

Planning and Zoning Board

Meeting Minutes

Mesa City Council Chambers – Upper Level, 20 East Main Street

Date: October 22, 2025 Time: 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Benjamin Ayers
Troy Peterson*
Jamie Blakeman
Jayson Carpenter

MEMBERS ABSENT

Genessee Montes
Chase Farnsworth
Jeff Pitcher

(*Boardmembers and staff participated in the meeting through the use of telephonic and video conference equipment)

STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Kopaskie-Brown
Rachel Phillips
Evan Balmer
Kellie Rorex
Charlotte Bridges
Alexis Wagner
Danika Heying

OTHERS PRESENT:

Call Meeting to Order.

Chair Ayers excused Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth and declared a quorum present; the meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

1 Take action on all consent agenda items.

It was moved by Boardmember Carpenter, seconded by Boardmember Blakeman, that the consent agenda items be approved.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

Items on the Consent Agenda

2 Approval of minutes from previous meetings.

***2-a** Minutes from September 23, 2025, Planning and Zoning Board Special Meeting.

***2-b** Minutes from September 24, 2025, Planning and Zoning Board Meeting.

3 Take action on the following zoning cases:

- *3-a ZON25-00426 “Parcel C Medina Station”** 13.5± acres located approximately 1,100 feet southeast of the intersection of East Southern Avenue and South Signal Butte Road. Site Plan Review for the development of a 276-unit multiple residence development. **(District 5)**

Planner: Kellie Rorex

Staff recommendations: Approval with conditions

The Board recommends to approve case ZON25-00426 conditioned upon:

1. Compliance with the final Specific Plan as submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review Case No. DRB25-00425.
3. Compliance with all conditions of approval associated with Case No. ZON25-00208 (Ordinance No. 5953).
4. Compliance with all applicable City development codes and regulations.
5. Prior to the submittal of a building permit, provide a recorded cross access agreement to the Planning Division demonstrating access will be provided with all parcels leading to right of way.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

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4 Discuss and make recommendations to the City Council on the following cases:

- *4-a ZON24-00998 "623 S Mesa Dr,"** 0.6± acres located approximately 1,420 feet south of the southeast corner of East Broadway Road and South Mesa Drive. Rezone from Multiple Residence-2 (RM-2) to Multiple Residence-4 with a Bonus Intensity Zone overlay (RM-4-BIZ) and Site Plan Review for a 15-unit multiple residence development. **(District 4)**

Planner: Jennifer Merrill

Staff recommendations: Continued to the November 12, 2025 Planning and Zoning Board meeting.

The Board recommends to continue case ZON24-00998 to the November 12, 2025 Planning and Zoning Board meeting.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

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- *4-b ZON25-00256 "Sun Devil Auto - Signal Butte"** 5.9± acres located approximately 280 feet east of the northeast corner of East Southern Avenue and South Signal Butte Road. Major Site Plan Modification and amending Conditions of Approval Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 9 of Ordinance No. 3884 for the development of an approximately 7,689± square foot Minor Automobile/Vehicle Service and Repair facility. **(District 5)**

Planner: Charlotte Bridges

Staff recommendations: Approval with Conditions

The Board recommends to approve case ZON25-00256 conditioned upon:

1. Compliance with the final site plan as submitted.
2. Compliance with Section 11-31-6 of the MZO, additional development standards for Automobile/Vehicle Repair, Major and Minor.
3. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review Case No. DRB25-00399.
4. Site Plan Review is required for future phases of development.
5. Compliance with Preliminary Plat as approved.
6. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Regulations.
7. Compliance with all applicable City development codes and regulations.
8. Installation of all off-site improvements and street frontage landscaping during the first phase of construction.
9. Dedicate the right-of-way and easements required under the Mesa City Code at the time of application for a building permit, at the time of recordation of the Final Plat, or at the time of the City's request for dedication, whichever comes first.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

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Items not on the Consent Agenda

5 Review, discuss and make recommendations to the City Council regarding the following proposed amendment to the Mesa City Code:

- 5-a** Proposed amendments to Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 31, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to pertaining to Battery Energy Storage Systems. The amendments include, but are not limited to: adding definitions for Battery Energy Storage System, Battery Energy Storage System Facility, Augmentation, and Nameplate Capacity; modifying land use tables to add Battery Energy Storage System and Battery Energy Storage System Facility; establishing development and other standards specific to Battery Energy Storage System Facilities. **(Citywide)**

Planner: Rachel Phillips

Staff Recommendation: Adoption

Summary:

The following citizens offered a series of comments in opposition to the proposed amendments to Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 31, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to pertaining to Battery Energy Storage Systems.

