

Town of Yucca Valley
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present: James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Clint Stoker, Mathew Thomas, Alejandro Vasconcelos

Absent:

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Commissioner Thomas.

Approval of Agenda

Motion:

Approve the meeting agenda as prepared

Result: (Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0)

Mover: Commissioner Clint Stoker

Second: Commissioner James Henderson

Ayes: James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Clint Stoker, Mathew Thomas, Alejandro Vasconcelos

Consent Agenda

Motion:

Result: (Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0)

Mover: Commissioner Mathew Thomas

Second: Commissioner James Henderson

Ayes: James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Clint Stoker, Mathew Thomas, Alejandro Vasconcelos

1. Planning Commission - Regular Meeting - Aug 26, 2025, 6:00 PM

Motion:

Approve the meeting minutes of August 26, 2025, as presented.

Result: (Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0)

Mover: Commissioner James Henderson

Second: Commissioner Gerard Noonan

Ayes: James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Mathew Thomas, Clint Stoker,

2. Native Plant Permit (NPP) 084-25 @ 7616 Barberry Avenue

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the attached Desert Native Plant Specialist Report for proposed residential construction and approves the Native Plant Permit (NPP 084-25) exemption, finding that, based on the evidence presented in the submittals, the proposed project is not disturbing any regulated desert native plants, and is therefore exempt from Town of Yucca Valley Development Code section 9.07.130 Native Landscape Documentation Package.

3. Native Plant Permit (NPP) 085-25 @ 7425 Borrego Trail

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the attached Desert Native Plant Specialist Report for proposed residential construction and approves the Native Plant Permit (NPP 085-25) exemption, finding that, based on the evidence presented in the submittals, the proposed project is not disturbing any regulated desert native plants, and is therefore exempt from Town of Yucca Valley Development Code section 9.07.130 Native Landscape Documentation Package.

4. Native Plant Permit (NPP) 105-25 @ 7384 Dumosa Avenue

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the attached Desert Native Plant Specialist Report for a proposed sewer connection and approves the Native Plant Permit (NPP 105-25) exemption, finding that, based on the evidence presented in the submittals, the proposed project is not disturbing any regulated desert native plants, and is therefore exempt from Town of Yucca Valley Development Code section 9.07.130 Native Landscape Documentation Package.

5. Native Plant Permit (NPP) 107-25 @ 57930 Twentynine Palms Highway

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the attached Applicant Report for a proposed plumbing repair and approves the Native Plant Permit (NPP 107-25) exemption, finding that, based on the evidence presented in the submittals, the proposed project is not disturbing any regulated desert native plants, and is therefore exempt from Town of Yucca Valley Development Code section 9.09.050 Native Landscape Documentation Package.

6. Native Plant Permit (NPP) 108-25 @ 57494 Bandera Road

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the attached Applicant Report for a

proposed septic replacement and approves the Native Plant Permit (NPP 108-25) exemption, finding that, based on the evidence presented in the submittals, the proposed project is not disturbing any regulated desert native plants, and is therefore exempt from Town of Yucca Valley Development Code section 9.07.130 Native Landscape Documentation Package.

Department Reports

7. Land Development Update

Motion:

That the Planning Commission receives and files the report.

Result: (Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0)

Mover: Commissioner James Henderson

Second: Commissioner Gerard Noonan

Ayes: James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Clint Stoker, Mathew Thomas, Alejandro Vasconcelos

Associate Planner Jerome stated good evening this is a receive and file recommendation. This is going to be kind of a long one because there's also CIP projects for public works in here. But I'll try to, not linger too long. First project update is the aquatic center you probably seen they're making good progress. I believe we have about 1 year left before it's intended to be operational. The senior center making good progress should be completed any minute I believe. Some time in the next couple of months. If I'm giving bad information hopefully Alex will jump in. Athletic facility we recently received our take permit from Fish & Wildlife for the Joshua trees. That was kind of the big thing we were waiting on. We are coordinating with contractors and consultants, etc., but this should be under way in about one month. Yucca Trail widening so between Palomar and La Contenta it's going to be widening to the General Plan width which is a 100' for the entire right-of-way. May tweak Indio, so, Indio doesn't have a little jog in it. So, it lines up with the south side of Indio. We kicked off CEQA for this, I believe about 2 weeks ago. So, the CEQA consultants are currently looking at Joshua trees, and measuring noise and those sorts of things.

