

**UTAH COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Minutes  
August 19, 2025**

**Present:**

Shayne Pierce  
Seth Cox  
Glen Roberts  
Karen Ellingson  
Sullivan Love  
Robert McMullin

**Excused:**

Lorraine Davis  
Chris Herrod

**Also Present:**

Bryce Armstrong  
Greg Robinson  
Marie Patten  
Dale Eyre

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**Shayne Pierce** called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM at 100 E Center St, Room 1400, of the Utah County Administration Building, located in Provo, Utah.

**B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion: Robert McMullin      Second: Karen Ellingson

Motion to **approve** the minutes of the June 17, 2025, meeting of the Utah County Planning Commission. The motion **passed** with the following vote: "Aye" Shayne Pierce, Seth Cox, Karen Ellingson, Sullivan Love, Glen Roberts, Robert McMullin. "Nay" none.

**C. CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION(S)**

- 1. Richard Bardauskas for PacifiCorp - Application #CU2025-05 - Request for conditional use for a 345 kV electric power transmission line. This application only covers the portion of the 48-mile long project located in the unincorporated area of Utah County between the Spanish Fork Substation (Mapleton) and Mercer Substation (Eagle Mountain)**

**Bryce Armstrong** explained the purpose of conditional uses, stating that they were permitted in certain zones but required an added layer of review to mitigate detrimental effects. He emphasized that state law did not require full elimination of those effects, only mitigation. He clarified that public facilities such as power transmission lines at 345 kV or higher in new corridors required conditional use approval. He also mentioned that Greg Robinson would

provide an overview, and he noted that some commissioners had been contacted directly by the public, which had been appropriately redirected to the meeting.

**Greg Robinson** described the application from Rocky Mountain Power for a 345 kV transmission line, approximately 48 miles long, with only the unincorporated portion in Utah County under review. He detailed that the line would use 90–135 ft monopoles with spans of 600–800 ft in a 125-ft corridor. He explained that county ordinance section 8.44 required conditional use approval for such facilities and that no minimum lot area or height applied. He confirmed multiple public comments had been received and that the applicant would provide more details.

**Shayne Pierce** asked how much of the route lay in unincorporated Utah County.

**Greg Robinson** responded that the majority, about 45–46 miles, was in unincorporated areas, crossing both public and private land, and passing through multiple cities such as Spanish Fork, Mapleton, Eagle Mountain, Genola, and Salem.

**Karen Ellingson** asked if the map could highlight which parts were in unincorporated areas and whether the corridor was piecemeal.

**Greg Robinson** explained that it was difficult to show on the map, but noted that boxed areas generally represented unincorporated sections.

**Karen Ellingson** asked if overlapping jurisdictions required coordination.

**Greg Robinson** replied that each jurisdiction managed its own approvals, though Rocky Mountain Power coordinated separately with each.

**Shayne Pierce** clarified that the 345 kV threshold and new corridor status triggered the conditional use requirement.

**Greg Robinson** confirmed that it was correct and explained that using existing corridors would not require conditional use approval.

**Shayne Pierce** asked if other municipalities had approved the project.

**Greg Robinson** stated that it varied by jurisdiction and that the applicant could better answer.

**Shayne Pierce** asked about zoning.

**Greg Robinson** stated multiple zones were involved, but public utilities were allowed in all, with conditional approval required.

**Karen Ellingson** asked about the distinction between permitted and conditional uses.

**Greg Robinson** explained that conditional uses were permitted but allowed conditions to

mitigate detrimental effects, and denial was rare.

**Bryce Armstrong** clarified that denial could occur only if the Planning Commission found detrimental effects could not be substantially mitigated.

**Shayne Pierce** asked if there were further staff questions.

**Glen Roberts** asked if the Public Service Commission had a role.

**Dale Eyre** explained that Rocky Mountain Power was regulated by the Public Service Commission, which could override county conditions or require the county to pay excess costs for imposed changes. He gave the example of undergrounding lines, which would require the county to cover extra costs. He stressed that utilities were essential and, therefore, regulated this way.

**Glen Roberts** confirmed that design changes and increasing cost would fall to the county.

**Dale Eyre** added that the regulation ensured utilities could function despite public resistance.

**Seth Cox** asked if costs could be known at the meeting.

**Dale Eyre** stated costs would come from the applicant, who had to define “excess costs.”

**Bryce Armstrong** added that regulators might consider whether extra costs could be absorbed in the rate structure, otherwise they might fall on the local jurisdiction.

**Sullivan Love** asked if multiple alignments were presented or just one.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated alternatives had been studied, but the applicant identified a preferred alignment.

**Greg Robinson** confirmed that the applicant proposed the route, and staff did not determine it.

**Bryce Armstrong** added that the county had provided general guidance, such as following roads or existing corridors and avoiding sensitive areas.

**Shayne Pierce** asked if the applicant was present.

**Rita Ruderman**, representing Rocky Mountain Power, outlined the project’s purpose: to construct a 345 kV transmission line between Spanish Fork and Mercer substations, improve reliability and capacity, and support renewable energy integration. She described the two-year study evaluating hundreds of miles of alternatives, including one under Utah Lake, before selecting the least impactful route. She noted physical details such as 90–135 ft steel monopoles, 600–800 ft spans, a 125-ft right-of-way, and 12.9 miles within unincorporated Utah County. She shared photo simulations showing how the line would look and emphasized ongoing coordination with agencies.

