

City of Green River

460 East Main Street, Green River, Utah

Planning Commission Minutes

Public Hearing Meeting

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

ATTENDING: Chair Stephanie Crabtree; Planning Commission; Tammy Howland, Kent Johnson; Mayor Ren Hatt, Council Members Bo , Harrison, Kent Nelson, Larry Packer, Kathy Ryan, and Ben Lehnhoff; Employees; Tyler Hunt, Julie Spadafora, David Wilson, Bryan Meadows, Chad Pinneo, Janet Smoak, Loni Meadows; Citizens; Levi Allen, Sheri Young, Pat Pile, Randy Ryan, Anne Elliot, Shannon Johnson, Keith Johnson, Ben Coomer, Dustin Gingerich, Kimarie Fluckey, and Landon Fluckey; Better City; Ryan Englund; ENYO; Christine Macouch. Holand & Hart; Havilah Cody.

CONDUCTING: Chair, Stephanie Crabtree, the public hearing began at 7:19 p.m.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Planning Commission Public Hearing on Zoning change of, parcel 01-0150-0011, Open Space- 1 to Commercial-2., Add "Electrical vehicle charging stations and related facilities" as a permitted use in the C-1 Zone and the C-2 Zone. Add "utility-scale solar energy generating facility" as a conditional use in the C-2 Zone. Havilah Cody from Holand & Hart spoke, he is wanting to familiarize the council and citizen of Green River with the project and what a great opportunity it is to rezone these properties. The first amendment is to rezone the rear portion of the property, and second is to add electrical vehicle charging stations as a permit use in the zone, and last to add utility scale solar energy generation, as a permit use in the C-2 Zone. She said, a charging station would create opportunities for the city, which would increase the tax base and bring in some federal government opportunities as well. They are now producing such large electrical vehicles and Green River is strategically situated to really benefit from this. It will be close to gas stations and close to I-70, it will bring more people to Green River, it will not bring any detrimental impact with it. It would attract more people to Green River to charge their vehicles, which would be close to other gas stations. This would be a land use decision, and they really feel it would be in the city's best interest to approve it. Ben Coomer asked, what is the approximate life span, and how are you going to store it? If he were to pull into one of these facilities, what would it look like? Havilah Cody answered, on the backside is where the solar generating facility would be, it would be like any other electrical charging station. Ben Coomer asked, will he be able to go to the restroom and buy drinks? Havilah Cody answered, they haven't gotten to that yet. Havilah Cody said it would be a very similar experience, like going to a gas station. Christine Macouch, the idea is how to position Green River in the future for an Inland Port. They are thinking of eighteen wheelers coming into Green River to charge their trucks. What is the future going to look like? What if gas is not going to be here forever? Things change, this is your chance to be at the forefront. What do you want your future to look like? They want to develop some of the properties on the west side. She said, they are just dipping their toes to see what is impossible. Ben Coomer again asked, what is the life of the solar panels and where are they going to store the energy? Christine Macouch said, typically solar panels last anywhere from 25 to 30 years. Ben Coomer asked, where does that estimate come from? Christine Mccouch answered, you can go to Idaho lab, the internet and look at any of the federal laboratories. Ben Coomer asked, after 25 years then what happens? Christine Mccouch said, they can do two things, typically what we do on our projects is, they submit a decommission bond. They would give a bond to Green River City for the cost of the decommission and reclamation. The solar panels are taken out