Walmart, I see lots of emails flying around about CEQA so they are knee deep in environmental review currently. So, I think their target date is the end of the year for Planning Commission. Not sure if they'll meet that date, but sometime December, January for Planning Commission review of their gas station convenience store. Dutch Bros as you can see, we also kicked off CEQA recently about a week and a half ago. So, they are also going through the pleasure of that process. They've got Joshua trees

onsite so that necessitates that. Sun Mesa Mini Storage kicked off CEQA a couple of months back. They are making progress. Another project that we see a ton of emails from the CEQA consultant on. So, they're making progress on that. I believe they're also targeting the end of the year for Planning Commission. Same with Dutch Bros. Circle K we just received a street vacation request. You can see the dotted line on the east side of the property as the current right-of-way. So, part of the street vacation is fixing that right-of-way so that it's not cutting through the property. And then they want to subdivide cut the property in half, north-south, and use the northern half of the property for something later on. So, we just received those and they are 1 traffic study away from kicking off their CEQA. Lighthouse Church, we haven't heard from them in a couple of months, but it's our impression they're still working on it. There's a couple of challenges with the sidewalk and Joshua trees, so, I think they're trying to navigate that. Joshua Springs has officially abandoned their project as of this month. So, we will not be seeing that at least not in the coming months. They had some other responsibilities they had to do to improve the site that was a higher priority than the gymnasium. Yucca Trail mini storage is actually getting fairly close. They are a landscape plan away from being complete. Then moving onto the CEQA process, they also have protected plants onsite like all the other projects. So, they will have to do some level of CEQA review for that. This is the one near the intersection of Yucca Trail and Kickpoo.

Minor subdivision on Spencer Road, 1 parcel to 2 parcels. Over at Balsa and Yucca Trail they're reverting a handful of lots back to 1 lot. But we are hopefully keeping the also right-of-way so it can tie in, tie the 2 side of the streets together. They're fairly close to completing that project. They're getting it ready for Planning Commission review.

Acoma Trail same thing reverting to acreage. They have a street network and lots in there that's covered in Joshua trees so they're reverting it back to 1 single lot instead of moving forward with a subdivision.

Tumbleweed is scheduled for September 23rd. So, this will be at your next Planning Commission meeting. That's hope right now September 23rd for your review. They're pretty close to being complete. Las Palmas said that they intend to start construction relatively soon they have a couple of minor improvements they want to do before they start the patio. But it should be any minute now.

Yucca Valley Materials Lab was in the office today. They are trying to figure out their access issues. You can see the current driveway bisects another property to the west. And they're trying to, we'll say, formalize a driveway. Starbucks says they intend to break ground this month. So, fingers crossed.

A couple quick updates. I saw that Nice Dreams was under construction today. They're doing some work back here, seeing them removing a tree, it's not a Joshua tree for the record. They're doing some improvement to the parking beginning to do that process. Not much change in Domino's/Jersey Mike's but there's some work. Star Café they had some people onsite. I think they might have been doing something, but they have a ways to go as you can see. They do have the interior partition wall. So, they've had 1 inspection so far. This is the Wamego Trail retail facility. Pretty much all they have left is their parking lot as you can see. But that is landscaping, well decorative with yard art we'll say. They have some gas pumps that are also decorative they're kind of cool. But they're making progress. You've already seen this, no change, Wing Stop is selling chickens. Bath & Body Works doesn't look like much different but they're making a little progress on the façade, continue to make interior work as well, interior progress. Just for, I don't know if we ever presented this but this is the 5 plex on Palo Alto as it is operational. This is what it looks like with the landscaping and fencing and what not. Actually it looks pretty good. It's the best looking apartment building on the block. And this is the 4 plex on Palo Alto as you can see they're starting to put walls up and do that kind of work and making progress. There was a team out there today working on it.

This is Camino Del Cielo as the water district continues to work there installing the sewer. This is Martinez Trail you see they also have that torn up to install the sewer.

Mojave Gold's mural is looking good.

I wasn't able to get any picture of this one but they do have all the grading done and looks like they're either ready to pour or about or have been pouring foundation, etc. so, they're making progress.

And that concludes our land development update. We can answer questions following public comment.

Chair Vasconcelos stated thank you staff. Anyone in the public wishes to comment. Anyone online. Close public comment. Commissioner Noonan.

Commissioner Noonan stated no comments. Thank you.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Thomas.