**Tammy Moody** explained that Rocky Mountain Power’s public outreach process complied with Utah State Code §54-18. Notices were sent to stakeholders and landowners, and media announcements were published. Outreach began in 2023 with briefings for jurisdictions, utilities, federal agencies, and developers. Five open houses were held, including a virtual session, with displays, maps, GIS stations, and a health and safety scientist available. Public input identified wells, irrigation, and new developments, leading to minor route adjustments. She reported 268 participants, 145 comments, over 700 mailers, and 3,600 website visits. Comments mostly focused on routing, easements, property impacts, agricultural impacts, and health and safety. She emphasized that routing considered environmental, engineering, economic, and regulatory factors.

**Rita Ruderman** noted that the application met Utah County’s conditional use standards and aligned with the general plan. She requested approval of the conditional use with an extended construction start timeframe permitted under the county ordinance.

**Greg Robinson** clarified that the approval period had recently been changed to three years with the option to request an extension up to five years, and he noted the commission could grant additional time if specific findings justified it.

**Rita Ruderman** asked whether the timeframe applied to project completion or start, and was told it applied to the start.

**Greg Robinson** confirmed that three years was sufficient and that the staff’s recommendation listed an approval through August 19, 2028, which already met the ordinance.

**Rita Ruderman** withdrew any request for extra time and then outlined the project timeline: routing and feasibility work in 2022–2023, analysis and agency input in 2023–2024, anticipated local land-use permitting completion in fall of the current year, BLM permitting to take longer, pre-construction in early to mid-2026, construction through 2026–2027, and target completion around February 2028. She invited questions.

**Shayne Pierce** asked which detrimental effects the applicant had considered and what mitigation was proposed.

**Rita Ruderman** began listing mitigations, emphasizing avoidance of natural areas, dense populations, and tight corridors, and preference for co-locating near existing linear infrastructure. She deferred to a colleague for further details.

**Shayne Pierce** noted that many public comments mentioned fire hazard and asked how that would be addressed.

**Richard Bardauskas**, the applicant, stated that transmission lines would be built to state-approved wildfire-safe standards, elevated above fuels, and supported by updated protection and control systems under Rocky Mountain Power’s wildfire program.

**Karen Ellingson** asked what differentiated the proposed design from infrastructure that failed and caused fires.

**Richard Bardauskas** explained that new, more robust construction and protective relays would detect faults and trip the line to remove ignition sources.

**Karen Ellingson** asked whether high winds that damage a line would immediately stop transmission.

**Richard Bardauskas** confirmed that it was correct.

**Seth Cox** asked whether the applicant had received the recent public comments and if they could address major concerns, including claims that some residents were not notified.

**Tammy Moody** stated that notices were mailed to all stakeholders within 500 feet of the preferred corridor centerline using county records; seven letters were returned, but those did not include the listed names of those submitted public comments. She stated names from public comments matched the mailing list and could not explain non-receipt beyond possibilities like ignored mail.

**Shayne Pierce** confirmed that the county also conducted its own required notice.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated that the county followed state and county law for public meeting notice and sent 400–500 property notices for conditional use to adjacent property owners along the route.

**Sullivan Love** asked whether owners inside municipalities were notified.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated that the county notified only of unincorporated areas, except when a city property owner was adjacent to an unincorporated project segment, in which case they were notified.

**Sullivan Love** asked about project cost, whether Eagle Mountain loads drove the project, and whether building a power plant near those loads had been considered.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated the line was not for a single customer; it addressed existing and growing system loads, enabled flows between southern and northern Utah, and formed a reliability loop required to prevent outages under federal standards, benefiting Utah County, Eagle Mountain, and the broader region.

**Sullivan Love** asked whether right-of-way width had increased and compared it to a line on the east side of Utah Lake.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated that the 345 kV standard right-of-way was 125 feet; he could not confirm the exact width of the east-lake line.

**Sullivan Love** asked about notice to a Salem subdivision and whether lots were owned or occupied during notification.

**Tammy Moody** stated that 2023–2024 records indicated most north-of-Snowy-Egret addresses were owner-occupied; some were trusts or had name changes, but addresses matched the county mailing list and should have received notices.

**Sullivan Love** stated they had contrary information and asked whether developers were notified when homes were not yet occupied.

**Tammy Moody** confirmed.

**Sullivan Love** asked if developers were required to inform purchasers about impending projects.

**Tammy Moody** stated that it would be a question for the developer.

**Seth Cox** asked the applicant to discuss alternatives considered and why they were rejected.

**Rita Ruderman** displayed routes and stated Highway 6 north alternatives were infeasible due to tight physical constraints from parallel railroad and a high-pressure gas line near existing homes; a southern alternative conflicted with dense existing and approved development and a canal corridor.

**Glen Roberts** asked for more details on Highway 6 constraints.

**Rita Ruderman** reiterated that fences, sidewalks, railroad, gas line, and highway left insufficient space for a 345 kV line.

**Glen Roberts** asked how canals affected routing.

**Rita Ruderman** stated that canal easements and limited space prevented fitting structures, citing conflicts within planned communities crossing diagonal canal corridors.

**Glen Roberts** asked about using 8000 South in Salem.

**Rita Ruderman** stated routing on 8000 South would severely impact existing homes and trees; spacing and setbacks made it infeasible.

**Glen Roberts** asked about the base width of monopoles.

**Richard Bardauskas** replied that foundations typically ranged from 6 to 12 feet in diameter, varying with soil and structure height.

**Sullivan Love** asked whether enclosing canals could allow shared easements.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated they discussed possibilities with water districts (e.g., along 8800

South), but cumulative constraints from homes and trees still pushed them toward the proposed route.

**Seth Cox** asked about pink areas on the map.

**Rita Ruderman** stated they marked planned or proposed developments to illustrate corridor complexity.

**Shayne Pierce** asked why the lines were not being buried.

**Rita Ruderman** explained that undergrounding at 345 kV posed severe land-use, construction, and reliability challenges, including large trenches, frequent vaults roughly one-car-garage size every ~1,200 feet, transition stations at each end, dramatically higher costs (often 15–20× overhead), and much longer outage repair times, which would ultimately affect ratepayers.

