



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2026

The San Joaquin County Planning Commission met in regular session on June 18, 2026 at 6 p.m., in the San Joaquin County Administration Building, 44 N. San Joaquin St., #640 (Board of Supervisors Chambers), Stockton, California.

The meeting was called to order by Donald Ruhstaller, Chair.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was given.

Roll Call:

(present)

Commissioners

Donald Ruhstaller, Chair
Chris Meehleis, Vice-Chair
Gloryanna Rhodes
Lawrence Wight
Jass Sangha

County Staff

Kirin Virk, County Counsel

Shayan Rehman, Department of Public Works

Steven Shih, Environmental Health Department

Community Development Department Staff

Corinne King, Deputy Director of Planning
Megan Aguirre, Principal Planner
Stephanie Stowers, Principal Planner
Jessica Leal, Associate Planner
Gerardo Altamirano, Office Assistant Specialist
Sean Cardenas, Office Assistant Specialist

(absent)

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

1. Minutes from 04-16-26 and 05-21-26.

MOTION:

It was moved, seconded (Rhodes / Sangha), and passed by a vote (5-0) to:

1. Approve and accept the minutes.

VOTE:

AYES: Lawrence Wight, Gloryanna Rhodes, Donald Ruhstaller, Chris Meehleis, Jass Sangha

NOES:

ABSENT:

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC THAT ARE NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:

OPPOSITION TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. PA-2500281 (NOT AN AGENDIZED ITEM):

Mrs. Wendy Tocchini, residing at 23597 Santos Court in Tracy, spoke in opposition to Conditional Use Permit No. PA-2500281, a proposed 3,200-square-foot religious assembly on Hansen Road. She stated that she and her husband are concerned about renewed traffic impacts in an area recently made safer after years of neighborhood efforts to limit cut-through traffic. Mrs. Tokini noted insufficient parking, lack of sidewalks, and that Hansen Road is one lane in each direction, creating safety risks near the local elementary school. She also raised questions regarding the adequacy of well water and septic capacity for the proposed use. She urged the Planning Commission to place the matter on a future agenda and help preserve the residential character and safety of the neighborhood.

Mr. John Tocchini, residing at 23597 Santos Court in Tracy, spoke in opposition to Conditional Use Permit No. PA-2500281. He reiterated concerns previously raised by his wife regarding traffic and safety, noting the community spent five years working with the County to close Hansen Road to through traffic. Mr. Tocchini expressed fear that a religious assembly use would reintroduce significant traffic and undermine those safety improvements. He questioned whether a residential neighborhood is an appropriate location for such a gathering use.

Ms. Shakeela Zahoori, residing at 23403 Hansen Road in Tracy, spoke in opposition to the proposed use at 23595 Hansen Road. She stated that the facility would operate a kitchen offering meals three times a day and attract visitors who remain on site. She expressed concern about the close proximity to her home and noted that she does not agree with the proposed activity due to its impact on nearby residents.

Ms. Cheryl DiCherico, residing at 16601 Wakefield Court in Tracy, spoke in opposition to the proposed religious assembly near her home. She stated that the site is visible from her property and expressed concern about noise and activity affecting the quiet character of the neighborhood where her young grandchildren play. Ms. DiCherico noted that several neighbors share similar concerns and may submit written comments. She asked the Planning Commission to consider the community's desire to preserve the peaceful environment of the area.

Mr. Robert Guadagna, residing at 23465 Currier Drive in Tracy, spoke as a long-time Santos Ranch resident of 40 years and expressed opposition to the proposed use. He stated that the neighborhood previously worked to close Hansen Road to reduce traffic and emphasized that area homes rely on wells and septic systems. Mr. Guadagna noted that introducing a business-type use generating additional traffic would be incompatible with the character of the established neighborhood. He concluded by stating he is opposed to the project.

Mrs. Mindy Meyer, residing at 23066 Los Ranchos Road in Tracy, spoke in opposition to the proposed religious assembly use. She stated that she grew up in the neighborhood, moved away, and returned to raise her family because of the area's quiet, rural character. Mrs. Meyer echoed concerns about traffic, lack of sidewalks, limited parking, and past issues with cut-through traffic and semis on Hansen Road. She also questioned the adequacy of local wells and septic systems and noted existing water quality concerns. Mrs. Meyer expressed frustration that the site is already listed online as a headquarters without broader neighborhood notification and urged the Planning Commission to consider community impacts.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. PA-2500200 OF NATURE CONSERVANCY (C/O ELI FERRIER)** for the establishment of a wildlife preserve within the Primary Zone of the Delta. The project includes the construction of a 475-square-foot viewing platform, a 2,400-square-foot viewing platform, and a 75-square-foot shade trellis, and the installation of a parking lot with bus turnaround and loading area and a portable restroom. The preserve will offer an interpretive program for educational purposes on sustainable, low emission, and wildlife friendly agricultural practices, migratory and resident birds, water in the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta, and the life and legacy of Dawit Zeleke, the founder of Conservation Farms & Ranches. The project site is located on the west side of North Staten Island Road, 3.25-miles south of West Walnut Grove Road, Thornton. (Supervisory District: 4)

Environmental Determination: This project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303. A Notice of Exemption will be filed if the project is approved.

