



Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd.
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

MINUTES

Planning Commission Meeting
October 28, 2025 @ 5:30 PM

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order on October 28, 2025, at 5:30 PM in the Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd. .

COMMISSION PRESENT: Commissioner Pitcher, Commissioner Gurule, Commissioner Hodges, and Commissioner Reid

COMMISSION ABSENT: Commissioner Weiler and Commissioner Pribble

1 CALL MEETING TO ORDER

a) at 5:41 p.m.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Member Weiler recused himself from the meeting. Chair Pitcher promoted Member Reid to a voting member.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) **Approval of the October 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Gurule moved to approve the October 20, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Reid seconded.

Carried.

4 PUBLIC COMMENT

a) Bill Hudson noted his concerns regarding Article 13 and his thoughts on potential conflicts. Jane Weitzel commented on the lack of parks west of Put Hill. Racheal Suh commented on her lack of trust in local government and the Land Use and Development Code.

5 PLANNING COMMISSION

a) **Major Subdivision Sketch Application, 3800 West US Hwy 160, 80 South Pagosa Blvd, and 100 S Pagosa Blvd**

Manager O'Dell presented the staff report. Brad Ash, applicant representative, presented the project. Chair Pitcher opened for public comment. Terri Pritchard stated opposition to the project and raised concerns about the lack of infrastructure to support it. Joanne Furko requested clarification in the staff report regarding metro districts. Director Dickhoff clarified that there is no metro district proposed for this development. Bill Hudson noted that the letter from Colorado Parks and Wildlife was not included in the Planning Commission packet, but was available on MyPagosa.org. He also questioned the approval criteria and LUDC requirements for Sketch Plans. He noted that lots, utilities, open space, trees, and wildlife impacts are to be included in Sketch Plan approval. Barbara Tillman asked where to access the applicant's presentation and the staff report. Manager O'Dell responded that the staff report is available on the Town of Pagosa Springs website and the applicant's full plans are available on MyPagosa.org. Sydney Latin Trudeau agreed with Terri Pritchard's remarks and added that she moved to Pagosa Springs for the town's charm and believes that both that character and wildlife corridors are being lost.

Racheal Suh stated that the staff report indicated some items are optional at the Sketch Plan stage, but she believes those requirements are not optional. She stated that the DOLA grant for this property was approved improperly. She noted that there is a Change.org petition with approximately 250 signatures seeking to revoke the DOLA funds. She questioned the Town's partnership with a private developer for DOLA funding. She proposed that the land be used for a public park and recreation center. She stated that the land is not currently owned by the applicant and questioned the legality of that. Evie Austin asked for clarification regarding the tree sanctuary. She asked whether the tree sanctuary applies only to mature trees or to all trees. Brad Ash, applicant representative, responded that he believes the standard is 12 inches in diameter and greater; however, he stated that trees benefit the development and the applicant would like to preserve as many trees as possible. He also noted that further definitions of "tree sanctuary" would be more clearly defined in the HOA documents and the developer agreement. Patricia Cooney noted how dangerous the intersection of Highway 160 and South Pagosa Boulevard is. She also noted that there are already two gas stations at this intersection and questioned the need for a third. She expressed concerns about traffic increases resulting from the development. Sharon Carter asked that the developer listen to public input on the development and stated that she believes this has not yet occurred. She suggested lower density, additional open space, height restrictions, preservation of trees, and mitigation of noise and light pollution. She questioned ownership of the property and noted that the LUDC requires a notarized statement of authority in order to apply for a permit. She questioned the completeness of the tree survey that was provided. Sharon Carter also read a letter from Scott Taunjis, in which he commented on the gas station and questioned whether it has met all regulatory requirements. He also stated that he believes the Town should assess whether the existing LIHTC apartments near Walmart are fully occupied before approving additional low-income apartments. Jane Weitzel questioned the legality of the meeting. She also noted that the developer stated at the neighborhood meeting that there would be a gradual transition from low density behind Pagosa Lakes Ranch to higher density in the center of the development, which she does not see reflected on the plan. She quoted LUDC Section 6.10.4 and noted that special consideration shall be given to adjacent land uses of different intensities. Neira Isley spoke about herd animals, wildlife corridors, and native species. She noted that these animals will not have a place to go. Ronnie Vennetta asked how the roads will be constructed and whether the developer will have access to the \$1.9 million grant to develop those roads. He also asked if, if the developer does not obtain financing for the apartments, the grant funding could be transferred to another workforce housing project in the area. Joe Rovig asked whether the applicant is the owner of the property. Director Dickhoff answered that the owner is not the applicant. He noted that Town staff does have a notarized statement of authority on file. Laurie Davenport asked for additional information and clarification regarding road connections and private property. Jennifer Ahrens stated that she believes not enough information has been provided regarding the Sketch Plan. She stated that she does not believe the Commission has sufficient information to make an informed decision. She also expressed concerns regarding infrastructure, dark sky compliance, buffers, wildlife, and trees. Allison Qualls stated that she believes more time and planning should be invested in this project. She noted that the community should be forward-thinking regarding this development. Lauren Motallo asked whether hotels are proposed as part of the development. Brad Ash, applicant representative, answered that hotels were included as an allowable use in the original development proposal and stated that this would ultimately be determined by the developer. Racheal Suh stated that the statement of authority was dated the day of the meeting and expressed that she believes it is not valid. Pamela Kostin questioned the need for another gas station. Chair Pitcher closed public comment. Member Gurule asked about the potential 120-foot setback mentioned during public comment. Director Dickhoff answered that he does not believe the map that was provided was a platted map and stated that it may have been provided by a real estate agent. Member Gurule asked what the current setback is from the proposed building. Mr. Ash answered that the setback is 63 feet. Member Gurule then asked where the current osprey nest is located. Manager O'Dell answered that it is located on Tract 4. Member Gurule asked whether the DIA will require the applicant to install sidewalks from the highway

