

## MINUTES OF THE KNOX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

May 6, 2025

**Call to order:** The May 6, 2025, special meeting of the Knox County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Dean Wilken at 6:05 p.m. at The God's Country Barn.

**Announcement of Open Meeting Act:** Chairman Wilken announced where the Open Meetings Act is posted.

**Roll Call:** Members present: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer. Also present were Zoning Administrator Kelsy Jelinek, Special Knox County Attorney David Begley, and several members of the public. Notices had been sent to over 3,100 landowners.

**Approve Agenda & Public Notice** in all Knox County newspapers.

Jim K. moved, Neil Clausen seconded to approve the agenda and public notice which was published in the Knox County News and Crofton Journal. Roll call vote showed all present in favor Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

**Approve the Minutes from the April 8, 2025 Meeting.** Jim Kotrouse moved, Rob Ganz seconded to approve the minutes from April 8th, 2025 meeting. Roll call vote showed all present in favor Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

**Ex Parte Communications:** Jim Kotrous stated that he's had several phone calls.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

- 1. Public hearing to receive public comments regarding potential changes to Chapter 9: Community, Utilities, and Energy of the Knox County, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan considering the proposed ban of all new commercial wind and solar developments in Knox County.**

Dean Wilken read Article X of the Knox County By-laws rules and regulations of a public hearing and opened the public hearing at 6:14 p.m. to explore the possibilities of potential changes to Chapter 9: Community, Utilities, and Energy of the Knox County, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan considering the proposed ban of all new commercial wind and solar developments in Knox County.

The Planning Commission heard testimony from 48 individuals who were either in favor of the ban, opposed of the ban or neutral. Prior to the meeting 5 letters were submitted to the Planning Commission members.

Motion to close the public hearing at 8:55 p.m. by Jim Kotrous, seconded by Robert Larsen. All in favor by roll call vote. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

Keith Nielsen commented on transmission lines, payments and tax dollars. Neil Clausen made a comment regarding the division.

Keith Nielsen made a motion to recommend to the Knox County Board of Supervisors that the County Board of Supervisors ban all new commercial wind and solar developments as being in the best interests of the public health, safety, convenience, order, prosperity and welfare of Knox County and its present and future residents and the demonstrable benefit to agriculture and recreational land in Knox County. As part of this motion, he further moved that the Commission amend the Comprehensive Development Plan as per the redlined stricken language from Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Development Plan which has been presented to the Commission by the Zoning Administrator. The motion was seconded by Jim Kotrous.

Roll call vote shows all in favor. Ayes: Keith Neilsen, Jim Kotrous, Neil Clausen, Robert Ganz, Robert Larsen, David Arens, Doug DeShazer, Greg Kuhlman, Dean Wilken

**2. Public hearing to receive public comments regarding possible repeal of Section 8.08 Commercial/Utility Grade Wind Energy Systems and Section 8.23.05 Commercial Solar Conversion Systems of the Knox County, Nebraska Zoning Regulations in considering the proposed ban of all new commercial wind and solar developments in Knox County.**

Dean Wilken pointed out Article X of the Knox County By-laws rules and regulations of a public hearing and then opened the public hearing at 9:03 p.m. to explore the possibilities of repeal of Section 8.08 Commercial/Utility Grade Wind Energy Systems and Section 8.23.05 Commercial Solar Conversion Systems of the Knox County, Nebraska Zoning Regulations considering the proposed ban of all new commercial wind and solar developments in Knox County.

The Planning Commission heard testimony from 12 individuals who were either in favor of the ban, opposed of the ban or neutral. Prior to the meeting 5 letters were submitted

to the Planning Commission members and 7 calls were received to the zoning office showing support of the ban.

A motion was made by Jim Kotrous and seconded by Doug DeShazer to close the public hearing at 9:31 p.m. Roll call votes show all in favor. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer.

Keith Nielsen made a motion to recommend to the Knox County Board of Supervisors that the County Board of Supervisors ban all new commercial wind and solar developments as being in the best interests of the public health, safety, convenience, order, prosperity and welfare of Knox County and its present and future residents and the demonstrable benefit to agriculture and recreational land in Knox County. As part of this motion, Keith further moved that the Commission recommend to the County Board of Supervisors that Section 8.08 Commercial/Utility Grade Wind Energy Systems and Section 8.23.05 Commercial Solar Conversion Systems of the Knox County be repealed and stricken in their entirety as per the redlined stricken language which has been presented to the Commission by the Zoning Administrator. Jim Kotrous seconded the motion.

Roll call vote showed all in favor. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

**Zoning Administrator's Report:** The April permit Report will be reviewed at the next regular meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10th at 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m. by Chairman Wilken.

Kelsy Jelinek, Zoning Administrator

Approved by Planning Commission: July 8, 2025

Placed on File with Board of Supervisors: Will be placed on file at 7/23/25 meeting