JESSICA LEAL, ASSOCIATE PLANNER, introduced the staff report into the record.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED:

PROPOSERS:

Mr. Eli Ferrier, the applicant for the project, provided a brief slide presentation on a proposed memorial honoring Dawit Zeleke, founder of Conservation Farms and Ranches. He explained that the project would create a safe and accessible gathering point for several thousand annual birdwatchers who currently use narrow farm roads on Staten Island. Mr. Ferrier noted that the site would occupy less than two acres of the 9,000-acre farm and would be located on an existing, raised staging area. The facility would include bus turnaround access, parking, a portable toilet, and space for up to 80 visitors, along with interpretive elements. He stated that the design is minimal and intended to improve safety for birders, visitors, and farm staff.

Commissioner Ruhstaller asked the applicant to clarify current visitor behavior on Staten Island.

Mr. Ferrier explained that birdwatchers presently park along farm roads and disperse throughout the property, including on levee roads and areas unsuitable for non-farm vehicles.

Commissioner Ruhstaller asked the applicant a question about current farm operations.

Mr. Ferrier stated that the farm produces rice, corn, triticale, and livestock, and leaves high forage in the fields from October through March to support Pacific Flyway birds. Mr. Ferrier noted that thousands of sandhill cranes and other species use the site each winter, creating a major viewing attraction.

OPPOSERS:

None.

REBUTTAL:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

MOTION:

It was moved, seconded (Meehleis / Sangha), and passed by a vote (5-0) to:

1. Accept the Notice of Exemption;
2. Adopt the Findings for the Williamson Act Principles of Compatibility and Conditional Use Permit No. PA-2500200; and
3. Approve Conditional Use Permit PA-2500200 subject to the Conditions of Approval.

VOTE:

AYES: Lawrence Wight, Gloryanna Rhodes, Donald Ruhstaller, Chris Meehleis, Jass Sangha
NOES:
ABSENT:

2. **GENERAL PLAN TEXT AMENDMENT NO. PA-2600209** to revise the 6th cycle Housing Element adopted in 2025. Proposed revisions include changes to address the incorporation of the City of Mountain House and the related reallocation of a portion of the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to the city. The project site is Countywide. (Supervisory District: Countywide)

Environmental Determination: This project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3). A Notice of Exemption will be filed if the project is approved.

MEGAN AGUIRRE, PRINCIPAL PLANNER, introduced the staff report into the record.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED:

PROPOSERS:

None.

OPPOSERS:

None.

REBUTTAL:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

Commissioner Rhodes asked whether formerly unincorporated land is now designated for Mountain House and whether the remaining area remains unincorporated.

Corinne King, Deputy Director of Planning, explained that Mountain House previously fell under the County's RHNA allocation, but upon incorporation, the city assumed its own share, requiring a redistribution of units.

Commissioner Sangha asked for clarification on whether the reallocated units are now under the City of Mountain House.

Deputy Director King confirmed that Mountain House now has its own allocation, receiving approximately 5,000 units while the County retains about 2,000.

Commissioner Rhodes asked about Mountain House's responsibility to prepare its own housing element.

Megan Aguirre, Principal Planner, confirmed they must prepare their own element, noting they had been using the County's General Plan but have a separate deadline from the County.

Commissioner Sangha asked whether the City of Mountain House currently had a Planning Commission of their own.

Ms. Aguirre responded, stating that she was unsure but believed appointments had been made, but this would need to be verified.

Commissioner Ruhstaller commented that Mountain House had sought complete control in prior discussions and now had obtained it.

Commissioner Rhodes commented that Mountain House would eventually need to establish a Planning

Commission within a certain timeframe after incorporation.

Commission Ruhstaller commented that it is the responsibility of City of Mountain House leadership to address that concern.

MOTION:

It was moved, seconded (Rhodes / Sangha), and passed by a vote (5-0) to:

1. Forward to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation to adopt the Findings for General Plan Text Amendment, and
2. Forward to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation to approve General Plan Text Amendment No. PA-2600209 for revisions to the adopted 2023-2031 Housing Element.

VOTE:

AYES: Lawrence Wight, Gloryanna Rhodes, Donald Ruhstaller, Chris Meehleis, Jass Sangha

NOES:

ABSENT:

OTHER BUSINESS:

Adoption of Rules and Procedures for Planning Commission Meetings:

Corinne King, Deputy Director of Planning, reported that the Planning Commission Rules and Procedures had been updated for the first time since 2002. Key revisions included changing the meeting location and time to 6:00 p.m. in the Board Chambers, updating references to the current Development Title, and reducing individual public comments from five minutes to three unless extended by the Chair. Staff also noted that the annual election of the Chair had been moved from July to January. Remaining updates were described as general cleanup revisions.

MOTION:

It was moved, seconded (Wight / Meehleis), and passed by a vote (5-0) to:

1. Accept the adoption of Rules and Procedures for Planning Commission meetings as presented.

VOTE:

AYES: Lawrence Wight, Gloryanna Rhodes, Donald Ruhstaller, Chris Meehleis, Jass Sangha

NOES:

ABSENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Donald Ruhstaller, Chair

Jennifer Jolley, Secretary