Commissioner Thomas stated yes, thank you. Just 1 question on the Walmart and you said the project also included an amendment to the specific plan. What was that [inaudible]

Associate Planner Jerome stated so, it's a little complicated, but in their original

approval for their specific plan they do not have a gas station as an approved use. So, the amendment is just really, it's 1 page and it's changing [crosstalk]

Commissioner Thomas stated It's just for that property. Okay. All right. Thank you.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Henderson.

Commissioner Henderson stated thank you. In regards to the old library and the conversion for the public's meeting space, is there any updates on that?

Associate Planner Jerome stated for the Town project, or for-- yeah.

Public Works Director Qishta, stated, good evening, Commissioners. In regard to that project, it's on hold for now. The reason why is because of funding. We are waiting to see what the funding will be from the aquatic center and see if we can deliver that project. But at this point of time, it's on hold.

Commissioner Henderson stated okay. Thank you, Alex. Nothing further.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Stoker.

Commissioner Stoker asked is there looking to be any movement from the state in regards to what their requirements are going to be for single-family housing projects? And the reason I ask is because two of our items that are in this list are reversion back to acreage, which that whole process costs a lot of money to do the first time to get something parceled out. And it's a shame because this kind of goes against what the state really wants is more houses. So is this kind of something that we could use these two specific tentative track maps to talk to Fish and Wildlife about some of the negative consequences that were unintended?

Associate Planner Jerome stated yeah. We haven't brought it up to Fish and Wildlife, but I think that's a good point

Commissioner Stoker stated I mean, I think prior to us-- if they're planning on bringing this to us to revert in the next meeting or so, this might be something that we want to talk to about at this community forum with some of the staff that's going to be here because I think everyone's goal is more housing, and the states made it their goal for, I feel like, decades. And this is kind of one of those instances where it's an unintended consequence of another action.

Associate Planner Jerome stated yeah. I think considering each of those lots could have one to three dwelling units on it, and there's a fair amount of lots being reverted, yeah, it could be dozens of housing units that we're losing.

Commissioner Thomas asked are they reverting it because of the Joshua tree?

Associate Planner Jerome stated there's several reasons, but the Joshua tree does not help them. It would be very expensive for them to go through that process.

Okay. [inaudible]. I interrupted you.

Chair Vasconcelos stated nothing for me other than I always appreciate these presentations with the pictures and the updates that you've recently been doing. It's more helpful for us to, I think, visually see the updates. So thanks for that. Do we have a motion to receive and file this?

Future Agenda Items

Associate Planner Jerome stated Tumbleweed Sanctuary, fingers crossed, September 23rd.

Commissioner Stoker stated I have something I'd like to add as a future agenda item if we could, actually. Maybe it's something we need to discuss and make a motion on. But in our consent agenda tonight, we have five native plant permits. And I know that when we had the Joshua trees as part of our 2084, we wanted to see all of those Joshua tree permits come through the Planning Commission. But for me, now that we've taken the governing authority and given it back to the state for the Joshua trees for the time being, I feel like these native plant permits, even if you look at one of the staff reports, it says they're administrative in nature and there's no discretion for us at all. So I feel like, for me, I don't know if this is something that can go back to staff or if we need to make a motion to have this agenda item in the future to send that ability just to approve these at the staff level. I think it'll help some of these contractors that are doing sewer hookups and things be able to get this stuff done in a more timely manner, rather than waiting for one of our meetings. Is that something we could get added?

Commissioner Thomas stated I would agree with that.

Commissioner Noonan stated I concur with that as well. It's a very good idea.

Commissioner Henderson stated yeah. I think originally, we voted on each one individually, which caused a lot of angst amongst us. And then it went to the consent agenda for transparency purposes. But in retrospect, I agree with you. I know some neighbors had to have a septic put in, and they had to wait until it got approved at the Planning Commission, which was--

Commissioner Thomas stated yeah. We--

Commissioner Stoker stated it just takes a while

Commissioner Henderson stated it takes a while. So I definitely concur as well.

Commissioner Stoker stated and I think if we were still doing--had Joshua tree governance locally, I wouldn't mind having that for transparency.

Commissioner Thomas stated yeah, I agree with that. Yeah.

Commissioner Stoker stated but seeing as right now, they're all ministerial, they're not a discretionary action any longer, I don't see that it needs to be here. So I don't mind making a motion to agendize removing the native plant permits from our consent calendar and handing it back to staff for approval, unless there's something that staff feels needed to be pushed our direction as an item.

