



The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 6:30 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 605 Spring St., Columbus, Texas, with the following present:

Chairperson	-	Tracy Lilie
Vice Chairperson	-	Henry Potter (Absent)
Member	-	Judy Barrett
Member	-	Brenda Wilson
Member	-	Steve McCullough
Member	-	Robin Garcia
Member	-	Paige Sciba
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

1. Call to Order

Tracy Lilie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of the September 7, 2021 Regular Meeting.

[MINUTES 20210907.pdf](#)

Motion to approve the September 7, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by: Steve McCullough

Seconded by: Robin Garcia

Ayes: Tracy Lilie, Judy Barrett, Robin Garcia, Steve McCullough, Paige Sciba, and Brenda Wilson

Carried 6-0

3. [PART VI DISTRICT B ZONING ORDINANCE.pdf](#) Discussion Regarding a Proposed Zoning Change, Specifically, a 20.853 Acre Tract in the WB Dewees Survey, Abstract 18 from District R-1, Multi-Family, Apartment, Townhouse or Condominium to District B, Business or Commercial.

City Manager, Donald Warschak stated a GlidePath company representative, and the project engineer, Kirk Lowe, from FSC, Inc was here to explain the project. Warschak also explained where the property up for rezoning is located.

Lowe stated he had done a survey of the property and was helping with local

permitting, but there would be another engineer for the design and construction of the project. He introduced Peter Rood from GlidePath Power Solutions. Rood stated GlidePath owns the land and would own the proposed containerized energy storage unit. It will be a 50 megawatt lithium ion battery storage project costing approximately \$35 million.

He explained the various aspects of the project. The storage units are self-contained with utility grade controls and fire suppression systems with 24 hour remote monitoring and communications. Rood also spoke about two current facilities; one operating in West Columbia, and the other under construction in Sweeny.

Steve McCullough confirmed the project was 50 megawatts.

Paige Sciba inquired about the traffic flow in and out of the property. Rood stated construction would take between 4 and 6 months to complete, and once under operation, there would be onsite monthly inspections with larger maintenance cycles every 2 years. Lilie asked if construction traffic would come through the subdivision. Rood stated they had not inquired about alternate entry, but it is something they could look into. Lilie voiced her concerns about large trucks on the neighborhood streets.

Rood highlighted the site plan that would include the incorporation of privacy fencing, berms and natural shrubbery to create visual barriers between the residential homes and the facility. Lilie asked if their other projects were as close to residential homes as this project would be. Rood stated in West Columbia, the nearest neighbor was approximately 1,000 feet away; however two projects they built but not longer own in Illinois, those facilities were right next to homes.

McCullough asked about noise from the facility. Rood stated the only noise would come from the cooling system. They would alternate the cooling units so they would not all be together on one side or the other.

Warschak stated the plans included a detention facility storing storm water on site, so the drainage on the property should be an improvement to the area.

Lilie asked about any emissions or electro-magnetic fields. Rood stated the biggest hazard is heat dissipation so heat management was an integrated design component with the containers designed to retain the heat.

McCullough asked if the local volunteer fire department would be responsible for fire-fighting at the facility, and if training would be offered to first responders. Rood stated the facility itself is designed for fire management; to detect heat and gasses, and to monitor battery performance. The facility is designed to shut down before an incident happens. Local first responders would be responsible containment of fire outside the facility like they would be at the adjacent utility sub-station. McCullough also asked if lightening could cause problems. Rood stated grounding and lightening protection were designed into the project.

Brenda Wilson inquired about the size difference from the 9 megawatt West Columbia facility to the proposed 50 megawatt here. Rood stated the cost of batteries is now much lower, and they study the grid for need.


Judy Barrett asked about the life-span of this type of facility. Rood stated the life of batteries is 2 to 3 years and the entire facility has a 20-25 year life span.

Sciba asked if they would be looking to expand the project size in the future. Rood stated currently the ERCOT agreement is limited to 50 megawatts, but if that changes,

then expansion could be a possibility.

Wilson asked if there were permitting requirements with TCEQ or any other kind of leak or spill hazards. Rood stated there were no TCEQ permit requirements.

Code Enforcement officer and Assistant Fire Chief, Richard LaCourse, asked about the fire suppression system and if water run-off would be to the detention ponds. He also asked if there would be visual disconnects for the containers. Rood stated it is a gas type suppression system and that the physical disconnects are remotely controlled. LaCourse asked about the need for City utilities. Rood stated there would be no need for utilities. LaCourse stated, as part of the design, the City would require a fire hydrant system, and access to the property through a Knox Box system. He also asked about site lighting. Rood stated there are no large overhead lights, but more like downcast safety lights above doors. LaCourse also asked about response time for personnel if there is ever a problem. Roods stated personnel would probably come from the Houston area, so it could be a couple of hours before company personnel could be onsite.

4. Public hearing Regarding the Proposed Zoning Change, Specifically, a 20.853 Acre Tract in the WB Dewees Survey, Abstract 18 from District R-1, Multi-Family, Apartment, Townhouse or Condominium to District B, Business or Commercial. [GLIDEPATH REZONING.pdf](#) 

Lilie opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Three local property owners, Rob Kliemann, Jaime Batchlor, and Gary Purcell spoke to the commission about their concerns; most specific safety issues.

Kliemann stated he was worried about what type of enterprise could go into the property if the company chose to subdivide and sell. City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated any other industry would have to comply with the current use ordinance, and if it did not fit within the business or commercial use, rezoning would need to be requested again.

Batchlor spoke about the dangers of hydrogen explosions. LaCourse explained that lithium ion batteries are dry cell, and do not cause a hydrogen explosion.

Purcell asked about hazardous gasses and emergency response plans. An incident at an Arizona facility like this was questioned. LaCourse stated the firefighters there had no idea what they were going into, and they should never have opened the door to the container.

After no further questions or comments, Lilie closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

5. Consideration and Action on a Recommendation and Report for City Council Regarding a Proposed Zoning, Change, Specifically, a 20.853 Acre Tract in the WB Dewees Survey, Abstract 18 from District R-1, Multi-Family, Apartment, Townhouse or Condominium to District B, Business or Commercial.

Motion to recommend City Council approve the requested zoning change.

Moved by: Steve McCullough

Seconded by: Robin Garcia

Ayes: Tracy Lilie, Judy Barrett, Robin Garcia, Steve McCullough, and Brenda Wilson

Abstained: Paige Sciba

Carried 5-0

6. Discussion of Ordinance Workshop - Mobile Food Vendors

The commission discussed adding "temporary mobile food vendors" to the main ordinance.

They discussed the referencing of fines for code violations in the ordinance for code, and the requirement for permits to be displayed.

7. Announcements

The next meeting for the commission will be on either April 20th or April 27th.

8. Adjournment

Lilie adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Chairman, Tracy Lilie

Attest:

Bana Schneider, City Secretary