SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
P&Z INTERVIEWS
Council Chambers/Library Auditorium
7401 E. Skoog Blvd., Prescott Valley, Arizona 86314, at 3:30pm

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MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2026

Present: Kell Palguta, Mayor
Matt Zurcher, Vice Mayor (appeared virtually)
Kendall Schumacher, Councilmember
Michael Greer, Councilmember
Kenneth Freund, Councilmember
Janell Kiehl, Councilmember
Jason Thornton, Councilmember

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Palguta called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

2. TOWN COUNCIL INTERVIEWS - PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION APPLICANTS

a. ***Town Council Interview of Bruce Evans, Sharon Stephens, Tricia Lewis, Joseph Huot, Jeremy Seger, Bryce Cox, and Kymberli Lopez for Possible Appointment (or Re-appointment) to the Planning & Zoning Commission - Consideration & Possible Action (Appoint) [Stacey Bristow, Development Services Director]***

Mayor Palguta welcomed attendees to the special Council meeting and thanked the applicants for their interest in serving the community. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews for the Planning and Zoning Commission. The interview process consisted of five predetermined questions. Each applicant would have an opportunity to respond to each question, with the starting applicant rotating for each subsequent question.

Town Clerk Fatima Fernandez advised that applicant Tricia Lewis is present remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Mayor Palguta asked the applicants the following question: What do you understand the responsibilities of a Planning and Zoning commission member to be, and what experiences or skills make you a good fit for this role?

Applicant Bruce Evans stated that he had served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for approximately

four years. He explained that the Commission primarily reviews rezoning and General Plan amendment applications, asks questions to make informed recommendations, and forwards its recommendations to Town Council. He also noted that commissioners participate in study sessions on topics such as wildlife corridors and cost recovery.

Applicant Kymberli Lopez indicated that the Commission serves at the will of Council and to review subdivisions, planning, and zoning matters to ensure alignment with the Town's General Plan.

Applicant Joseph Huot explained the Commission's advisory role in reviewing planning and zoning matters and participating in study sessions to support informed recommendations to Town Council. He noted his prior service on the Commission and his thirty-six years of local government experience.

Applicant Sharon Stephens stated that the Commission's role is to serve the Town by reviewing zoning applications, asking questions, and making recommendations in the best interest of Prescott Valley.

Applicant Bryce Cox noted that the Commission's role is to support responsible community growth through review of zoning, mapping, land use, and permits. He shared that he has been a Prescott Valley resident for over twenty years, owns a small HVAC business, and is an Embry-Riddle graduate.

Applicant Jeremy Seger stated that the Commission's role is to support community growth while keeping residents' at the forefront. He noted that he is a lifelong resident and has thirty years of construction experience with knowledge of building codes and development.

Applicant Tricia Lewis apologized for being unable to attend in person due to a conference in Phoenix. She noted that she has worked in state and local government since 2011 and has been a Prescott Valley resident since 2003. She highlighted her experience with the cities of Prescott and Cottonwood, where planning and zoning matters were part of her regular responsibilities, and expressed her interest in serving her community and supporting sustainable, responsible growth.

Mayor Palguta asked the applicants the following question: Why do you want to serve on this commission, and what do you hope to accomplish?

Applicant Kymberli Lopez highlighted decades of community service and volunteer involvement. She emphasized the importance of sustainable, responsible growth as Prescott Valley continues to expand and expressed a desire to work with developers to support the community's continued success.

Applicant Joseph Huot expressed a desire to give back to the community after raising a family in Prescott Valley. He emphasized the importance of volunteer service and responsible growth, noting his goal of helping preserve the community for future generations through the Commission's advisory role to Town Council.

Applicant Sharon Stephens stated that, although she had lived in Prescott Valley for approximately six months, she brought a fresh perspective and decades of experience observing community growth elsewhere. She also highlighted her seventeen years leading a nonprofit organization and expressed a desire to serve and give back to the community.

Applicant Bryce Cox noted his interest in serving based on his two decades of living, working, and attending school in Prescott Valley. He emphasized the importance of citizen representation and bringing construction industry and property ownership perspectives to support responsible community growth.

Applicant Jeremy Seger noted that he has benefited from Prescott Valley's growth over the past thirty years and now wishes to give back through community service. He stated that others encouraged him to apply, believing his experience would be beneficial to the Commission.

Applicant Tricia Lewis touched on her government experience, familiarity with Prescott Valley, and participation in the Flinn-Brown Fellowship. Having grown up in Prescott and resided in Prescott Valley since 2003, she noted her desire to contribute to the community in a leadership capacity by supporting thoughtful, sustainable growth and long-term opportunities.

Applicant Bruce Evans stated that he has been a Prescott Valley resident for approximately seven and a half years and wishes to give back to the community. He highlighted more than thirty years of project finance and

commercial real estate experience across Canada and the United States. He emphasized smart, controlled growth, community collaboration, and thoughtful consideration of development applications before making recommendations to Town Council.

Mayor Palguta asked the applicants the following question: How would you describe your communication and collaboration style when working on a board or commission?

