

# Juab County Planning Commission

## November 19, 2025

### **Welcome/Prayer/Pledge**

Chairman Shirl Nichols welcomed those attending the Juab County Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 7:00 PM in the Juab County Commission Chambers in Nephi, Utah. Commissioner Memmott said a prayer. Tracy Painter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Commission Members Present:

Chairman Shirl Nichols, Vice Chairman Mike Kramer, Commissioner Steven Bunker, Commissioner Chris Memmott, and Commissioner Marc Rowley.

### Others Present:

Zoning Administrator Colby Park (by phone), Secretary Tracy Painter, Nephi City Council Member Shari Cowan, Jim McWilliams, Travis Smith, Bobbi Smith, Shawn Miller, Mike Sperry, Pam Park, Ed Park, Eric Kellews, Jon Jensen, Mike Datar, Brent Boswell, Michie McKenzie, Dan McKenzie, Scott Anderson, Daleen Anderson, Joran Carter, and Ryan Matthews.

### **Public Hearing – Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry Zone Change Request**

Chairman Nichols opened the public hearing for the Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry zone change request at 7:02 PM. He asked those who wish to comment to sign up on the list.

Ryan Matthews of Summit Group Holdings spoke on behalf of the rezoning request for Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry, explaining that his group has the land under contract to develop a multi-billion-dollar data center. He said the site is attractive because it already has or is near key utilities (power, transmission lines, and gas), is relatively safe from natural disasters, and is far enough from town and the interstate to be “out of sight” while still accessible. Matthews emphasized that modern data centers are not heavy water users, describing closed-loop glycol cooling systems that function like radiators, so the primary water demand would be potable and sanitary use (toilets, bathrooms), which could be supplied by water tanks and trucked-in water rather than large new wells. He repeatedly stated that the project is intended to avoid burdening local water resources. Economically, he projected 75–100 permanent local jobs with average salaries of \$150,000–\$200,000, plus hundreds of construction and contractor jobs over a 5–10-year (or longer) buildout and argued that the data center’s buildings and equipment would generate substantially higher property tax revenue than current agricultural use. He could not answer questions about the point of sale for data services or resulting sales tax

distribution but stressed that, regardless of sales-tax issues, the county would benefit from the long-term property tax base, infrastructure investment (including road improvements to county standards), and job creation that would come with the development.

Paul McPherson (appearing remotely from Georgia) spoke in support of the proposed data center and zone change. He framed the project as a significant financial benefit to Juab County, saying he wants to see added revenue help lower property taxes, noting his own taxes had recently increased by about \$10,000. McPherson argued that if the project brings in over a million dollars in tax revenue, it would meaningfully help the county. He also emphasized that the site is in an out-of-the-way location, which he viewed as appropriate for this kind of development. Finally, he mentioned that a large solar project on his property is already moving forward and that, in his view, it would pair well with the data center by providing the power needed to run it.

Jim McWilliams briefly spoke in support of the requested zone change for his property to allow a data center. He noted that there are already about 4,000 acres of permitted solar immediately adjacent to the site and argued that adding the data center there would create a much stronger tax base for Juab County than leaving the land as agricultural “dirt.” McWilliams characterized the decision as a “no brainer” for the county, saying that if the project does not go forward it would be a lost opportunity for local revenue. He concluded by clearly stating that he wants the zone change approved.

Michael Morgan spoke in favor of the zone change, framing it from the perspective of a long-time agricultural and greenbelt landowner whose family has owned land in Juab County since territorial days. He referenced the 1969 Utah Farmland Assessment Act (greenbelt), explaining that his family and other farmers benefit from being taxed on production rather than market value, which lowers their property taxes. Morgan argued that whenever land is removed from greenbelt and converted to a higher-tax industrial use, it strengthens the overall tax base and effectively helps remaining greenbelt owners, because a larger share of the tax burden is carried by non-greenbelt, industrial property. He noted he had recently supported a property tax increase to better fund the county jail and patrol officers, and said projects like this data center are exactly the kind of revenue-generating development that can support county services while easing pressure on agricultural landowners.

Shawn Miller spoke in support of the data center project, drawing on his 10+ years of experience working in data centers across Utah and other states. He said data center work has supported his family and that having a facility in Juab County would create valuable local employment and wage stability, reducing the need for long commutes or out-of-state work. Miller explained that modern data centers now use closed-loop cooling systems that no longer discharge large volumes of water like older facilities, the technology and operations have improved significantly over time. He described past projects with up to 1,600 construction workers on site daily and noted that even once operational there are still hundreds of contractor personnel working there regularly, emphasizing the ongoing jobs and economic activity such a project can bring to the community.

In a letter read by Chris Memmott, Mike Peterson (High Desert Land and Livestock) expressed strong opposition to the proposed zone change to industrial in the south end of Dog Valley for a data center, primarily due to water concerns. He explained that his 8,200-acre cattle operation, plus additional leased private and BLM land, depends on a single well (~500 feet deep) and a very limited local water resource, which is also used by a few other small users (the LDS Welfare Ranch, Kern River station, and the Wayne MacPherson family). Citing research, he stated that a typical data center might use around 300,000 gallons of water per day, with larger centers using 500,000 gallons or more, and argued that pumping at those levels in Dog Valley—where there has never been such usage—would likely overdraw the aquifer, threatening his water right and operation, as well as neighboring users' rights. While acknowledging he considers McWilliams and Sperry friends and bears no ill will, Peterson urged the Planning and Zoning Commission to deny the zone change for an industrial data center, though he said he would not oppose a change for solar or other uses that do not require significant new pumping of water.