**Karen Ellingson** asked what failures would cause underground outages.

**Richard Bardauskas** cited dig-ins, cable faults, and splice failures; he noted an example at 138 kV where a developer struck a line 20 feet deep, leading to a two-year repair, and stated Rocky Mountain Power had no lines above 138 kV underground due to operational and cost prohibitions.

**Shayne Pierce** asked about health effects from large transmission lines.

**Rita Ruderman** introduced Dr. Gabor Mezei, a physician and epidemiologist from Exponent, to address EMF concerns.

**Gabor Mezei** summarized 50 years of EMF research across epidemiology, animal, and cellular studies, noting that national and international reviews repeatedly concluded that evidence did not confirm adverse health effects from EMF at public exposure levels associated with electricity transmission and use. He emphasized relying on the totality of evidence rather than individual studies.

**Glen Roberts** asked what “low-level” EMF meant and whether this line would exceed guideline values.

**Gabor Mezei** stated that fields were highest beneath lines but diminished quickly with distance. International guidelines for magnetic fields were on the order of 2,000–9,000 milligauss for short-term effects, far above typical public exposures, and anticipated levels under and near the line would be below those guidelines.

**Glen Roberts** asked about long-term studies.

**Gabor Mezei** stated that numerous long-term epidemiological studies had been conducted, and major reviews had not confirmed adverse health effects at typical exposure levels.

**Shayne Pierce** asked about audible sound.

**Gabor Mezei** acknowledged some sound could occur but stated there were no associated adverse health effects.

**Shayne Pierce** asked about the effects on animals and wildlife.

**Gabor Mezei** stated that studies of livestock, domestic animals, and wildlife had not shown consistent adverse effects.

**Sullivan Love** raised concerns about noise annoyance, property value decreases, and limits on structures or trees under lines, asking how businesses would be mitigated if the corridor crossed their properties.

**Rita Ruderman** stated Rocky Mountain Power would negotiate individually with affected landowners to place poles sensibly and accommodate feasible site uses, with limitations primarily focused on safety clearances and tall vegetation.

**Sullivan Love** asked whether power flow varied over time and whether voltage could be increased later.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated the voltage class would remain 345 kV; current would vary with load and generation as normal system operations.

**Robert McMullin** asked about flooding in the Spanish Fork River bottoms.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated that lines in flood zones were common and designed accordingly, with deeper or larger foundations and potentially taller structures to meet conditions.

**Karen Ellingson** asked about earthquake design.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated that designs followed seismic zone data, with structures sized to local seismic requirements.

**Glen Roberts** asked about eminent domain authority and why easements were preferred over fee title.

**Richard Bardauskas** acknowledged the utility's eminent domain power but stated the intent was to negotiate easements so owners could retain and continue using their property with reasonable limitations. He noted easements were non-exclusive and could support joint uses like trails.

**Glen Roberts** highlighted that owners would still pay property taxes while use was restricted and asked about 15-foot access roads and whether they were inside the 125-foot easement.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated access would usually be within the corridor, but could require

separate agreements; temporary construction areas wider than the corridor would be negotiated as short-term agreements during stringing or staging.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether laydown and storage areas were temporary.

**Richard Bardauskas** confirmed they were temporary and would be negotiated case by case; **Rita Ruderman** added they sought willing landowners for these temporary uses.

**Glen Roberts** asked who benefited from the project.

**Richard Bardauskas** stated the broader Rocky Mountain Power service territory benefited through reliability, capacity, and the ability to integrate new generation, including municipal providers who purchased power from Rocky Mountain Power.

**Glen Roberts** asked about permits from each municipality and related building requirements.

**Greg Robinson** stated the Utah County Land-Use Ordinance required temporary construction yards to obtain a temporary use permit for each location and for the duration of the construction yard use.

**Glen Roberts** asked who mandated Rocky Mountain Power's responsibility to ensure adequate power and why the project was necessary.

**Tammy Moody** stated federal and state requirements obligated the utility to serve demand and strengthen grid resiliency and redundancy to avoid blackouts amid rapid regional growth.

**Glen Roberts** confirmed the line itself would not generate power but would enable delivery of additional generation to where it was needed.

**Richard Bardauskas** agreed, stating the line created the necessary loop between Utah and Salt Lake counties to move power as new generation came online.

**Glen Roberts** acknowledged the community-wide benefits but emphasized the disproportionate burden on a small number of landowners and thanked the applicant for the answers.

**Robert McMullin** asked about property tax on transmission lines and easements; uncertainty followed, and the chair urged public commenters to wait for their turn.

**Shayne Pierce** asked if there were further questions for the applicant, thanked them, and shifted back to staff questions.

**Seth Cox** summarized that the commission could approve with reasonable conditions to mitigate detrimental effects, but if conditions imposed excess cost, the burden could come back to the county, and he asked if that was an oversimplification.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated the commission's role was to identify reasonably anticipated

detrimental effects and attach reasonable mitigation conditions; a separate state review could determine cost responsibility, potentially requiring county commission approval to bear excess costs. If the county declined, that condition would not apply. He added that denial required specific findings that effects could not be substantially mitigated and would be appealable to the same state body.

**Shayne Pierce** sought the staff's recommendation on whether the minimum requirements were met and if any conditions were proposed.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated that several conditions would be required, including compliance with state and federal requirements, obtaining applicable permits, and following the mitigation measures already proposed by the applicant.

