

Emery County Planning & Zoning

Meeting Minutes

July 8th, 2026 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/4353813570?pwd=NWduRlZzRCtGNUdnd1d0NkNNdmxIZz09>

passcode:Emery

IN ATTENDANCE: Gary Arrington, Bruce Wilson, Tyler Jeffs, Bart Cox, Laurel Killpack, Jim Jennings, Natalie Olsen, Commissioner Leonard, Commissioner Dennis Worwood

EXCUSED:

VISITORS:

1. Welcome:

Gary Arrington welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Discuss/Approve/Deny: June 10th, 2026 Meeting Minutes.

Bart made a motion to approve the minutes with a second from Tyler. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discuss/Approve/Deny: Board member applications (3)/Recommendations to Commission.

The Planning Commission reviewed applications from Whitney Phelps, Joe Begay, Seth Manning, and Dave Sebring. It was noted that Dave Sebring's application was submitted after the published deadline and would be left to the County Commission's discretion.

Bruce Wilson made a motion to recommend Whitney Phelps, Joe Begay, and Seth Manning for appointment to the three vacant Planning Commission seats. Tyler Jeffs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Update: Drunkards Wash Energy CUP.

Paul Gascoigne provided an update on the proposed Drunkards Wash Energy Project, including:

- An agreement had been reached with the McElprang family, resolving their formal opposition.
- Discussions with the Division of Wildlife Resources resulted in proposed voluntary wildlife mitigation through a financial contribution.
- Paul requested a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

The Commission explained that no recommendation could be made because:

- The agenda only listed the item as an update.
- The staff review process had not yet been completed.
- Commissioners had not been able to fully review the application due to difficulties accessing the electronic files and the limited availability of the hard copy.

Paul agreed to provide electronic access and additional copies of the application materials. The Commission indicated it anticipates being prepared to make a recommendation after members have adequate time to review the complete application.

5. Presentation: Rocky Mountain Power/PacifiCorp Representative.

Tim Hemstreet, Vice President of Resource Development for PacifiCorp, presented information regarding:

- The transmission interconnection process for new generation projects.
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requirements.
- Cluster studies and transmission upgrade requirements.
- Cost responsibilities for new generation developers.
- Existing and proposed transmission infrastructure in Emery County.
- How new generation projects are interconnected without displacing existing facilities such as the Hunter and Huntington power plants.

Commission members discussed current transmission capacity, future electrical demand, and the growing need for generation resources throughout Utah.

6. Discussion: Data Centers and Water Consumption

The Commission discussed potential future data center developments and the need to develop county ordinances addressing:

- Water consumption.
- Cooling methods.
- Noise generated by data centers.
- Appropriate siting and compatibility with existing land uses.

Members discussed closed-loop cooling systems, proof-of-concept projects currently being developed, and the importance of obtaining accurate technical information before adopting regulations. Suggestions included visiting existing data centers to better understand their operations before drafting ordinances.

7. Discuss/Approve/Deny: Recommendations to Commission on Solar Ordinance.

The Commission reviewed potential updates to the County's solar ordinance, including recent state legislation requiring:

- Wildlife impact consultation.
- Decommissioning plans and financial assurances.
- Updated permitting requirements.

Discussion included:

- Updating county ordinances to comply with state law.
- Establishing setbacks from homes and agricultural operations.
- Improving notification requirements for affected property owners.
- Ensuring future projects include adequate public information, maps, and aerial imagery.
- Balancing economic development with protection of residents and agricultural lands.

Commission members reiterated they are not in favor of a countywide ban on solar development, but support strengthening ordinances to provide greater protections, clearer standards, and improved public notification. The Commission emphasized its role

is to recommend ordinance changes while applying existing ordinances to current applications.

8. Discuss Any Other Business:

Members of the public expressed concerns regarding:

- Notification procedures for proposed solar developments.
- Lack of publicly available maps and project information.
- Adequate setbacks from residences and agricultural properties.
- Consistent enforcement of notification requirements.
- Using drone imagery and online project maps to improve public awareness.

Commission members acknowledged previous shortcomings in notification procedures and stated they intend to improve future processes, including making project information more accessible to both commissioners and the public. The Commission also discussed the need for future ordinances addressing data centers and other emerging industrial uses.

9. Adjourn:

Bruce made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held September 9th at **1:00 pm**.