



TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024
701 East Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745
City Hall, Helen Kawagoe Council Chambers
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION

Members:	Dianne Thomas Chair	Louie Diaz Vice Chair	Frederick Docdocil
	Carlos Guerra DeQuita Mfume	Del Huff Clarence Johnson	Richard Hernandez
Alternates:	Leticia Wilson	Jaime Monteclaro	
Staff:	Christopher Palmer, AICP Planning Manager	Benjamin Jones Assistant City Attorney	Laura Gonzalez Planning Secretary

“In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call the Planning Department at 310-952-1761 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.” (Government Code Section 54954.2)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thomas Called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Diaz led the Salute to the Flag.

3. ROLL CALL

Planning Commissioners Present: Thomas, Diaz, Guerra, Hernandez, Docdocil, Mfume, Wilson, Johnson

Planning Commissioners Absent: Mfume (EA), Monteclaro

Planning Staff Present: Planning Manager Palmer, Senior Planner Alexander, Assistant City Attorney Jones, Planning Secretary Gonzalez

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)

None

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A) Approval of Minutes – June 11, 2024

Planning Commission Decision:

Commissioner Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Guerra, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried, unanimous.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A) Avocet Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) – Mitigated Negative Declaration, Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1887-22, Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 1115-21, and Development Agreement (DA) No. 32-22

Request:

A request to consider approval of DOR No. 1887-22 and CUP No. 1115-21, contingent upon City Council approval, and recommendation of City Council adoption of Mitigated Negative Declaration and DA No. 32-22 for the development of an approximately 200-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) and project-related offsite improvements (as described in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project and in the Development Agreement).

Staff Recommendation:

Senior Planner McKina Alexander presented the staff report and the recommendation to ADOPT Resolution No. 24-2871, entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON CONDITIONALLY APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW NO. 1887-22 AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 1115-21 CONTINGENT UPON CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION AND APPROVAL OF, AND RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AND APPROVE, MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT NO. 32-22 FOR A PROPOSED BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) FACILITY LOCATED AT 23320 ALAMEDA STREET, APN 7315-020-022."

Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

Applicant John Meinecke provided a presentation.

Commissioner Hernandez – Under Conditional Use Permit 1115-21 it states that, “shall be equipped with internal, failsafe heat and gas detection alarm systems.” Can you talk to us a little about that?

Joshua Castello (L.A. County Fire Department) – You have a third party monitoring the enclosures so that if an event develops inside an enclosure and begins to fill that space with flammable or explosive gases that there is early detection by a listed third-party alarm monitoring service that would then alert 911 and it would also be part of a listed fire alarm system that has listed components. Meaning, each component and the assembly of the system has met the required standards of a fire alarm system and that they all have achieved their product safety standards. The intent is to provide an early warning before the event might result in a fire or an explosion. If there were an off gassing coming out of the battery enclosure into the open space around that there also be a warning on that. That is the standard in the fire code today. The code was written for enclosures that are in terms of the energy and the hazardous materials within the enclosure in the ballpark of 50 to 80 times smaller than what we are looking at in terms of this and similar projects.

Commissioner Guerra – After reading the material, I understand that the battery stands could be aluminum or steel. Is that correct?

Planner Alexander – I don't recall calling out the material of the enclosures.

John Meinecke – The racks are steel inside of a steel enclosure.

Commissioner Guerra – In your report, you are saying that the chain link fence will not be visible.

John Meinecke - The chain link fence around the project substation within the facility will have a 10-foot concrete wall surrounding the facility. The internal chain link fence will not be visible from the outside because of the 10-foot concrete wall in front of it.

Commissioner Wilson - This project represents the future of energy in our communities. Thank you for bringing it to Carson. Often time, we are over led when it comes to having the newest technologies. I want to commend you for engaging the community and being a partner when it pertains to thinking about our tax revenue, when it pertains to providing jobs to people in our communities, and all the benefits that come with you partnering with high schools to provide jobs and education of our energy projects. I hope that you can provide some educational aspects as well. We have a great STEM academy at Carson High School. It's important to always have competition in the mix. It will make other players more responsive to our communities when they know we have other alternatives.

Commissioner Johnson – Is the general function to store electricity for Edison or the municipality?

John Meinecke – It's to store electricity for the CAISO (California Independent System Operator) grid. The energy is sold to the San Diego clean power. They have a requirement to

purchase a certain amount of RA (Resource Adequacy). They contracted with us for the project. Even though it's technically going to San Diego, it goes to the local area first.

Commissioner Wilson – The Metropolitan Water District is working on a massive water project that would require a lot of energy to push the water all the way to Orange County. Will you be working with the Metropolitan Water District?

John Meinecke - Not for this project, maybe for future projects.

Tommy Faavae (Los Angeles/Orange County Building Trades Council) – We are very supportive of the project. It will put a lot of our building trade members to work. We urge the commission to support this project moving forward.

Michael Stewart (Economic Development Committee Vice Chair, Chamber of Commerce) – I strongly support the Avocet Energy project because this 350-million-dollar project is a win, win, win project for our community. We see a project that's going to be hiring between 80 and 100 labor jobs through the process of this project. We see 35 million dollars in property tax improvements to the community coming in as a result of this project. This project will improve and bring in further investment in our community.

Joe Rangel (International Union of Operating Engineers) – I'm here to communicate unconditional support of the Avocet Battery Energy Storage Project. I'm asking respectfully that the commission cease the moment and invest in your community as well by supporting this 350 million dollar project, which is an investment of 350 million dollars into your community as well as the tax revenue that will generate. It's going to put 70 to 100 local union members under this project.

Chair Thomas closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Decision:

Vice Chair Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to approve staff's recommendation, thus adopting Resolution No. 24-2871. Motion carried, 8-0.

8. MANAGER'S REPORT

Planning Manager Palmer – We'll be shifting our Planning Commission meetings to the Community Center in August as the council chambers undergoes renovations. Community Development has a new online portal. We can now take applications, payments, and make corrections online. I will set up a demonstration on our next meeting for the commission and the public to know how to use this online tool.

9. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Johnson – Happy to be here.

Commissioner Hernandez – I'm wondering if anybody can talk about what happened at the Carson Mall.

Chair Thomas – There was a mass message that went out over social media. A similar incident happened at Del Amo Mall in Torrance where these young people through social media were going to all converge in a particular mall. There was a trashcan that was set on fire. I must commend the Sheriff's Department in Carson because they were all over it. They handled it quite well.

Commissioner Hernandez – Carson's Sheriff, Redondo Beach Police Department, and Torrance Department all got together and surrounded 200 kids. It shows that we won't tolerate anything like that in Carson.

Commissioner Docdocil - For those that need public service, if you have any requests the quickest way to do that is to call the Public Works service at (310) 847-3500.

Commissioner Wilson – I would like to commend our local Sheriff's Department because they were in full force this weekend.

Commissioner Guerra – They have a mutual response agreement with LASD, LAPD, and the local law enforcement communities to respond when there's an emergency and it works.

Vice Chair Diaz – I want to acknowledge and welcome our first responders fire fighters for being here to lend some assurance to the community at large. We all have a vested interest in our communities and safety especially any projects that come before us. This is the first time we have you here, thank you. It's good to see that we had speakers from the labor movement. Thank you to our residents that made the time and effort to be here this evening.

Chair Thomas – I want to thank my colleagues for their time and efforts in continuing to be part of this commission. Thank you staff and Laura for the work that you all do.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Dianne Thomas
Chairperson

Attest By:

Laura Gonzalez
Planning Secretary