**Shayne Pierce** noted that the applicant had already included those mitigation measures in their application, and with them, the staff's recommendation was approval.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether the matter would proceed to the County Commission.

**Bryce Armstrong** explained that the Planning Commission was the Land Use Authority for conditional uses, so its decision would be final unless appealed.

**Shayne Pierce** stated that public comment could be heard and clarified for attendees that the Planning Commission had not planned the power line but was only considering the applicant's request for a permit. He emphasized that each speaker would have three minutes, a timer would be used, and group representation was possible. He explained that a group spokesperson could speak for up to seven minutes if three individuals forfeited their time, and he confirmed that such a group from Salem Park had a spokesperson.

**Bryce Armstrong** clarified that the adopted resolution allowed a spokesperson arrangement only if the represented individuals were on the list and verified.

**Shayne Pierce** asked whether repetitive comments should be curtailed. He noted that speakers should avoid restating points and instead indicate agreement if their view had already been expressed. He stressed his goal was to ensure everyone had their chance to be heard while keeping the discussion efficient.

**Bryce Armstrong** added that written statements were also part of the record and could be referenced rather than repeated.

**Shayne Pierce** asked whether the commission needed to open a formal hearing.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated that this was not a public hearing, but the commission could still choose to accept comments.

**Shayne Pierce** opened the public comment.

**Joseph Ybarra**, representing the Salem Park Residents and Wildlife Coalition, stated that Utah law required direct-mailed notice and a public workshop for high-voltage lines and asserted that 40 sworn declarations—and potentially 59 total—showed affected landowners had not been notified. He argued Rocky Mountain Power relied on media postings rather than required mailers, referenced Utah Code §54-18-301/302, and urged the commission to withhold a decision under §54-18-304(2) until lawful notice and a workshop occurred. He contended families would suffer large equity losses, wetlands and migratory birds would be threatened, EMF and wildfire risks would rise, and he claimed studies showed a 65% higher childhood leukemia risk near high-voltage lines. He stated the coalition had offered alternative routes and targeted undergrounding near neighborhoods and wetlands, arguing costs should be shared by all beneficiaries rather than imposed on a few landowners, and urged the commission to require proper notice and less harmful alternatives.

**Glen Roberts** thanked Mr. Ybarra and asked what would follow if notice were improper, noting the utility's condemnation power.

**Joseph Ybarra** acknowledged the point, noted ongoing records requests for potential additional issues, and stated the coalition had only learned of the project a week prior.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether Salem Park residents would lose land or have covenants protecting views.

**Joseph Ybarra** noted he did not know and offered to research.

**Robert McMullin** questioned how residents missed prior meetings.

**Joseph Ybarra** noted that without mail notice, they could not attend and emphasized that notice was Rocky Mountain Power's legal responsibility. He observed that a commissioner would naturally hear about projects due to connections, whereas residents had not.

**Sullivan Love** noted that he personally first learned of the item from the agenda packet.

**Joseph Ybarra** acknowledged not knowing the internal process.

**Kevin Kutterer** stated that he had corresponded with Rocky Mountain Power and that no one he knew had received the clear notice document the company later shared.

**Joseph Ybarra** pointed to low meeting turnout as further evidence of a lack of notice, then queued subsequent speakers from his list.

**Matthew Miller** stated the coalition canvassed every home within the required distance and found only one person—who worked in government—reported being notified. He emphasized due process concerns and the “attractive nuisance” risk to many small children living near the corridor.

**Kevin Brickson** noted concerns about diminished equity, referencing studies indicating 20–30%

home value reductions, and questioned why residents should bear millions in cumulative losses.

**Mary Ybarra**, speaking as a parent of six living directly adjacent to the corridor, stated there were at least 35 children under six near the route. She acknowledged conflicting studies on EMF and childhood leukemia, noted some reported a 65% increase in risk near high-voltage lines, and urged the commission to prioritize children's health and require lawful, safe, and responsible construction.

**Garnet Kutterer** stated the route crossed Salem Park wetlands, described as habitat for over 100 bird species, including bald eagles and sandhill cranes, and referenced PacifiCorp's past fines for bird deaths under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. She argued that towers in a migratory flyway posed a significant risk and advocated for undergrounding through the corridor to protect wildlife and wetlands.

**Tasha Fox** noted her home would be surrounded by the lines and raised concerns about children's proximity, safety, and noise. She asked why the company could not bury the segment between Highway 198 and Arrowhead Trail Road or use an alternate route along those roads.

**Daven Stevens** focused on solutions and stated the coalition had developed multiple workable alternatives that reduced harm. He argued that where the route must approach neighborhoods or wetlands, undergrounding should be used, as required in sensitive areas by some cities. He asserted that cost, ratepayer impacts, and ecological concerns were cited as objections, but he maintained that a fair distribution of costs across beneficiaries was appropriate and that overhead towers failed the "substantially mitigated" test under Utah Code §17-27a-506.

**Rebecca Frost** stated the coalition had over 1,000 petition signatures and emphasized that the community was organized and committed for the long term. She urged the commission to insist on lawful notice and responsible alternatives rather than act as a "rubber stamp."

**Aaron Zahart** noted additional notice defects, stating the law required mailing addresses for utility contacts and inclusion of a proposed corridor map, not merely a study area, and argued the omissions rendered the notice noncompliant under §54-18-301/302.

**Kevin Kutterer** compared the situation to the Ford Pinto cost-benefit memo, urging the commission to prioritize human life, environmental integrity, and home values over corporate cost savings.

**Chris Blythe** stated that beyond tangible impacts, the project threatened the community's intangible culture and cohesion. He noted concerns about property value questions being deflected, described Salem Park as a uniquely close-knit community, and urged the commission not to undermine it with large-scale infrastructure.