and it goes back to normal. What are the steps you want us to go through? Ben Coomer said, as of today, there is no facility that will accept or recycle these panels, costing more to recycle than they are worth. Where is the city going to put these? Christine Mccouch said, she does all the big projects, Spanish Fork Canyon, Monticello, and Casper Wyoming. She has met with the Mayor in Casper Wyoming, and they also manage the land fill there, they received a fee for the solar panels, they were able to make money, and they were grateful. Ben Coomer commented, so they dug a big hole. Christine Mccouch told them they have found uses for the carbon fiber, General Electric can grind them up and use it for road base. So now the Casper Wyoming land fill is being paid a second fee for the solar panels. Ben Coomer said, Green River already has zones that are more in tune with what you want to do. Green River has areas properties to the east and west that are better for this use. He said he owns property next to this parcel and there is also a hotel on the other side. He doesn't feel that battery storage is safe, he is asking about a chemical leak. Chemical leaks if they get into the water supply can be hazardous. Many people downstream can be affected by this project. Havilah Cody commented, this is a very legitimate concern, after a land use decision is made, the next step is to create a conditional use permit, where all those concerns will be mitigated during the conditional use permit process. Ben Coomer said, yes, I understand that. After you have your foot in the door, then you can present your case. He stated he has a problem with this whole project. The whole idea of the Open Space Zone is to buffer this type of commercial or Industrial development. The first thing you see as you turn the corner is going to be a big solar array instead of open space. Havilah Cody commented, she totally understands but they were given the idea that this is the direction the city wants to go, and that they want to be in the fore front, they want to be involved. These are legitimate concerns; this is where the Conditional Use Permit Ordinance comes into play. Ben Coomer says he likes green energy, but it is something to experiment with and he feels this is where we are at on this. In a few years the panels degrade from 100% of photo electric production and degrade quite rapidly. Stephanie Crabtree made a comment, this is a Public Hearing and there are some points she wanted to hit on, and she wanted to hear comments on all areas. Number one is the zoning. Ben Coomer feels it is spot zoning. Stephanie Crabtree said, in prior Planning and Zoning Meetings, they have continually discussed identifying more C-2 (Commercial -2 Zones) the request came to them. Love's also wants to be included in the discussion on C-2 zones. They said, let's look at these other places. She said she potentially wanted to promote this for Commercial Development. This is not spot zoning; this open space was four different parcels. Ben Coomer commented, do you know what Open Space was meant to do? His answer was, to insulate people from Industrial growth. Shannon Johnson spoke, so it will be put right next door to a new \$50 million dollar hotel and ruin it, a 6-foot fence won't do anything. This is a four-story hotel; they are going to see it and hear it! People staying in this hotel love the beautiful sun sets, all the projects she just spoke of in Monticello and Spanish Fork are all huge eyesores. Look what has happened to Richfield, driving down I-70, it was farmland once, fields that were so beautiful, and now look at it, just covered with solar panels for miles and it is ugly! Havilah Cody commented, she can see what you're saying from a general standpoint. This is something that will be addressed during the Conditional Use Permit phase. She said, they are not coming in tomorrow, this is not a solar project that will completely ruin the landscape, based off the guidance of the city, all detrimental aspects will be addressed. Then and only then. Ben Coomer asked, tell us one thing, you say you want this for commercial trucking more than anything else. There are areas in the Green River vicinity with exits on the east and west ends of town where trucking would be better suited for Commercial Industrial truck use. Trent Fluckey commented, down the road twenty-five to thirty years, the environmental impacts. No one really knows what impact it will make, but it is a total eye sore on main street. If it is a conditional use, if the town has a limited number of spaces for businesses on Main Street, if the city blows those on an industrial thing, there is no way the city will ever get it back in our lifetime. If you do an industrial operation like that, it needs to be an Industrial Park. The city gets the same benefit from it, whether it is in an industrial or commercial

area. Sheri Young spoke, her property is super special, because it has a berm that runs diagonally. This berm runs through her property and there is an easement that can never leave. When she pulled into town, she does not live here, but when you are pulling into town and you drive past her property, you cannot see to the rear of the property because of that berm, it is like rolling hills. Keith Johnson said, from the fourth floor of this hotel you can see all of this valley! Sheri Young comment, she drove to the high school, and all you can see are rolling hills as well, to the back of her property. The hotel is on a diagonal, she said she doesn't disagree that if you are on the 4th floor, you can probably see them. Keith Johnson said, the hotel was positioned specifically that way to get the best view. Shannon Johnson comment, there is a 9-foot square patio specifically place in the rear of the hotel to view all sunsets and sunrises. Ben Coomer said, his property is just to the right of your property, and he can see Sheri Young's property from his. Sheri Young expressed, the other point she wanted to bring to light was, a year and half ago a resident called her and said, Sheri did you know someone has ordered an appraisal on your property? She said she didn't even have her property for sale. A few weeks went by, and the appraisal person called her back to ask questions about the property and it was then that she learned Green River City had ordered the appraisal. So Green River City was also looking to use the property in the back, she doesn't know what their plans are. She thinks it was for industrial use and it had something to do with Inland Port. She talked to Conae Black, and she told her the city was interested in purchasing the back 35 acres for an Industrial Park. Randy Erwin asked, what benefit and employment will this bring into Green River? Havilah Cody answered, all the properties that were spoken of earlier were all done in a high-Class A manner, bringing funds back into their projects, this is their number one priority. They will be happy to have the property rezoned. Randy Erwin asked, what will Green River City make off this but taxes? Will the city make any benefit from those solar panels? Havilah Cody answered, just like any other business or hotel or use of property in Green River, it would be the same. That is what the tax base is for, this business will not have profit sharing. Randy Erwin commented, we are unique we have lots of open space that is a long way from everyone. If Green River could find the right people, they could put in their own solar panels, to pay their electric bills plus pay for the cost to build. The benefit on a little bit of tax base, is not much. Green River needs to make money off the solar, not so someone else making the money. Havilah Cody told how there needs to be a lot of expertise to make a productive solar farm. This piece of property is so well situated for solar panels, and they so want to come here. This is now just a land use decision. Randy Erwin said, he owns the property right across the street from Sheri Young property on the south side of the highway. The drainage ditch, the same one you spoke of earlier, when it gets developed, there will be an issue. When it drains, it drains across the street onto his property. Havilah Cody Commented, this is the time that the Conditional Use Permit would come into play. At this point it is a matter of rezoning in accordance with what the city wants to do as a whole. As a developer the last thing they would like to get into would be a flooding issue. Randy Erwin said, they just developed a Solar farm in Wellington, you can see the solar farm for miles. This is exactly the same thing; Green River will have here. Christine Macouch spoke, they have developed a project outside the Hunter Power Plant, if they get this project to the same point, they will do a visual simulation of what it would look like from the second floor of your hotel and the patio where you look across Sheri Young's land. They would have to look at Sheri Young's land and Ben Coomer's land. They would do a visual simulation and glare study, and if it doesn't meet the needs of this community, we wouldn't put it there. She said they have worked on multiple projects they walked away from, because the project just didn't fit, she has lived in Utah, and she has been an Elected Official in Utah. She has been on their side of the isle and on the other side as well. She doesn't come into a community and do something everyone hates. She has plenty of other places to go. Ben Coomer said, there is a place for you here but on the west side. Christine Macouch said, the west side has a lot of land issues. She has looked at it and spent a lot of time to see if they could make it work, it is difficult. Ben Coomer mentioned, there is huge industrial park on the east side of town. She said, they

