

MINUTES
CHURCHILL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS JOINT WORKSHOP
Tuesday, June 24, 2025

1. Call to Order

Chair Bunyard called the regular workshop of the Churchill County Planning Commission to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, County Administrative Complex, 155 N Taylor Street, Fallon, Nevada.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Zack Bunyard, Chair; Victor Ansotegui, Member; Tami Edgmon, and Member; Joe Frey.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eric Blakey, Commissioner; and Matt Hyde, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Myles Getto, Board of County Commissioners Chairman; Jeff Goings, Planning Commission Vice Chair Member; Mark Hyde, Planning Commission Member; and Scott Nelson, Planning Commission Member.

STAFF PRESENT: Randy Hines, Public Works Director; Dean Patterson, Senior Planner; Amos Akena, Planning Technician; Joseph Sanford, Deputy District Attorney-Civil; Chris Spross, Assistant County Manager; Jim Barbee, County Manager; and Diane Moyle, Administrative Assistant.

2. Public Comment

Chair Bunyard asked for public comments and there were none.

3. Verification of the Posting of the Agenda

Chair Bunyard verified with Diane Moyle that the agenda had been posted as stated on the agenda in accordance with NRS 241 and the Churchill County Code.

4. Consideration and possible action re: Review and adoption of Agenda as submitted or revised

Chair Bunyard called for a motion.

Member Edgmon made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted.

Member Ansotegui seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (4-0).

5. Discussion Item

- A. Consideration and possible action re: Review and discussion of potential amendments to the Churchill County Code relating to the land use table, definitions, and zoning map amendments relating to properties zoned Industrial, and other associated code changes.

Randy Hines, Public Works Director, shared a presentation related to the proposed changes to the Churchill County Code regarding Industrial Zoning (a copy is attached). He expressed that there is a problem with people understanding what they can do with their private property and what neighbors can do with their property in our code as it pertains to Industrial zoning. He pointed out

that we currently only have one Industrial zoning that encapsulates vastly differing locations from within the city limits of Fallon, to the outskirts of town, to Bango Road, and to the forty-mile desert area. This creates a need for individual special use permit review of almost all industrial activities. This full review is required to determine whether a “use” is approved.

Director Hines went through the land use table legend and explained how to understand how to determine what is required for the different uses in the table and whether a particular use is prohibited. He then showed a listing of all of the existing industrial uses that are currently in our land use table. He pointed out that with only one industrial zone throughout the county, you’re really stuck with requiring a special use permit for almost everything that comes in the area. He shared the zoning and planning goals to provide clarity in our code, have community protection, economic development, and managed growth. One way to improve clarity is to split the industrial zone into three—I1 (light), I2 (medium), and I3 (heavy). The light industrial would be designed for warehousing, indoor manufacturing, etc. There could be some heavier uses allowed by special use permit. Medium industrial is designated for most industrial uses, but would require very heavy uses, such as munition manufacturing, hazardous material manufacturing, etc. to be permitted with a special use permit. Heavy industrial is designed for almost all uses with special use permits being required for explosives, chemical manufacturing facilities, and so forth.

Director Hines explained procedures when a developer comes to the county with a project idea. There will be a pre-application meeting to discuss the proposed project. Staff will make a determination whether the proposed use is either permitted, permitted through a special use permit, or it is prohibited in that zoning. If a use is permitted, the applicant would proceed with the Zoning and Design Review process. If the use requires a special use permit (SUP), the applicant would require approval of a permit from the Planning Commission. They would submit the application and complete the SUP process. With each of these, staff would provide a checklist of documents that would be required for the applicable process. He then went over the Zoning and Design Review (Z) process—this is more in depth than a regular Zoning Review (R) required in most other zoning districts. He stated the criteria that would need to be met in order to meet the requirements of the code for this review; these are pulled directly from the current code requirements. The Director would determine if there is a preponderance of evidence in the application to support the findings required in Churchill County Code in order to approve, conditionally approve, modify, or deny this Zoning and Design Review application. This is more of an administrative function for permitted uses requiring a Zoning and Design Review application.