Commissioner Thomas stated I second that.

Commissioner James Henderson, Gerard Noonan, Clint Stoker, Mathew Thomas, Alejandro Vasconcelos voted yes.

Public Comments

Chair Vasconcelos stated the Planning Commission takes this time to consider your comments on items of concern which are not on the agenda. When you are called to speak, please state your name and community of residence. Please limit your comments to three minutes or less. Inappropriate behavior which disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of this meeting will result in the forfeiture of your public comment privilege. The Planning Commission is prohibited by state law from taking action or discussion items that are not on the printed agenda. With that, is there anyone in the public that wishes to speak? Please approach the podium. State your name and your residence.

Melody Hanson, public speaker, stated I stay out here under the awning. I'm homeless out here. I sleep over here by Grocery Outlet. I don't know if anybody has seen me over there, but that's me lying over there next to Grocery Outlet. I just want to come up and let you guys know that the pest control that you guys have been using isn't working. I know that he comes out and he sprays, but the day after, the ants, actually, it seems to be a little bit worse. So I just wanted to confront you guys with that. There is a couple more issues that I'd like to bring up, but it said only 30 seconds.

Three minutes? Is it okay if I bring up the other two issues? Okay. So I am noticing that the Joshua trees out here are drying out. And I've noticed that the ones over here, where you guys are going to be putting pickleball, is starting to fall. And the one by the bathroom, the kids are over there in and out, so I kind of want to just announce that as to they're very unsafe. If they're in the walkway, I feel like it's unsafe. Not only that one, but the one where you come from the bathroom into the park, it's kind of getting really dry. And I mean, it could be a hazard to you guys, or you guys could get sued. I know that you guys only clean the park every two

weeks, but I've actually been picking that up myself and cleaning it since I'm homeless. I don't have any other time. God's got me there. So I've been picking that job up and sanitizing myself. So I mean, if you guys don't have the money to employ somebody to do that, I don't think you guys have the money to be sued. So I just wanted to confront that to you all. Thanks.

Chair Vasconcelos stated thank you. Thank you. Is there anyone else in the public who wishes to make any comments? Anyone online? That will close public comment.

Staff Reports and Comments

Associate Planner Jerome stated only one comment. On Wednesday, October 15th, assembly member Greg Wallis is going to be hosting a discussion with California Department of Fish and Wildlife here. So, from what we understand, Fish and Wildlife will be here to answer resident questions, get feedback, etc. So if anyone is interested in talking directly with that assembly member and/or the Department of Fish and Wildlife, that will be at 1:00 PM, Wednesday, October 15th, in the Yucca Valley Community Center.

Commissioner Reports and Comments

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Henderson.

Commissioner Henderson stated that was a good meeting. And I agree with you about having all the updated pictures. It's helpful because I don't drive around as much. So I like that. In regards to one of the past items that came in front of the commission where we were asked to do a code interpretation, is that item supposed to come back in front of us?

Associate Planner stated I think we're still figuring out the downstream effects of the interpretation from legal counsel. It kind of solved one issue but complicated another. So we're trying to get more clarification. Hopefully, I would guess in the next week, we'll be more clear on that.

Commissioner Henderson stated okay. Thank you.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Vice Chair Thomas.

Commissioner Thomas stated I have no comments. Thank you to staff. Short meeting. That's it.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Noonan.

Commissioner Noonan stated thank you again to staff for great materials and a lot of visuals. And other than that, I have no comment.

Chair Vasconcelos stated Commissioner Stoker.

Commissioner Stoker stated very much appreciate the meeting. Thank you. And look forward to this community forum. And then on a side note, as different sports leagues, we represented ourselves with the Town's sports council last night. And it was great hearing from all of the different leagues, whether it be Little League, Lobos, soccer, tennis, and - I'm forgetting one - oh, Laces travel baseball and softball about all the activity that's happening. So we're doing a great job, combined with the work of the parks department, for having a lot of programming for the kids out here. So that's pretty awesome to see. Thank you.

Chair Vasconcelos stated yeah. I'd like to thank staff for another great meeting, well-prepared, and preparing us for the future items. I'm looking forward to tackling some of those future agenda items in the future. So thank you for all of that.

Announcements

Chair Vasconcelos stated Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next regular meeting of the Yucca Valley Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 6:00 PM in the Yucca Valley Community Center Yucca Room.

Adjournment

Chair Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 6:26 PM.