**Steve Wilson** stated he owned 85 acres in the river bottoms, had worked for seven years toward a 5-acre-lot subdivision, and was not notified until the county's letter. He noted the proposed alignment would split his and a neighbor's property, undermining future development potential, and requested tabling or denial pending proper notice and further route discussion, suggesting

Powerhouse Road as an alternative.

**Shayne Pierce** asked Mr. Wilson to confirm his property's location in the county north of the Spanish Fork River.

**Steve Wilson** confirmed the details.

**Steve Reeves** stated he managed property for Steve Reed on Powerhouse Road, totaling about 163 acres, and that notice arrived only the prior week. He stated the line would bisect the property, questioned deference to a large developer, and asked for engagement with landowners. He noted that high water tables would necessitate larger foundations and taller structures.

**Paul Prior** noted ownership of 177 acres and emphasized "a place for everything" as a guiding principle. He urged improving existing infrastructure, sharing corridors with existing rights-of-way, and avoiding floodplains. He argued that Highway 6 and other established corridors should be prioritized over new corridors across wetlands or river bottoms.

**Neal Lindell** stated his operation on 8000 South already faced a planned four-lane road and that the line would remove barns and sheds critical to his cattle business. He requested compensation adequate to remain viable or routing that avoided such impacts, noting broad frontage impacts and long-term property value degradation.

**Bruce Jensen** stated that if the county imposed additional restrictions, the county should bear the added cost, thereby sharing the burden countywide. He argued the project largely served growth in Eagle Mountain and northern areas and urged conditions such as partial undergrounding so that wider beneficiaries shared the costs rather than concentrating burdens on a small group.

**Melina Edwards** stated she learned of the project only from the county's recent notice and acknowledged the need for infrastructure, but opposed imposing disproportionate costs on existing communities. She emphasized that Salem Park did not receive Rocky Mountain Power service, asked why potential future developments should be prioritized over current residents, and urged rerouting along 8000 South, moving further south, or burying portions to avoid harm that a large utility could afford but homeowners could not.

Motion: Shayne Pierce      Second: Karen Ellingson

**Motion** to take a 10-minute recess. The motion **passed** with the following vote: "Aye" Shayne Pierce, Seth Cox, Karen Ellingson, Sullivan Love, Glen Roberts, Robert McMullin. "Nay" none.

**Shayne Pierce** reopened the public comment.

**Tom Patten** appreciated the presentation and noted that explanations residents sought were missing, especially around notice. He asserted that the commission—not Rocky Mountain Power or counsel—served as the gatekeeper for determining whether notice was adequate. He urged the commission to require reposting and re-mailing notice, including posting along the actual route,

and suggested a brief postponement of 30–60 days. He referenced a Juab County lawsuit alleging power-line impacts on cattle and urged the county attorney to obtain those expert materials, expressing skepticism toward expert testimony generally.

**Shayne Pierce** asked what length of additional notice Mr. Patten would recommend, referenced the current 10-day meeting notice and large turnout, and asked whether a 30-day delay would suffice.

**Tom Patten** deferred specifics to the commission and attorneys, noted he was not from Salem, and recommended asking the coalition’s representative.

**Dwight Wagman** thanked the commission, noted the difference between what was legally required and what was morally right, and urged commissioners to place themselves in the position of affected residents, considering impacts on families and future generations. He emphasized the need to balance power needs with equitable treatment of those living near the proposed corridor.

**Scott Blood** introduced himself as a fifth-generation Benjamin resident and noted that views and community symbols mattered despite learning they were not protected interests. He asserted the alignment reflected a path of least resistance that would destroy community value and property value, referenced outreach to Warren Buffett and a reported plan to move lines 100 feet south, and questioned whether such changes would restore value. He described a historic pioneer home and farm frequently used by the public, argued the project would undermine that heritage, and urged the commission not to yield to developer interests or “steal” value from landowners. He offered an analogy comparing forced easements to having an unwanted structure placed on someone’s front yard, and he urged siting power infrastructure where it was used rather than burdening existing rural properties.

**Jackie Larsen** stated she was the owner of Southern Bar Farming, the spouse of a sixth-generation farmer, and an elected Utah County Farm Bureau board member, and she requested that the permit be tabled rather than approved. She asserted Rocky Mountain Power had not met county, state, or federal standards or adequately mitigated direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, and she detailed conflicts with the federally conditioned Benjamin Drainage District and other irrigation entities that, she noted, had not been noticed or coordinated with. She warned the alignment could jeopardize greenbelt (FAA/RRA) status by effectively removing productive acreage through poles, access roads, and vegetation controls, potentially triggering rollback taxes and undermining sprinkler irrigation. She also referenced ongoing federal investigations in the area and proposed an alternative south of SR-164/beyond Bear Creek to avoid drainage systems, requesting formal consultation with affected districts and a site tour before any decision.

**Rex Larsen** introduced himself as operating Glen Ray’s Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch on 8000 South and noted his family had farmed the land for 156 years. He recounted on-site reviews where company staff indicated his shed roof and a windmill installation would need removal, and he emphasized 8000 South as a planned commercial corridor for Spanish Fork and Salem that would be hindered by a major transmission line. He noted potential effects on future commercial pad sites, drone spraying operations, historic drain tiles, and event parking,

questioned assurances about shared easements attracting other utilities, and urged consideration of alternatives that better use existing right-of-way.

**Randy Young** endorsed Larsen's points and characterized the Benjamin interchange as the last undeveloped I-15 exit in the region. He noted involvement in a 900-acre, multi-city area expected to yield roughly 17,000 homes over 10–12 years and urged routing that preserved prime development corridors rather than imposing large losses on cities and residents.