Next, Director Hines went through the special use permit application process and findings that must be met in order to be granted a permit. Basically, it is the same process as the previous one. Staff prepares a report of these findings to the Planning Commission, who then review the application and other information to make a decision. These findings are the same as those that would be required in the Zoning and Design Review process. He stated that Churchill County Code has a special use permit “catch-all”. He outlined the types of uses that would require a special use permit. As stated currently in the code, this catches almost all industrial uses and overrides the general use table. These impacts shall be addressed during the Zoning and Design Review and Special Use Permit review of an industrial project. This catch-all would remain to address commercial uses.

Director Hines then displayed some proposed changes to the current land use table to address those uses that exist now as well as add other uses (shaded in blue in the presentation) that are not included at this time. These will include updated definitions that would be added to the code

for clarity in determining what is included in each use. This states definitively what a use would fall under and not be left to the discretion of the department. He noted that the column for Industrial (I) is being split into I1, I2, and I3 and explained those designations and the type of permitting that would be required or whether a particular use was prohibited in that zone. He went over each use individually. He noted that this is a basic first draft, and he is still working on fleshing out some of these definitions. He then showed a section from the land use table for commercial uses that might also be considered in some of the industrial zones and went over these. He said that the county is not working toward changes in the commercial zones yet, but these uses may be appropriate for some of the areas that could be zoned industrial. He then went through some of the uses related to vehicle and equipment, transportation facilities, utilities facilities, transmission, waste handling, and energy production in the same way. Once this is approved, they would like to take this and work on the rest of the land use table to be clearer regarding what the uses would include.

Director Hines outlined the public involvement regarding the various processes related to the Industrial Zones. He stated that the Industrial Zoning and Design Review and Special Use Permit applications would still meet the code requirements for a minimum of 300' and 30 property owners. Nevada Revised Statutes only requires 300' notifications for special use permits, but Churchill County adopted the 30 property owners to ensure that we meet and exceed the notification requirement. Input by the public would be focused on mitigating impacts on the community rather than disputing whether the particular use should be allowed. The comments and concerns are used in consideration for decisions made and requirements imposed to mitigate the potential impacts. They are also considering creating a link on the website to post applications that are received for public viewing. The County wants to be as open as possible, and this would be one way for people to see the projects proposed in the community while they are being reviewed.

Director Hines then displayed a map showing the Industrial zoned parcels as they currently exist right now. He went over where these areas are located and explained that right now any industrial use may be proposed in any of these locations. He then showed a map with the proposed changes to these parcels to indicate where I1, I2 and I3 would be implemented. He also demonstrated specific areas with maps zoomed in to show how the lighter industrial zones would be nearer the residences and roadways with the heavier industrial zones being further away from these. He noted that many people have shared that they don't mind some of the heavier industrial uses, but they want those further from town, which is what this is trying to address.

Director Hines asked for comments, questions, and suggestions.

Chair Bunyard expressed his opinion that the solid waste landfill, which is under the Utilities Facilities, Transmission, and Waste Handling, should be prohibited in I1.

Member Ansotegui said that he would like to see Major Power Generation excluded from I1 as well. He felt that the locations where I1 is on the map wouldn't be conducive to having a major power plant. Director Hines agreed that this was just a first draft of these things, and he could make these changes. Member Ansotegui commended Randy Hines for all of the work he put into these changes. The information is great, and the department did a great job.

Member Frey concurred with Member Ansotegui's comments regarding the great job in putting all of this together. He questioned if in the future and related to the checkerboard areas in the county, will there be opportunities to swap federal lands and how that would start looking as things progress. Director Hines remarked that this is the subject of the final part of the presentation that Jim Barbee is going to share, so this will be addressed when Mr. Barbee presents his information. Member Frey then mentioned that there are a few areas on the proposed industrial

zoning map that are marked as I2 that abut directly to some residential, and maybe that will change when we get to the later slides, but there are a few that he thinks would be better as I1 instead of I2. He inquired if there were one parcel that was zoned I1 that is surrounded by other parcels zoned I2, would it start taking away value of private property owners at that point, too. They specifically mentioned the area off of Bench Road in the Hazen area (furthest east section) that is closer to residential parcels there. He thought that it might be better as I1 instead. We are having this meeting to discuss these types of things. There was also discussion of graduating from I1 to I2 and then I3 as it moves further from the residences.

