

**GUNNISON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, June 15, 2023**

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The Gunnison County Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting in the Planning Commission Meeting Room in the Blackstock Government Center, 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, Co. and on Zoom on Thursday at 8:45 am.

**Present:**

Chairperson-Andy Sovick Commissioner-Matt Schwartz Commissioner-Fred Niederer Commissioner- Julie Baca All. Commissioner- Annie Beall Alt. Commissioner- Eric Phillips	Planning Director- Hillary Seminick Senior Planner – Rachel Sabbato Planner-Sean Pope Others present as listed in text
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**Absent:**

**Recused:**

**Zoom:** Annie Beall, Roland Mason

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**8:45 AM** With a quorum present Chairperson Sovick opened the June 1, 2023 regular meeting of the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission reviewed the meeting minutes and referred them back to staff for multiple corrections.

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**9:00 AM Work Session, LUC-23-00013 Minor Impact Review for Extension of Expansion of Snow Plowing at 1501 CR 813, Almont Colorado.**

With a quorum present Chairperson Sovick opened the work session at 9 am. The Applicant, Zach and Kylie Springer, attended in-person.

Commissioner Eric Phillips disclosed that he took photos for the Sotheby's real estate listing and did not feel that it was a conflict of interest. The Commission and Applicant agreed.

Rachel Sabbato provided an overview of the Minor Impact review process.

The Applicant introduced themselves as long time locals employed by the local businesses and Search and Rescue volunteers. They want to gain year-round vehicular access to the subject property for which they are under contract.

The Applicant reviewed the project location in a power point presentation.

*Note: the file is publicly available on Citizen Access at:  
<https://permitdb.gunnisoncounty.org/citizenaccess/>.*

*To access the file, click "Projects", select "Application Number", enter "LUC-23-00013" into the search field, select the result, select the "Attachments" tab, and then navigate to the file named "Applicant PC presentation.pptx" and click on the "view" button.*

The Applicant requests to relocate the existing winter closure gate .6 miles to west to the USFS boundary. There is currently over the snow access to the property. The Applicant will fabricate and install a gate at the USFS boundary. The Applicant will maintain the .6 miles of CR 813 from

current winter closure gate to the USFS boundary and maintain a Public Works compliant Y style turnaround. The Applicant will remove snow with a snowblower from 10-2 pursuant to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) recommendations. They have Dietrich Dirtworks under contract to remove snow according to these recommendations and will eventually purchase their own compliant snow removal equipment.

The Applicant noted that the property is located in sensitive wildlife habitat; however, it is not part of winter closure and that CPW comfortable with extension with conditions. Use of a snowblower will reduce impacts and damage to road and potential damage to the Allen Ranch fence.

The US Forest Service (USFS) will install appropriate signage on the gate. The Applicant will provide mounting bracket locations for the signage. CPW and USFS supports the gate relocation because it will delineate a very clear boundary at the Almont Triangle Big Game Closure.

The Applicant stated they do not anticipate additional development beyond regular maintenance of the existing structures. They feel they are encouraging housing diversity to local community members and their current condo is under contract with another local; housing two local families.

The Applicant cannot obtain at least one of their loans without year-round emergency vehicle access, snow removal and maintenance of the Y-turnaround would meet the requirements of the loan. They do not feel they would create additional travel beyond their own personal travel needs. The relocation of the gate could reduce the environmental impact, using snow blower will reduce road impacts.

CPW and USFS stated via email in comment that they do not see a detriment in wildlife impacts. They Applicant feels the benefits outweigh any detriment: they would be creating housing for a local resident.

Over the snow access is not practical because there is no place to store cars at winter closure. Public Works would approve winter parking at an existing turnout; however, the only two turnouts are Allen ranch and Roaring Judy, neither will allow them to park at the pullouts during the winter.

The Applicant closed their presentation stating that CPW said their presence could help monitor people trying to access the Almont Triangle and the largest public benefit will be an improved closure at a crucial winter closure.

Sabbato provides general overview of the proposal and request that is similar to the presentation provided by the Applicant.

The Applicant noted that there used to be a plow permit, the most recent owners let it lapse 12 years ago because they were only using it as a summer residence.

Sabbato confirmed that there was little documentation in the Public Works department and that plowing was permitted within recent history. Sabbato added that there was a school bus turnaround at the proposed Y-turnaround.

Sabbato then reviewed property and relationship to Allen ranch, the existing gate, and the proposed closure at the USFS boundary. Sabbato noted that there are sufficient ROW easements along CR-813 and that the Applicant's driveway is also known as Patrick Road. She confirmed the proposed snow removal windows meet CPW and USFS conditions, and that CPW/USFS believe the new closure location is a benefit because it may reduce current trespass into the

winter closure that occurs from December first to May first<sup>1</sup> Applicant is aware how this could impact their work schedules. CPW noted there is disturbance in the area during Roaring Judy snow removal operations.

Commissioner Schwartz: Who is going to maintain the gate?

Applicant: there has been discussion about that and not decided.

Commissioner Bacca: who opens the gate?

Sabbato: The exact location and maintenance of the gate will be reviewed and approved by the Public Works review of the application, which is a separate yet concurrent review process.

Commissioner Sovick: this is a good way to solve a problem, but there are other ways to solve the problem too. CPW could put better signage there tomorrow.

Commissioner Sovick asked if there were any members of the public whom would like to comment and received no additional comment.

Commissioner Phillips: Most SAR calls do not come in between 10-2, how can you adequality get in and out of the house to respond?

Applicant: Zach Springer stated he stays at the fire house on shift and while he is not required to go on every SAR call, he feels there is adequate time. Kylie Springer notes there is a lot less snow there than at their current residence in CB South. Zach Springer adds that we don't typically deploy SAR teams at night due to safety concerns.

Commissioner Mason: I used to plow in that area; while it snows less there, the wind does drift snow into the road. He did not feel the plowing window would be realistic and that there is a lot of plowing in this area with noisy, heavy machinery. He would rather see the time constraint as a recommendation rather than a requirement because it's an additional hardship.

Commissioner Schwartz: (referring to the CPW letter) it is a recommendation and not a condition.

Commissioner Sovick: the plowing between 10-2 isn't as realistic and the logistics don't work with plow companies, because if there is someone in the area, they will likely want to clear while they are there.

Commissioner Mason: it is going to take some time to plow that road, probably 1-2 hours of plowing just to get to the driveway.

Commissioner Bacca states she would like to schedule the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Niederer states that he feels they have met the conditions of the LUR, and the sentiment is unanimous among the Commission.

Commissioner Sovick directs Staff to draft recommendation. The Public Hearing is set for July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

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<sup>1</sup> Staff provided incorrect dates during the work session, the correct closure dates are November 22- May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Staff notes that the Gregory Joint Public Hearing was postponed to July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**The Work Session was closed at 9:45 AM, Bacca motioned, Commissioner Niederer seconded, all in favor.**

Commissioner Niederer: requested of Staff to provide a clear outline of the 2021 Building and Energy Code requirements and State triggers. Noted he has additional concerns about unintended consequences and will reach out to Staff prior to the next work session. The Commission looks forward to hearing more about his concerns at the next work session.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:59 AM.**