- Victor Atlasman, a Mesa resident
- Autumn Johnson, a representative for Arizona Solar Energy Industries Association
- Julie Moore, Retired Battalion Chief, City of Surprise
- Ryan Rickles, a Phoenix resident
- Cepand Alizadeh, Government Relations Specialist for the Arizona Technology Council
- Andy Tobin, Director of Arizona for Western Way
- Court Rich, a representative of the Energy Department at the Rose Law Group
- Aron Branam, Senior Vice President of Development at Aypa Power
- Jeff Crockett, with Crockett Law Group
- Nico Howard, a Mesa resident
- Linda Brady, a representative for Salt River Project

In response to comments, staff noted that a prior study session with City Council had addressed similar questions and clarified that Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) used as an accessory would be exempt from the ordinance requirements. Staff clarified that “separation” refers to the distance between the BESS enclosure wall and the nearest residential property line (1,000 feet for residential, 400 feet for sensitive receptors, and 150 feet for commercial or industrial), while “setback” applies within the site and follows NFPA fire code requirements of 100 feet. As there is no industry standard for separation distances, the proposed 1,000-foot separation is intended to balance safety, quality of life, and development feasibility. The ordinance requires maintaining existing ambient noise levels at the property line rather than setting a fixed decibel limit and has been reviewed to ensure it does not preclude existing projects or establish a moratorium. Staff confirmed that the one-megawatt limit applies cumulatively per site.

Discussion amongst the Board and staff members ensued regarding the one-megawatt

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threshold for BESS, distinguishing accessory from utility-scale systems, and the rationale for the threshold based on the American Clean Power Association model ordinance. Staff confirmed that accessory uses under one megawatt remain exempt from ordinance standards but must comply with underlying zoning, fire, and building codes. Board members sought clarification on the 1,000-foot separation for residential properties, noting it exceeds NFPA minimums and is intended to balance safety, residential impacts, and development feasibility, particularly in light and general industrial zones. Fire safety measures were discussed extensively, with Battalion Chief Shawn Alexander explaining that newer battery technologies, enhanced monitoring, battery management systems, and NFPA 855 standards significantly reduce the risk of fire spreading between containers, and that firefighting tactics have been adapted for these systems. Additional discussion addressed how existing pre-submittal or in-progress projects would be accommodated, confirming that the draft ordinance includes tools allowing them to proceed without rezoning while still complying with all standards, and staff emphasized that all safety measures are site-specific, evolve with technology, and apply to residential accessory systems as well.

Chair Ayers motioned to recommend adoption to City Council regarding the proposed amendments to Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 31, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to pertaining to Battery Energy Storage Systems with the following changes:

1. The separation requirement from residential zoning districts or uses be reduced from 1,000 feet to 400 feet.
2. The maximum nameplate capacity for BESS accessory uses be increased from one megawatt to a minimum five megawatts.

The motion was seconded by Boardmember Carpenter

Vote (3-1; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Carpenter

NAYS – Blakeman

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- 5-b** Proposed amendments to Chapters 5, 8, 31, 32, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to Middle Housing. The amendments include, but are not limited to: modifying land use tables and footnotes to permit Middle Housing in certain circumstances; adding eligibility requirements and development standards for Middle Housing; adding parking requirements for Middle Housing; modifying the definition of “Single Residence, Attached”; adding definitions for “Duplex”, “Fourplex”, “Middle Housing”, “Structure, Attached”, “Structure, Detached”, “Structure, Semi-Detached”, “Townhouse”, and “Triplex”. **(Citywide)**

Planner: Rachel Phillips

Staff Recommendation: Adoption

Summary:

The following citizens offered a series of comments in support of the proposed amendments to Chapters 5, 8, 31, 32, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to Middle Housing.

- Ora Napoleon, a Mesa resident

Boardmember Carpenter motioned to recommend adoption to City Council regarding the proposed amendments to Chapters 5, 8, 31, 32, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa City Code pertaining to Middle Housing. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Blakeman.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

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6 Adjournment.

Chair Ayers motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Blakeman.

Vote (4-0; Boardmember Pitcher, Boardmember Montes and Boardmember Farnsworth, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Ayers, Peterson, Blakeman, Carpenter

NAYS – None

The public hearing was adjourned at 5:43 pm.

The City of Mesa is committed to making its public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. For special accommodations, please contact the City Manager's Office at (480) 644-3333 or AzRelay 7-1-1 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al (480) 644-2767.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Ayers
Planning and Zoning Board Chair

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