Commissioner Matt Hyde stated that he was looking at the Basic Chemical Manufacturing and Storage in the Land Use Table, and he wouldn't want that in I1 zoning. Director Hines confirmed that he really struggled with that definition for those chemical manufacturing processes that do not pose as great of a threat as the more hazardous ones. This is one that he really needs to work on. He wouldn't be opposed to prohibiting that in I1 zoning as long as the commissioners agree.

Member Frey commented that he knows nothing about the area out by Lahontan Reservoir other than, in his opinion, those elevations are higher than the lake, and that would be another one he thinks should be I1 zoning to keep hazardous materials, fuels, bulk fuel storage, fuel farms, and so forth out of the area around the lake for safety reasons being right above the watershed. Director Hines stated that he wouldn't be opposed to making those I1 along the highway corridor there.

Member Edgmon then brought up the proposed zoning near the Fallon Municipal Airport that is marked for I2 that is near a residential area. She believes that it should be designated as I1 there (along the north side of the I2 zoning that touches the residential parcels). There was discussion about industrial uses that currently exist in that area, and it was determined that the parcels, or portions of parcels, that border the residential parcels should be I1.

Director Hines moved on to the last slide related to proposed industrial zoning for future locations. He demonstrated the potential for industrial zoning along Interstate 80 and both north and south of there. There are currently a couple of large power generation projects that have been approved in these areas—NV Energy Sierra Solar Project and Fervo Geothermal Project Exploration. There are also some other areas that have been requested by landowners to be potentially rezoned for industrial uses in this area. Jim Barbee, County Manager, shared that in December 2022 the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was passed, which expanded the Navy air base by roughly over 600,000 acres. As part of that negotiation, the County worked diligently to address the checkerboard. This is where we have alternating private sections of land with public sections of land, and that was created with a 20 mile buffer on each side of the railway back in the 1800s when the railroad was brought through to create the ability to have townships intermittent and then eventually, the original vision was, that the land would then be turned over to be developed for agriculture, market, commercial, etc. as it was seen through the lenses of those in the late 1800s. Over time, with the federal government's holding onto those federal lands, it has created the troubles that we have seen with checkerboard in terms of access—for the private landowner as well as access for the public lands, and the issues that creates for the public lands managers in terms of having these sections that are intermittent across there. What we did is to create the first ever program to create resolution, or consolidation, in that process. The idea was whether you have ground that is in the level valleys that can be utilized for industrial, geothermal, and so on, there are just as many private or public lands that are interchanged that are in the mountaintops and can't be utilized for anything, or at least very limited in the uses that can be done

there. What this does is uses the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act as a funding resource, and individuals and the County, we had to exchange lands that we had in the Fallon Refuge, which wasn't a true refuge but was labeled that way, and then lands that were taken over by B-20 expansion that the County owned, in a trade for a direct conveyance of roughly 14,000 acres, and some of those acres are up near Interstate 80 (I-80), some out by the airport, and some that are just north of the sewer treatment plant. That is a separate set of land that will be conveyed that the county could then use for economic development purposes moving forward. Additionally, the law was written in that basically if you're a private property owner that has a section at the top of a mountain and would like to exchange that land for something that is federally owned in the valley that Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is willing to dispose of, then it goes through a lot of processing to be able to swap those lands. Now the land at the top of the mountain becomes a piece of federal ground that would then be surrounded by other federal lands and this creates a larger area for public lands. The valley areas would be able to consolidate into larger swaths of private lands that can be utilized for things in the future as we see growth in the county. As you look at this particular map (displayed on the overhead screen) is the existing private parcels whose owners are asking to have these zoned for industrial purposes. He noted the area beginning north of Hazen and following along the railway, then north of that is the south forty-mile desert, and north of I-80 is the north forty-mile desert area. These would be used for a lot of solar, energy, power projects, and so forth that people are looking at going out into those areas. At that time, we would be able to proceed with the change in zoning, but what you would see is that there would be more consolidation of runs of federal grounds over time. This isn't going to happen very fast because you are working with the federal government. He thinks that the checkerboard component is going to work faster than the direct conveyance because it is funded, the money exists, and they have already started working on developing the plan. He heard at a meeting recently that BLM has a drafted plan that has been submitted to the State Director of BLM, who is doing a review, then it would come to the County for a review, and then it would go through a public process, which is where it must go through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and cultural reviews, and so forth, to become eligible for those exchanges.