are coming to your community and would love to work it out. They are not asking for your approval of it, if it works fine if not, they will go somewhere else. Stephanie Crabtree conducted saying, they have touch on the first two agenda items and now she would like to talk about the third. Currently electrical vehicles are not included in Green River's matrix right now. They do exist in the town, and the Planning Commission would like to add them to the C-2 (Commercial- 2) Zone. She would like them to have the time to make public comment on the third one as well. Ben Coomer asked, why is it when there are services offered, they are not required to provide minimum public services such as restrooms and a place to walk their pets, instead of having to go to other places like other commercial properties to use the bathroom or walk their pets? Stephanie Crabtree said, it would be good to buddy up with a business or organization, one exists at a museum and one at a coffee shop. Ben Coomer commented that charging station shouldn't even be at the museum. He said he has a business in that area, and he can tell you it is a problem. Stephanie Crabtree said, the Tamarisk Restaurant feels it is a positive thing. Ben Coomer said, they want to use their restrooms and their back yard and walk their dogs. These businesses should provide basic waste services for the people who come there off the road. The first thing you do when you stop for fuel is to go to the bathroom. You can go out and watch that, he doesn't think you need to do a study to see that. Kent Nelson commented, it takes about one hour to charge your car. Havilah Cody said it would actually bring more business to Green River. You're not going to wait a couple of hours; you'll grab a drink at the Chow Hound, you'll grab a drink at the local bar etc. Anne Elliot commented, truck drivers do not have a way to get into town, they usually just stay with the truck. Shannon Johnson agreed that truck drivers just stay with their truck while fueling and maybe walk their dog, letting them poop on the lawn. Havilah Cody commented, what they are asking from the city is to allow them to provide a vehicle charging station, all the infrastructure, improvement and equipment needed, so they have the right to improve it. They are asking the city for the right to add Trent Fluckey said, it is probably a good idea for charging stations to have a bathroom, just like the other stations. Keith Johnson commented, the idea is very benign, to be able to slip that conditional use in. Stephanie Crabtree commented, there are three separate items that are being present in this parcel plan. They are looking at charging stations, so we are looking at that and they didn't have anything for the solar energy, so they are adding that too. Trent Fluckey said it looks like the C-1 language was changed, he doesn't know if the city would benefit from that or not. Something minimal, like property taxes, but if you take the C-1, hotels pay transient tax, and it is huge. If you have a retail establishment, you can collect a lot of sales tax. If it does change to a charging station and solar farm, and is included as a conditional use, the city will not get the benefit it will be shipped out. Havilah Cody said they have received a lot of valuable feedback, at this point if it is okay with the Planning Commission, they would like to table this. She said, what we are hearing is they are deeply committed to the community, to the sunsets, to your visitors, and to how they are treating their property. She thinks this would be a great opportunity for Green River, bringing money, looking to the future. Trent Fluckey said he has driven past a lot of solar farms, and he has yet to see anyone working there. They install them, but no one works there. Havilah Cody answered back, she knows jobs are really important. She wonders if there is enough housing to accommodate this type of business. Christine Macouch said, if you are talking about jobs and businesses, you'll need to look up high. We are looking for truck charging here, they could have a walking path to walk their dogs, there could be showers and all the amenities. They will do whatever it takes to bring them here. Ben Coomer said he thinks this is good idea, to bring them to Green River. He still thinks there are other areas in Green River that are better suited. Chair, Stephanie Crabtree made a motion to close the meeting.

Stephanie Crabtree, Chair

Julie Spadafora, City Recorder

Approved: May16, 2023