Applicant Joseph Huot described his communication style as centered on listening, gathering facts, and encouraging open dialogue. He emphasized the importance of asking questions and independently evaluating matters to provide Town Council with well-rounded recommendations.

Applicant Sharon Stephens emphasized the importance of active listening, asking questions, and understanding differing perspectives. She noted that teamwork and open dialogue help bridge gaps through understanding.

Applicant Bryce Cox shared his common-sense approach to communication and collaboration, beginning with listening and discussing issues to identify solutions.

Applicant Jeremy Seger discussed a fact-based, logical approach, focusing on clarifying what is known and what actions are permitted. He also noted the importance of giving everyone an opportunity to be heard, considering different perspectives, and using safe communication to move forward.

Applicant Tricia Lewis described a listen-first approach, making fact-based decisions, and valuing collaboration among Commission members, Town staff, and Council. She noted the importance of understanding different perspectives, asking questions, and aligning recommendations with the Town's goals. She also referenced her government and economic development experience working with Planning and Zoning on development projects.

Applicant Bruce Evans discussed a thoughtful, fact-based approach to decision-making, with respect for differing perspectives and ensuring all Commission members have an opportunity to be heard. He also noted the importance of maintaining the integrity of the process by understanding the Commission's authority and limitations. His experience negotiating and collaborating with others was identified as an asset to serving on the Commission.

Applicant Kymberli Lopez outlined a communication approach centered on listening first, conducting research, and achieving results. She referenced her involvement in the rodeo grounds neighborhood steering committee and master plan process as an example of collaboration, noting the importance of listening to residents and validating concerns. She concluded that effective service on a board or commission requires teamwork and collaboration.

Mayor Palguta asked the applicants the following question: If presented with a complex request that has both strong support and opposition from residents, how would you approach your decision-making process?

Applicant Sharon Stephens mentioned the importance of setting emotions aside, focusing on facts, and considering what is best for the community.

Applicant Bryce Cox indicated that development requests often involve complex issues and differing levels of support and opposition. He outlined his approach of focusing on facts and making decisions in the best interests of the community and its residents.

Applicant Jeremy Seger noted that identifying common goals and areas of agreement can help resolve conflicts and narrow differences. He recommended keeping emotions out of discussions, focusing on facts, and working to get the best results for everyone.

Applicant Tricia Lewis acknowledged that complex projects and decisions may not always have unanimous community support. She noted the importance of working with staff, gathering accurate information, keeping political considerations separate, and ensuring Commission members are fully informed. She also stressed making decisions with integrity and prioritizing the Town's overall interests, strategic plan, and community benefit.

Applicant Bruce Evans recommended using logic, rationality, and discernment when evaluating complex issues.

He noted the importance of recognizing that some community members may not actively participate in public discussions and carefully considering the perspectives of both support and opposition before making decisions in the best interest of the community.

Applicant Kymberli Lopez outlined an approach of first understanding the request, conducting research, and consulting with both supporters as well as those in opposition. She acknowledged that difficult decisions may not satisfy everyone but noted that such decisions should prioritize the best interests of the community.

Applicant Joseph Huot acknowledged that emotions often accompany complex community issues but stressed the importance of maintaining objectivity, integrity, and discernment. He noted that public comment provides an opportunity to hear concerns, gather information, and evaluate applications from multiple perspectives before making recommendations to the Town Council.

Mayor Palguta asked the applicants the following question: Commission Members often deliberate as a group. Can you describe a time when you worked on a group decision that required negotiation or compromise, and how you ensured a fair outcome?

Applicant Bryce Cox referenced six years of service as a Marine Corps platoon sergeant, where negotiation and compromise were regular responsibilities when working with different units and local nationals. He noted that fair outcomes are not always straightforward and require analyzing each situation to determine the best possible result for the overall community.

Applicant Jeremy Seger noted his experience as a small business owner, noting that group decision-making and collaboration are part of his regular work. He acknowledged that achieving fair outcomes can be challenging; however, everyone deserves the opportunity to be heard. Listening to different perspectives can provide new insights and can lead you to making better decisions.

Applicant Tricia Lewis recounted her experience as the Tourism and Economic Development Director for the City of Cottonwood, where she navigated community opposition following changes to the City's relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and destination marketing organization. She further discussed working through difficult public discussions and negotiations with the Chamber to establish revised responsibilities and funding arrangements.

Applicant Bruce Evans provided examples of resolving complex issues through negotiation and collaboration. He noted that establishing common goals, maintaining transparency, and prioritizing listening helped the parties reach workable solutions, even when the outcomes were not perfect for either party.

Applicant Kymberli Lopez cited the four-year rodeo grounds master planning process as an example of successful collaboration involving community members, business owners and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. She noted that reaching consensus required listening, considering differing perspectives, and being willing to incorporate others' ideas. The resulting master plan was approved by Town Council and reflected a collective approach that prioritized the community's overall interests.