Director Hines pointed out that this kind of follows our concept in the proposed zones of the existing Industrial zoning. There really isn't any I1 out in these areas, except nearer Hazen. The parcels in the forty-mile desert areas would primarily be zoned I3. Along the I-80 corridor, those parcels would be designated I2. Many people have stated over the last few months that the heavier industrial uses should be out there, and this is a proposal for future industrial zoned parcels. Manager Barbee noted that this is directly tied to and follows the Master Plan, and the development of the Master Plan more than 20 years ago identified that all of the industrial growth would go to that northern direction, to protect the city and the area of Fallon, and maintain our aquifer through recharge from the Newlands Project through all of the land that we have put into conservation easements, which is a benefit to the Navy, but also a huge benefit to this community that will get us where we can maintain that 20,000 acre feet of water in the aquifer that is recharged each year that they turn on the irrigation ditches. It isn't a splat; this is a big plan, and one that has been talked about for many years.

Chair Bunyard asked if there were any other comments or discussion from the commissioners, and there were none.

Chair Bunyard then called for public comment.

Diane Moyle, Administrative Assistant, remarked that there was an email received, and Joseph Sanford, Deputy District Attorney-Civil, read the email from Vita Keller into the record regarding this item. She wrote to express her concerns, not about the changes themselves, but specifically about one of the locations. She was concerned about the property that is near the lake, which was already identified by Member Frey, as not being appropriate for a level 3 or heavy industrial use, and that it would be detrimental to the lake and the state park. She asked that they consider that having any industry in close proximity to Lake Lahontan be categorized as light industry only. Thousands of people utilize the state park every year, and she requested that any industrial zoned properties be limited to light industrial uses only.

Amber Sanchez, 4007 Cimarron Road, inquired about the map on the last page of proposed future industrial properties because it covers such a large area and is hard to see where these locations could be. She asked if any were proposed near her area near Bottom Road and McLean Road. She needs to know whether they are proposing any industrial zoning near her home, and she's sure that many others are wondering that as well. Manager Barbee noted that any industrial zoning in the City of Fallon would be outside of the county's jurisdiction, and this only addresses the areas outside of the city. Director Hines responded that there were no new industrial areas being proposed in that area, and he demonstrated by having that area zoomed in on the Industrial Zoning Map. He pointed out that the Industrial Zoning is primarily east toward the Fallon Municipal Airport and Rattlesnake and west starting around Leeteville Junction. There is a small Industrial parcel north of the city where the old Mackedon Concrete plant was on Auction Road. There are no existing Industrial zoned parcels within the county jurisdiction from Williams Avenue until you get to near NAS (Naval Air Station) Fallon. Mrs. Sanchez then asked if anything is being proposed in that area, and Director Hines confirmed that there is nothing new being proposed in that area either. This workshop is to address the current Industrial parcels as they sit today. We are not proposing any new parcels. Member Frey stated that anything that is zoned as anything other than Industrial right now is not even being discussed. There is nothing residential that is going to be rezoned to Industrial. They are only talking about Industrial zoning and making subcategories of industrial zoning. Mrs. Sanchez remarked that she brought this up because the last page says Churchill County proposed industrial. Director Hines had the last slide displayed on the overhead screen and stated that this is what Manager Barbee was speaking about, and as you see all of these parcels being proposed are north of Hazen to I-80 and then north of I-80. The county is not proposing anything southeast of Hazen. They are concentrating on the checkerboard area, which is north of Hazen and north of I-80. Manager Barbee reiterated that these parcels are proposals by the property owners. Director Hines admitted that some of these maps are tough to view because there are hundreds of square miles to cover in a single map. He assured Mrs. Sanchez that nothing is being proposed in the area near where she lives.

