A, B, C and D of the Planning Commission staff report, that the proposed amendments to be the NCZO (Exhibit 3) are consistent with the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan and good planning practices and are in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare;
 - d. **ADOPT** the proposed ordinance amending Articles 2, 5, 7, and 19 of the NCZO (Exhibit 3); and
 - e. **SPECY** the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors is the custodian, and 800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 is the location of the documents and materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which these decisions are based.

Chair Garcia called for a recess at 9:24 a.m. and resumed the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

Statement Card received and read at the meeting:

- Richard Francis

Zoom Speakers:

- Chris Williamson
- Lisa Woodburn
- Emily McCrorie

- Gary Franzen
- Kendall Lousen

Planning Commission Deliberation and Vote:

Motion: Approve staff recommended actions, with a revision to the definitions of “energy production and storage from renewable resources” and “renewable energy storage” pursuant to the revised definition language set forth in Planning staff’s PowerPoint presentation. The Planning Commission further recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Consider directing Planning staff to further study potential job impacts as the result of energy storage projects in the industrial zones, including potential job losses and/or job gains,
2. Consider limiting the acreage available for energy storage projects in the Industrial zones, and
3. Require, in Phase II of the Renewable Energy Program, that energy storage facilities be located adjacent to or as close as possible to existing electrical infrastructure in the Agricultural (“AE”), Open Space (“OS”), or Rural Agricultural (“RA”) zones.

Moved by: Commissioner Sandlin

Seconded by: Commissioner McPhail

Motion carried: 5-0

Yes: Commissioners Boydston, Sandlin, and McPhail, Vice-Chair Kestly, and Chair Garcia

7. DISCUSSION:

a) Report by the Planning Director on Board actions and other matters.

Planning Director Ward has no reportable items from the Board of Supervisors.

The Planning Commission upcoming hearing dates and the anticipated projects to consider are:

- April 4 – PL24-0014 and PL24-0027
- May 2 – PL21-0092 and PL23-0033

Post-meeting Note: PL21-0092 item has been removed from the Planning Commission list of items to review and consider.

b) Items the Planning Commission may wish to introduce.

No reportable action taken.

8. **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Garcia adjourned the meeting out of closed session at 10:47 a.m.



Luz Juachon, Recording Secretary
Ventura County Planning Division

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