Applicant Joseph Huot discussed his work with Yavapai County Public Works to develop roadway design standards for micro-trenching to allow broadband installations within rights-of-way. The process involved coordination with other agencies, broadband providers, contractors, and affected communities to balance installation costs with infrastructure integrity and public safety. He noted that listening to stakeholder input and incorporating workable recommendations resulted in standards that are currently being implemented and helping expand broadband access to underserved communities.

Applicant Sharon Stephens referenced her nonprofit leadership experience, where she navigated difficult conversations and opposition when establishing new centers and projects. She noted the importance of revisiting the organization's mission, identifying whom the project would serve, and evaluating the facts to determine whether the proposed project supported that mission. She added that fairness can be subjective, but decisions are easier to substantiate when grounded in the intended purpose and understanding who you are trying to serve.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Council did not go into Executive Session.

4. MOTION

a. ***Motion to appoint (or re-appoint) _____ and _____ to the Planning & Zoning Commission to a Three-Year Term with a Renewal Date of October 31, 2029, OR Motion to table the appointment(s) and direct staff to re-open applications.***

Mayor Palguta thanked the applicants for their participation.

Councilmember Kiehl commended the talent represented among the applicants.

Mayor Palguta announced that Council would not enter executive session, and proceeded to allow Councilmembers an opportunity to discuss the applicants and provide comments or ask questions.

Councilmember Kiehl sought confirmation that the Council would forgo Executive Session and conduct its discussion of the applicants during the public meeting.

Mayor Palguta confirmed that the Council would conduct its discussion of the applicants during the public meeting.

Councilmember Kiehl remarked that the applicant pool included several standout candidates with relevant industry experience and asked whether the Mayor would like to share who he is considering.

Mayor Palguta replied that he is going to speak with everyone first. He then thanked all applicants for their willingness to serve the community and recognized the time and commitment involved in volunteering. He stated that each applicant was qualified to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission and potentially the Town Council, encouraged those not selected to consider future opportunities to serve, and invited them to meet for further discussion about other ways to become involved in the community.

Vice Mayor Zurcher, having served the Town since 2014 in both Planning and Zoning and Council capacities, supported reappointing Commissioners Joseph Huot and Bruce Evans, citing their expertise and institutional knowledge as valuable to the Commission, particularly given its newer members. Vice Mayor Zurcher then moved to make a motion. Councilmember Schumacher seconded the motion. Mayor Palguta opened it up for discussion.

Councilmember Kiehl shared support for the reappointment of Joseph Huot. She then raised concerns regarding community complaints about potentially inappropriate late-night text messages and asked whether Bruce Evans would be willing to sign and abide by the Town's Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Mayor Palguta clarified that the discussion was not a question-and-answer opportunity, noted that a motion and second had been made, and asked Councilmember Kiehl if she had any additional comments.

Councilmember Thornton requested clarification regarding the motion before the Council, and Mayor Palguta confirmed that it was for consideration of two applicants.

Motion by Vice Mayor (appeared virtually) Matt Zurcher, seconded by Councilmember Kendall Schumacher to re-appoint Joseph Huot and Bruce Evans to the Planning & Zoning Commission to a Three-Year Term with a Renewal Date of October 31, 2029 (by electronic vote).

AYE: Mayor Kell Palguta, Vice Mayor (appeared virtually) Matt Zurcher, Councilmember Kendall Schumacher, Councilmember Michael Greer

NAY: Councilmember Kenneth Freund, Councilmember Janell Kiehl, Councilmember Jason Thornton

4 - 3 Passed

b. ***Motion to appoint (or re-appoint) _____ to the Planning & Zoning Commission to a Partial Term with Renewal date of October 31, 2027, OR Motion to table the appointment and direct staff to re-open applications.***

Mayor Palguta inquired if there was any further discussion on this item.

Councilmember Kiehl moved to make a motion. Mayor Palguta recognized Councilmember Schumacher to make the motion which was seconded by Councilmember Greer.

Councilmember Kiehl thanked the applicants for their participation and recognized the experience and talent represented among the candidates.

Motion by Councilmember Kendall Schumacher, seconded by Councilmember Michael Greer to appoint Kymberli Lopez to the Planning & Zoning Commission to a Partial Term with Renewal date of October 31, 2027 (by electronic vote).

AYE: Mayor Kell Palguta, Vice Mayor (appeared virtually) Matt Zurcher, Councilmember Kendall Schumacher, Councilmember Michael Greer

NAY: Councilmember Kenneth Freund, Councilmember Janell Kiehl, Councilmember Jason Thornton

4 - 3 Passed

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Palguta adjourned the meeting at 4:17pm.

ATTEST: APPROVED:

_____ _____

Fatima Fernandez, Town Clerk Kell Palguta, Mayor

STATE OF ARIZONA)
COUNTY OF YAVAPAI)
ss:
TOWN OF PRESCOTT VALLEY)

CERTIFICATE OF COUNCIL MINUTES

I, Marissa Greenwood, Deputy Town Clerk of the Town of Prescott Valley, Arizona, hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Prescott Valley, held on October 22, 2026.

I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was

present.

Dated this November 12, 2026

_____
Marissa Greenwood, Deputy Town Clerk