Jay Munger, 400 California Street in Hazen, wanted to know what the impact...he was under the impression that there was some BLM property behind where the access road goes up around Black Butte Mountain there, and he wanted to know what this proposal behind all of the residences and why it is necessary to change that area to proposed I1 zone. He didn't know what it was zoned currently, but everything along that road is residential—there are about eight or twelve residences and most of those people are retirees. Director Hines answered that this area is already zoned industrial currently. We are not trying to change the zoning; we are just saying that half of that parcel would be I1 and the other half would be I2, or we could make the whole parcel I1 if that was the desire. We are just trying to use the friction zone for the highway as a guide for designating

the lighter industrial uses closer to the highway and Hazen, and then allow for medium industrial further away. Mr. Munger wondered how that would impact them, and then he had a suggestion to be entertained. He wasn't sure who would be able to make it happen, but in between the two mountains there, where the saddle of the butte is, he doesn't understand why Churchill County doesn't entertain that area as a special use for the high school. At some point maybe creating some sort of an observatory type area—maybe on a small scale with low maintenance—that could be used because there is low light interference out there. As Fallon and the base grows and creating light interference, if there was any kind of exchange of lands at some point, that area is nice and flat between there, and he believes that as the gateway to Churchill County coming from the expansion would represent the county very well. He knows that the geothermal plant has had topics come down to here, and he is not trying to run interference with the way they operate and their expansion, as long as it is not disrupting the water tables for their wells. He believes there should be a level of contribution to the community at some point because from the newspapers that he has kept, there is a planned expansion out in the east valley of Hazen for a warehouse, and the property has been purchased already. If that is the case, Hazen is going to expand, and that will be part of Churchill County, which will be the gateway into Fallon, and he thinks that would be a good representation before there is a lot of light pollution developed there.

Kathy Harris, 9525 Reno Highway, remarked about the 1.2 map showing the Leeteville Junction area. She inquired if the area displayed as red that starts from the Reno Highway started north of the railroad tracks or north of the highway and includes the tracks. Director Hines believes that it includes the tracks and thinks that it goes to the edge of the right of way, or maybe even goes to the middle of the highway or south side of the highway, but it would include the tracks and area north of that.

Chair Bunyard questioned whether any of the commissioners or staff had anything else to add. Director Hines requested comments and feedback regarding this proposal. They have spent quite a few weeks putting this together, and he wondered if this was close to the direction that the commissioners want them to go with these changes. He asked for recommendations, comments, and so on before they prepare the final documents to present for approvals. Chair Bunyard proposed that they take this and review it, and then provide any suggestions to Randy. He asked when they were planning to hold another meeting about this, and Director Hines suggested that they submit comments in the next two weeks, and then they could either prepare everything for another workshop, or if the commissioners believe this is fairly close to what they were looking for with the changes mentioned tonight, they could prepare the bill to bring to a future meeting for approvals. Do they want to hold another workshop, or do they want them to make the changes suggested and bring the final document to the Planning Commission.

Joseph Sanford, DDA-Civil, recommended that the board make a decision whether they would like to have an additional workshop where they would receive this information again and potentially provide comments as they have done today, whether you have additional comments and changes that they would like to see made, and then schedule another workshop in the next month to discuss this again. Alternatively, if they've reviewed this information and generally satisfied with it as it has been presented today, you don't believe that you have significant changes that they would like to see made, and in that case, we would finalize these materials, prepare the code to match what you have stated today, and then they would present it to you in a Planning Commission meeting either next month or the month after that based upon their ability to get it prepared. That would be a time of decision, and they could absolutely could make recommendations or changes at that

meeting, but wholesale changes would be very difficult to make at that meeting. If they would like to change, like was mentioned earlier, one particular spot in II that would be prohibited instead of a zoning review or special use permit, those types of changes are completely acceptable at the meeting, but if they want to potentially change two or three different parcels on the map, that gets to be more of a workshop type discussion. It is the board's pleasure as to which direction they would like to go forward.