to the apartments. Director Dickhoff answered that it is not currently included in the DIA, but it is a requirement based on staff contingencies. Member Hodges requested clarification that the Board was only deciding on subdivision and infrastructure matters, and not conducting a design review of businesses, housing, or other site elements. Manager O'Dell confirmed that this is correct. Member Reid asked the applicant about view corridors and whether views would be impeded. Mr. Ash answered that setbacks will be established, but some views will be compromised. Member Reid then asked whether the Town has any responsibility to consider whether the proposed businesses are needed or feasible. Director Dickhoff answered that determinations of business need are up to the developer. Chair Pitcher explained the role of the Planning Commission to the public and thanked attendees for their participation. The Commission discussed conditions of approval and which items would be required now versus in future applications. Member Reid recommended legal counsel review as a condition of approval, and the Board agreed.

Commissioner Gurule moved to approve the Arena Labs LLC, Major Subdivision, Sketch Plan at 3800 W. US Hwy 160, 80 S. Pagosa Blvd, and 100 S. Pagosa Blvd, as presented with the following conditions:

1. Applicant must, on the Preliminary Plan Review submission, provide a preliminary subdivision plat meeting the Town's criteria for such. (Planning Staff Review).
2. Applicant must include the anticipated phasing of the development in their submission for the Preliminary Plan (LUDC 2.4.3 C. 3b. (ii) (1) (g)).
3. Applicant shall include the road section roadway, pedestrian sidewalk and trail to be within the Right-of-Way (ROW) (LUDC 7.3.5), which shall be dedicated public ROW.
4. Applicant must provide a full utility build-out analysis including a lighting plan for roadways and pedestrian networks, water and sewer, natural gas, fiber, and electric in their submission for their Preliminary Plan Review (LUDC 7.3.6).
5. Applicant must submit a Drainage Study, prepared by a Licensed Colorado Professional Engineer, with runoff rates determined using the NRCS TR-20 method, to include detention for all roads, sidewalks, and trails. This study must also identify the current condition of the drainage culverts that would divert water under Hwy 160 (LUDC 6.3.2).
6. Applicant should provide written justification from a wetland professional for appropriate buffers distances between development activities and riparian areas to avoid conflict with delineated wetlands as well as protection measures during construction activities.
7. Applicant must provide native, drought tolerant, landscaping treatments along the 5- foot buffer between the sidewalk and curb and gutter, at subdivision entrances, and in public open spaces.
8. Applicant must, for the individual site developments, contact the Town of Pagosa Springs Planning Division for respective development application permitting (Planning Staff Review).
9. Applicant must enter into a Development Improvement Agreement with the Town of Pagosa Springs to set specific timelines on the phases of this proposal, at Final Subdivision application (Planning Staff Review).
10. The applicant should, on the submission of the Preliminary Plan, provide a closer mix of uses (Planning Staff Review of Smart Growth America (SGA)).
11. The applicant must submit a conceptual pedestrian plan at the Preliminary Plan submission to ensure safe, convenient connections between uses and adjacent pedestrian facilities (Planning Staff Review of SGA).
12. The applicant must depict a central plaza or park to serve as a visual aid and a social anchor (Planning Staff Review of SGA).
13. The applicant must provide transit stop and add crosswalks, bike lanes, and safe pedestrian access (Planning Staff Review of SGA). This includes a cross to the Hospital and sidewalk/trail connection to the SE corner of Hwy 160/S. Pagosa Blvd.
14. Applicant should contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pertaining the active osprey nest located

adjacent to the proposed development for preservation and protection. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recommends a ¼ mile buffer of No Surface Occupancy around active osprey nests, with no permitted, authorized or human encroachment activities within ¼ mile between the dates of March 15th to August 15th (Colorado Parks and Wildlife Review).

15. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recommends the use of wildlife-resistant trash containers at both residential and commercial developments to reduce the potential for conflicts with black bears (Colorado Parks and Wildlife Review).

16. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recommends keeping any fencing around the property to a minimum. If boundary fencing is use, “wildlife friendly” fencing is recommended, allowing the safe passage of deer, elk, and other wildlife (Colorado Parks and Wildlife Review).

17. Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation requirements are as follows:

- 1. Water and wastewater modeling are required and conditions of services will be predicated on the results of the modeling. All modeling fees to be paid for by applicant.
- 2. Any and all other conditions required by the District’s Rules and Regulations in place at the time and/or District Board of Director requirements apply.

18. Have staff’s legal council review the Statement of Authority from the applicant. Commissioner Hodges seconded.

All yay. Carried.

6 REPORTS AND COMMENTS

a) Planning Commission - Comments, Ideas and Discussion

7 PUBLIC COMMENT

- a)** Bill Hudson stated that he was upset that the application was not tabled. Pamela Kostin stated that approximately 700 people signed a Change.org petition opposing the project. John Stewart asked why Member Weiler recused himself. Chair Pitcher answered that he had a conflict. Terri Pritchard expressed concern regarding the approval. Chair Pitcher closed public comment.

8 ADJOURNMENT

- a)** at 8:29 p.m.