**Rachel Ricks** requested a proper 60-day notice period, stating residents would use the time to surface site-specific constraints (e.g., wells) similar to insights reportedly gained in earlier open houses. She emphasized the community's ability to collaborate on less harmful solutions if given lawful notice and time.

**Joy Cochran** described living adjacent to the proposed corridor and urged either burying the segment near her neighborhood or shifting it to run along the main road to reduce direct backyard impacts. She noted the neighborhood's unusually high population of young children and expressed concern that "normal use" EMF statements did not reflect continuous, very close-proximity exposure in a residential setting. In an exchange, she pointed to fields and sparse housing along Arrowhead/198 and suggested routing there might affect far fewer homes.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether moving the line to Arrowhead would force home removals and probed the practical width of the easement; he questioned how close homes would be to the conductors under the proposed configuration.

**Allen Steele** identified himself as a landowner at Goshen Bay and stated the line would cross the south end of his wetlands property at the tip of the Pacific Flyway. He urged shifting the alignment a quarter mile south over government land to allow migratory birds to gain altitude and to reduce safety hazards for hunters in poor-visibility conditions.

**Cynthia Chamberlain**, a West Mountain resident near the canal, noted she received notice only from the county the prior week. She raised concerns about pressurized irrigation lines where foundations might be placed, potential EMF impacts on orchards and vineyards, noise impacts on neurological conditions, parcel splits down the middle despite nearby roads, and the possibility that existing zoning tolerances for utility height and setbacks were outdated for 125-foot structures.

**David Miller** stated he owned several hundred acres on West Mountain with a new multimillion-dollar equine facility sited near the route. He supported a 60-day pause to obtain comparative cost analyses for alternatives that would reuse existing corridors and avoid new land impacts.

**Clark Fleming**, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel and former DEA agent, urged the commission to accomplish the mission of power delivery while "taking care of the people," encouraging boundary adjustments or similar measures to reduce harm.

**Tammy Moody** provided clarifications on outreach, displaying the letter used for notices with mailing address, contact details, website, and open-house information. She noted additional

letters were mailed in April 2024 and for a July 1 open house, and she emphasized that any general rate changes would apply to all Rocky Mountain Power customers, while county-imposed excess-cost conditions tied to alignment changes could fall to the county.

**Seth Cox** asked when the letters were sent and whether alternatives were still under consideration during the open houses, and Tammy Moody confirmed the April and July mailings and noted a preferred route was presented alongside alternatives to explain why they were not preferred.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether incremental costs from deviations to the preferred route would fall on Utah County, and Tammy Moody reiterated that rate changes are systemwide while local excess-cost conditions could be borne by the county.

**Tammy Moody** responded to questions on “affected landowners,” noting that the state code did not set a distance and that the utility defined a 500-foot study corridor (250 feet each side of the centerline) for mailing. She stated land-use authorities were also notified and provided materials to share publicly.

**Shayne Pierce** and **Bryce Armstrong** contrasted county noticing (adjacent to properties containing the 125-foot proposed right-of-way boundary, sometimes extended two houses in) with the utility’s broader study corridor.

**Shayne Pierce** observed residents might discount mailings from a utility compared to county mail and asked whether that contributed to missed notices.

**Tammy Moody** stated Salem Park’s Snowy Egret addresses were on the mailing list and offered to provide the lists to the commission.

**Glen Roberts** sought clarity on easement proximity to Salem Park and structure configuration.

**Rita Ruderman** explained the 125-foot right-of-way (62.5 feet each side of the centerline), the single-circuit monopole configurations, and that detailed pole locations were not yet designed; typical spans were 600–800 feet, and poles would not be at every house.

**Shayne Pierce** asked about partial undergrounding.

**Rita Ruderman** reiterated that undergrounding at 345 kV was not feasible for this project due to technical requirements, vault spacing, transition station needs at each entry/exit, reliability/repair considerations, and cost; she noted such installations were typically limited to special cases like under airport runways.

**Karen Ellingson** asked how feasibility was determined.

**Rita Ruderman** outlined the routing study process, balancing constraints (e.g., proximity to homes, protected areas, physical space) with opportunities (e.g., existing linear features,

undeveloped agricultural land for micrositing), along with constructability, system design, cost, and defensibility in public forums.

**Karen Ellingson** asked if shifting about 100 feet was possible near Salem Park.

**Rita Ruderman** stated any such adjustment would require negotiation with the northern landowner and emphasized forthcoming one-on-one easement negotiations with directly impacted owners.

**Seth Cox** requested comments on the southern alternative.

**Rita Ruderman** stated extensive development created physical constraints, including master-planned neighborhoods where homes and canals left insufficient space, even considering a median alignment.

**Glen Roberts** questioned why land could not be acquired in the Veridian project despite its approvals.

**Rita Ruderman** noted it was theoretically possible but not considered reasonable given active development, tax base implications, and multiple additional pinch points on the southern path; she contrasted that with an open parcel whose owner was willing to negotiate.

**Glen Roberts** asked for a definition of “directly affected” landowners for negotiation purposes.

**Rita Ruderman** stated it referred to owners from whom an easement would be required—i.e., parcels directly crossed by the alignment rather than adjacent neighbors.

**Glen Roberts** asked how far off 8000 South the line would be placed, noting it looked as though it might run along the south side.

**Rita Ruderman** clarified it would be on the north, or Spanish Fork side.

**Glen Roberts** pressed for details about how far into the property the easement would extend, given future road widening.

**Rita Ruderman** stated they were coordinating with the road widening project and that while the line might appear far off the current road for a time, it would ultimately be adjacent to the expanded roadway.