Commissioner Blakey inquired once the final plan is ready for decision, would there be a public review time period, or would it only be during that meeting when it is presented. Joseph Sanford, DDA-Civil, responded that this will be a zoning change as well as a code change, and so the process will start with the Planning Commission. There will be, as with any other public meeting, a chance and opportunity for the public to be present and provide comment during that meeting. Based upon the recommendation from that meeting to the Board of County Commissioners, it would then go to a Board meeting. The actual zoning change is a single hearing, and it would be up to the Board to make a decision at that time. The code changes requires a two part process, and there would be two separate meetings—an initial first reading of the code and then a second reading and final adoption of the code. For the code portion, there would be at least three meetings.

Member Frey feels that with the recommendations that were made this evening and some of the public comment that we are close enough to, if the department thinks that it is good to make some of those recommended changes and bring this to the Planning Commission at the next available meeting, they should proceed that way. He doesn't believe that another workshop is necessary. They are very close. Director Hines confirmed that they will have to see when they can get everything prepared in order to bring it forward. It might be something that is ready by the August meeting. Chair Bunyard concurred with Member Frey regarding this being very close to what they want to see and ready to bring the final document forward. Member Edgmon thinks that it is close as well, and she believes that the changes suggested at this meeting need to be made, and then if they could go through the finalization of what they have been provided. She commented that Matt Hyde and Joe Frey made recommendations that should be implemented. She thinks that by the next meeting they could definitely have some insight. She asked if Randy would like them to email their comments to him, and he agreed that would be best. Member Edgmon asked if he wanted those within the next ten days, and Director Hines said it would give them to put everything together. He suggested that they could give an update in the July Planning Commission meeting as well, and then if there is anything that was missed and addressed in that meeting, they could add that before it is presented in August. Member Ansotegui concurred with the other commissioners. He thanked staff for the information that has been provided, and he expressed appreciation for them moving forward with keeping the heavier industrial uses out of the community and more north of town. Chair Bunyard stated that it looks like everyone will send him their suggestions within the next two weeks, and then they can even discuss any other items at the next meeting. Then it should be ready to bring the final document to the August meeting. He further asked if anyone in the public had any suggestions or comments that they contact the department as well.

Joyce Week, 4050 S Allen Road, owns property in Hazen. She owns a shop and property that is right below the overpass, and she's having trouble understanding the map. There was some discussion to try to determine where her property was located in relation to the zoning map, and Director Hines suggested that she get with him or Dean Patterson, Senior Planner, in the office so that they could determine how this would affect her property. She just wanted to understand

because she knows that it was always heavy industrial zoning previously, and she's not sure how these changes would affect her. If there are any concerns or comments, she could submit that to the office and they could incorporate that into their plan.

6. Public Comment

Chair Bunyard asked for any other public comments, and there were none.

7. Adjournment

Chair Bunyard thanked everyone for coming to participate. There were no further comments or questions, so he adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Planning Commissioners:

Approved: NOT present
Zack Bunyard, Chair

Approved: [Signature]
Jeff Goings, Vice Chair

Approved: [Signature]
Victor Ansotegui, Commissioner

Approved: NOT present
Tami Edgmon, Commissioner

Approved: [Signature]
Joe Frey, Commissioner

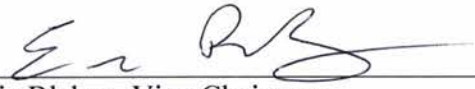
Approved: [Signature]
R. Mark Hyde, Commissioner

Approved: [Signature]
Scott Nelson, Commissioner

ATTEST: [Signature]
Diane Moyle, Administrative Assistant

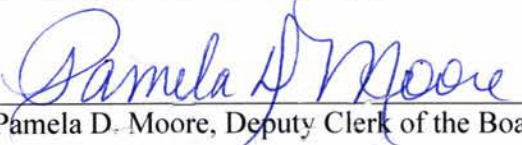
Board of County Commissioners:

Approved: 
Myles Getto, Chairman

Approved: 
Eric Blakey, Vice-Chairman

Approved: 
Matt Hyde, Commissioner

ATTEST:
Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer


Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk of the Board