Chairman Nichols closed the public hearing for Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry zone change request at 7:31 PM.

### **Public Hearing – DCPC Conditional Use Permits**

Chairman Nichols opened the public hearing for the DCPC conditional use permit at 7:31 PM.

Jon Jensen commented regarding the DCPC data center project north of Mona, explaining that he received a conditional use permit about a year ago for a large two-building (about 1 million sq. ft.) data center, and now needs additional adjacent parcels (the Kay property and Young Living property) included because the final design made the facility more linear/rectangular, causing buildings to cross property lines. He emphasized that the project scope has not changed, only the shape and footprint, and that the same conditions as the original CUP would apply. On water, Jensen said their design uses a closed-loop system with only about 300 acre-feet/year of consumptive use, mostly for a few very hot days, with water stored in tanks and drawn during limited hours, and that they are leasing existing water from a neighbor. He stated they have also been working with the county on bringing water through Central Utah Project (CUP). He highlighted substantial economic benefits—large capital investment, property and personal property taxes, sales tax captured in Juab County through contract structuring, and ongoing natural gas usage that would generate municipal energy tax—arguing the project will provide significant, long-term revenue and jobs while using comparatively modest amounts of water for its size.

Chairman Nichols closed the public hearing for the DCPC conditional use permit at 7:34 PM.

## **Minutes 9/17/2025**

The commission reviewed the minutes of the October 15, 2025 meeting. There were no corrections noted.

Commissioner Mike Kramer moved to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2025 meeting as written. Commissioner Marc Rowley seconded the motion. The motion carried, all voted in favor.

### **Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry Zone Change Request Recommendation**

The Planning Commission's discussion with Ryan Matthews focused heavily on water use, tax benefits, and location for the proposed data center tied to the McWilliams/Sperry zone change. Commissioners pressed him on how much water a data center would actually use, how cooling systems function, and whether new wells or transferred water rights would impact existing agricultural users. Matthews repeatedly emphasized closed-loop glycol cooling, minimal consumptive water use (mainly restrooms and potable needs), and the possibility of trucked-in/tank water, stressing that operators are moving away from water-dependent designs in arid regions. Commissioners also questioned the point of sale for data services, whether Juab County would see meaningful tax revenue beyond construction purchases, and how this compares to gravel pits and other industries. Matthews said he could not disclose or control tenant sales-tax structures but highlighted multi-billion-dollar construction value, higher property tax on buildings and equipment, and 75–100 high-paying permanent jobs, plus long-term construction employment. Some commissioners voiced concern about creating an industrial "island" in an agricultural area and whether future tenants might demand more water, while others noted the site is intentionally remote and out of view, near 4,000 acres of solar and major transmission/gas lines, and argued that detailed water-rights and design constraints would be addressed later in permitting and by the Division of Water Rights

Commissioner Mike Kramer moved to recommend the County Commissioners approve the Jim McWilliams and Mike Sperry zone change request. Commissioner Steven Bunker seconded the motion. Commissioners Shirl Nichols, Mike Kramer, and Steven Bunker voted in favor of recommending the zone change. Commissioners Chris Memmott and Marc Rowley voted in opposition.

### **Consider DCPC Conditional Use Permits**

Before considering the additional DCPC conditional use permits, the Planning Commission questioned Jon Jensen about the project's expansion, water use, power, and tax impacts. Jensen explained that the data center design had shifted from square to more rectangular, requiring it to cross onto the Kay property and Young Living parcels, but the overall scope, technology, and impacts remain the same as in the original CUP. Commissioners focused on water, and Jensen said their closed-loop system will consume about 300 acre-feet per year, mostly during a few very hot days, with water stored in tanks and drawn over time, and that they

are leasing existing well water plus pursuing redundant supply, including a possible Central Utah Project pipeline extension that could also benefit the county. He described the existing 22-inch, ~700-foot well, asserted they do not expect to overdraw neighbors' sources, and emphasized that data centers today use far less water than legacy facilities. The Commission also asked about natural gas supply, sales tax point of sale, and property/personal property taxes; Jensen said the project is structuring large equipment purchases so sales tax is booked to Juab County, and ongoing gas use would generate significant municipal energy tax, in addition to property and equipment taxes.

Commissioner Chris Memmott moved to approve the DCPC conditional use permit application on the Kay property with the same conditions as the first conditional use permit. Commissioner Marc Rowley seconded the motion. The motion carried, all voted in favor.

Commissioner Chris Memmott moved to approve the DCPC conditional use permit application on the Young Living property with the same conditions as the first conditional use permit. Commissioner Marc Rowley seconded the motion. The motion carried, all voted in favor.

### **Industrial Park Ordinance Discussion**

Colby wanted to make sure everyone received the links to the documents for the industrial park ordinance. He invited everyone to go in and mark it up and add their comments. He explained that it was quite broad the way it is now. They are proposing a heavy industrial and a light industrial. The heavy industrial will include larger parcels like the 20 acres. Colby explained that there are four different documents. He said that we won't be able to address it until January anyway so everyone take some time in the next couple of months to review it and make comments.

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Chris Memmott asked how the additional property pledged for building permits is kept track of. The pledges must be recorded in the Recorder's office, so it is attached to the property documents. We also track it on a map in the planning office.

Commissioner Mike Kramer said that in his research of data centers, states were giving tax breaks and different concessions. He asked if they can override what we are doing. Colby said that they couldn't affect the local real property tax and the personal property tax. The state could affect other taxes like sales tax.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.