**Shayne Pierce** asked what Rocky Mountain Power would do with 60 more days.

**Rita Ruderman** responded that 60 days was not part of their schedule since they had been working on the project since late 2022.

**Dale Eyre** clarified that the statute required the commission to decide within 60 days of the application being filed, not from the meeting date.

**Seth Cox** distinguished this from the state law requirement for Rocky Mountain Power to give 60 days' notice before filing.

**Rita Ruderman** stated they had met that requirement through notices and open houses held in April and July 2024.

**Seth Cox** asked whether Salem Park homes were directly affected.

**Rita Ruderman** explained that they were not within the right-of-way and would not be subject to easements.

**Tammy Moody** clarified that properties along Woodland Hills Drive and Snowy Egret were within the study area but not in the easement.

**Bryce Armstrong** noted the next regular commission meeting would fall outside the 60-day decision window.

**Dale Eyre** explained that the only exception was if proper notice was not given.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated the commission had discretion if it found notice insufficient.

**Seth Cox** asked whether Rocky Mountain Power felt enough notice had been given.

**Rita Ruderman** responded that while people always deserved more time, they had provided five open houses and sent notices according to county records, but could not control whether the mail was opened. She confirmed they had conducted on-site visits when requested.

**Karen Ellingson** asked about the scope of detrimental effects the commission could consider.

**Dale Eyre** explained the process required for identifying a detrimental effect and then deciding whether it could be mitigated within the ordinance. He confirmed property value was not a factor the commission could consider, as it did not constitute a taking.

**Seth Cox** asked whether moving the easement north of Salem Park could be considered.

**Rita Ruderman** replied that the landowner north of the area was not present, but such adjustments would depend on negotiations with that property owner.

**Shayne Pierce** asked whether the commission could identify a detrimental impact based on community concerns.

**Glen Roberts** raised concerns about whether proper notice had been given, noting conflicting accounts and the commission's limited role in reviewing evidence. He favored postponing to allow the notice issue to be reviewed, even if that required a special meeting.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated that a special meeting could be scheduled without re-sending property notices, but with public meeting requirements.

**Shayne Pierce** clarified that if the commission determined notice had not been properly given, they could extend the process beyond the 60-day deadline. Eyre confirmed that it was the only statutory exception.

**Sullivan Love** asked how notification should be defined, given conflicting accounts.

**Dale Eyre** explained the law required utilities to send notice to affected landowners, not ensure receipt. He clarified that the statute defined affected landowners as those whose property lay within the proposed corridor.

**Glen Roberts** concluded that while Salem Park residents might not be entitled to notice, other landowners within the corridor clearly were and testified they had not received it. He argued this was sufficient evidence that notice had not been properly given and urged postponement.

**Karen Ellingson** asked if Rocky Mountain Power's submission of evidence of notice would obligate the commission to move the hearing forward.

**Glen Roberts** stated the commission could still postpone based on the record heard.

**Dale Eyre** reiterated that the commission had the authority to withhold a decision until it was satisfied that notice requirements had been met.

**Seth Cox** emphasized the sheer number of people reporting they had not received notice.

**Shayne Pierce** asked **Dale Eyre** to reread the statutory exception, which confirmed the commission could withhold a decision until notice and workshop requirements were satisfied.

Motion: Glen Roberts

Second: Sullivan Love

**Motion to withhold** the decision until the public utility brings forth evidence of notice to the affected parties pursuant to 54.18.304 of the Utah State Code. The motion **passed** with the following vote: "Aye" Seth Cox, Karen Ellingson, Sullivan Love, Glen Roberts, Robert McMullin. "Nay" Shayne Pierce.

- 2. Quicksilver Solar, LLC - Application #CU2025-06 - Request for conditional use for a proposed solar energy facility as an electric power generation facility in the Mining and Grazing (M&G-1) Zone located in multiple sections in T7S R1W, T7S R2W, and T8S R2W, approximately 750 acres in the Cedar Valley area unincorporated area of Utah County**

**Greg Robinson** summarized the application and noted it was similar to prior approvals, covering six additional parcels totaling about 750 acres, adjacent to previously approved sites, for an anticipated 170-megawatt, unmanned facility in the MNG1 zone. He stated five parcels had restrictive covenants limiting non-agricultural uses until legal adjustments were made, while one parcel was already legal and within Fairfield and Eagle Mountain annexation policy plans; both jurisdictions had been notified. He noted the conditions mirrored prior approvals and explained the applicant requested an initial approval period extended from three to five years, requiring findings to justify the extension; staff recommended approval duration be approved as specified in the ordinance.

**Shayne Pierce** confirmed the staff's recommendation to approve and invited the applicant to speak.

**Greg Probst** introduced himself for Quicksilver and focused on the requested five-year initial approval. He stated three years would not be sufficient due to utility-controlled timelines: completion of a multi-project cluster study and subsequent design and construction of required grid upgrades (lines, breakers, and system facilities). He emphasized that the use complied with conditional use standards and that Quicksilver would meet all staff-recommended pre-building-permit conditions on fire safety, roads, and related items.

**Shayne Pierce** asked for questions from the commission and, hearing none, thanked the applicant.

**Robert McMullin** asked what the power would be used for.

**Greg Probst** stated it was primarily intended for data centers planned in the Eagle Mountain area and recounted that PacifiCorp could not meet the needed timeline (initially 2031), prompting Quicksilver to expand solar capacity, add battery storage, and include gas generation to provide firm, 24/7 power.

**Karen Ellingson** confirmed the gas component had been part of a previous permit and characterized this application as an extension of the solar portion.

**Greg Robinson** clarified there had been five separate prior approvals—three for solar areas and one for natural gas (plus related fuel and height exception applications)—and this request added parcels to the overall project area.

**Greg Probst** noted additional property deals had been concluded, with supportive owners present (the Carter family) covering five of the six parcels.

**Sullivan Love** asked whether existing Rocky Mountain Power infrastructure would be used to deliver power to data centers.

**Greg Probst** stated the intent was to start with behind-the-meter arrangements directly with data centers while utility timelines evolved, adding that the situation was complex and attracting legislative interest, with ongoing discussions with PacifiCorp.

**Sullivan Love** asked if, once interconnected, the project's power could flow to other Rocky Mountain customers.

**Greg Probst** stated interconnected power would flow across the system and could serve broader customers, with commercial arrangements to be determined.

**Shayne Pierce** confirmed adjacent property owners had been notified and invited public comment from those present.

**Bryce Armstrong** noted that a mailing list was available to show notices sent.

**Xiaoli Ortega** stated she owned the parcel directly south of one of the added sites and expressed concerns about being boxed in by this project and another nearby solar project, potential loss of access, drones flown over her property, and discrepancies between written setback descriptions and drawings (especially the 12-foot vegetation-clearing strip outside the fence). She noted an agent's prior low offer and asked that setbacks and access be clarified and enforced.

**Seth Cox** asked how she currently accessed the property.

**Glen Roberts** asked whether current access had been blocked.

**Esteven Ortega** stated he was most worried about setbacks encroaching on his property, noted the application text referenced larger setbacks while drawings suggested tighter ones at their shared boundary, and described past rude interactions and drone activity by affiliates.

**Xiaoli Ortega** noted she had seen better offers from other parties and reiterated concerns with the drone incidents and access.

**Esteven Ortega** stated inconsistent submittal materials made him fear future encroachment, emphasizing he wanted to continue his use without being forced into costly disputes.

**Glen Roberts** noted fences could be placed on property lines, confirmed the county could enforce approved plans and setbacks, and advised that any trespass be handled with law enforcement.

**Esteven Ortega** stated he wanted assurance that the final approval would match the submitted descriptions and drawings.

**Glen Roberts** stated approvals were tied to submissions, and deviations could be stopped by county staff; enforcement would follow the approved site plan.

**Esteven Ortega** acknowledged that process and asked whom to contact if the behavior continued.

**Glen Roberts** directed him to the staff for plan-compliance issues and to law enforcement for

trespass.

**Karen Ellingson** asked which department would handle land-use disputes.

**Bryce Armstrong** stated the county would enforce zoning or land-use violations, while trespass issues would go to the sheriff; plan-compliance concerns could be brought to planning staff.

**Shayne Pierce** thanked the Ortegas for their comments and explained that the commission was limited to ordinance-based detrimental effects and could not base decisions on property value impacts.

**Xiaoli Ortega** expressed frustration about the potential loss of access and questioned the project's claimed lack of impact on property values.

**Glen Roberts** stated the commission's task was to determine ordinance compliance, not property valuation.

**Shayne Pierce** reiterated that property value was not an allowable detrimental impact, unlike health or safety concerns.

**Glen Roberts** acknowledged the concern but noted it fell outside the commission's authority.

**Xiaoli Ortega** referenced "good neighbor" agreements she had seen with other projects and wished similar practices would be followed.

**Glen Roberts** encouraged continued engagement with staff on standards and compliance.

**Esteven Ortega** asked whom to contact if compliance concerns arose and accepted the guidance to the planning staff and, for trespass, the sheriff.

**Karen Ellingson** asked how the county would respond to potential land-use disputes.

**Bryce Armstrong** reiterated that zoning violations would be enforced by the county and trespass by the sheriff, and plan-compliance questions could go to staff.

**Shayne Pierce** thanked the Ortegas and moved the discussion forward, noting the commission had not heard an ordinance-recognized detrimental impact that would alter the application.

**Xiaoli Ortega** voiced disappointment and concern that approvals would surround her property, limiting her intended agricultural use.

**Shayne Pierce** moved toward deliberation and confirmed the request before the commission concerned, adding parcels and considering an initial approval extension.

**Greg Robinson** clarified that the application was a separate approval adjacent to other project areas and that Quicksilver also sought to extend the initial approval period on these parcels from

three to five years (to 2030). He stated findings should reference the utility cluster study timeline and the time needed for utility construction when granting the extension.

Motion: Glen Roberts                      Second: Robert McMullin

Motion to **approve** the application and adopt five findings by the staff. The motion **passed** with the following vote: "Aye" Shayne Pierce, Seth Cox, Karen Ellingson, Sullivan Love, Glen Roberts, Robert McMullin. "Nay" none.

**D. AGRICULTURE PROTECTION AREA**

**1. Notification of creation/continuation of agricultural protection areas**

**Bryce Armstrong** noted that state code required recording newly created agricultural protection areas with the Planning Commission and explained their practice of adding an agenda item to enter the information into the minutes. He stated that on July 9, 2025, the Utah County Commission approved the Relief Mine Company 2025 Agricultural Protection Area comprising 175 acres east of Salem, which had previously come to the commission for recommendation. He clarified that this announcement was solely for the record and required no vote or motion.

**E. OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Take action on proposed Utah County Planning Commission Resolution No. 2025-01 to replace Resolution No. 2013-01 for Rules of Conduct for Public Hearings and Meetings**

Motion to **continue** the item to the next meeting. The motion **passed** with the following vote: "Aye" Shayne Pierce, Seth Cox, Karen Ellingson, Sullivan Love, Glen Roberts, Robert McMullin. "Nay" none.

**F. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 PM.

Utah County Planning Commission  
August 19, 2025

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

APPROVED BY:

  
Secretary

  
Chair

