

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee met at the Estes Valley Community Center and virtually via Zoom video at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at which time the following business was transacted.

Committee members present included: David Converse, Drew Webb, Scott Stewart, and Nataly Handlos.

Staff present included: Rebecca Everette, Michael Whitley, Ryane Oswandel, and Christina Scrutchins.

Board of County Commission present included: Jody Shadduck-McNally

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Member Stewart moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion to adopt the January 15, 2026, agenda of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee, as presented. Members Webb, Stewart, Handlos, and Converse voted in favor. The motion carried (4-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Stewart moved, and Member Webb seconded the motion to approve the October 16, 2025, minutes of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee, as presented. Members Webb, Stewart, Handlos, and Converse voted in favor. The motion carried (4-0).

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally shared how important the committee has been since it was formed following the dissolution of the IGA. She noted that the committee worked in tandem with the town and county on the Estes Forward comprehensive plan and short-term rental regulations.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally explained that due to structural deficits and a need for efficiency, the county leadership has been evaluating boards and commissions. She announced the suggestion to sunset the EVPAC after the first quarter of 2026. She designated the committee members as official ambassadors and subject matter experts for the Estes Valley to be called upon for future stakeholder groups, specifically for upcoming special events discussions.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally presented certificates of appreciation to all members and challenge coins for their long-term service.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally provided updates on the pine beetle outbreak affecting Ponderosa pines in the southern part of the county. She announced an event on January 21st at the Estes Valley Community Center featuring a film titled Fire Lives Here and a visit from the Colorado Insurance Commissioner. She also noted that the county is working with Estes Park on a Dark Sky initiative.

STAFF UPDATES

Director Rebecca Everette highlighted the accomplishments of the committee over the past five years, noting they held 52 meetings and provided recommendations on 51 projects, including the Estes Forward plan and short-term rental regulations.

Director Everette outlined the Community Development Department's focus for 2026, which includes a transfer of development rights stakeholder committee, updating special events code requirements, land use code amendments related to wildfire readiness, and a groundwater study. She also noted the department will look at data center regulations.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Member Stewart expressed concern regarding power lines and wildfire mitigation, suggesting a county-wide initiative to assist power companies in clearing hazardous trees from rights-of-way. Members expressed their appreciation for the staff and the Commissioner's leadership.

ACTION ITEM

ITEM NO. 1 - POSTING OF PUBLIC MEETING

MOTION

Member Handlos moved, and Member Stewart seconded the motion that the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee designate www.Larimer.gov as the place for posting notice of public meetings, and if exigent or emergency circumstances prevent the online posting at such location, public notice shall be physically posted at the bulletin boards located at the north and south entrances to the Larimer County Administrative Services Building at 200 West Oak, Fort Collins, Colorado, in accordance with Colorado's open meetings laws. Members Webb, Stewart, Handlos, and Converse voted in favor. The motion carried (4-0).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 1 - EVPAC PURPOSE & ROLE

This item was addressed during the Commissioner Updates regarding the sunseting of the board, and the committee moved directly to the engagement options discussion.

ITEM NO. 2 - ESTES VALLEY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

Rebecca Everette presented options for future community engagement in the Estes Valley following the sunseting of the committee. Options presented included:

1. Neighborhood Meetings: For any development application in the Estes Valley that requires a hearing (Planning Commission or Board of County Commissioners), a neighborhood meeting will be held within the Estes Valley. These meetings will be advertised via notice letters to property owners within a specific radius, notices in the local newspaper, and through a new email distribution list.
2. Project-Specific Outreach Events: For policy and code projects (such as special events code updates), staff will hold open houses or workshops specifically in Estes Park. These may be hybrid or in-person events designed to gather broad community input.
3. Town Hall Events: Commissioner Shadduck-McNally proposed holding Town Hall events twice a year. These events would focus on specific topics of interest (e.g., wildfire, water, housing) and bring together subject matter experts and staff from multiple county departments to answer questions and listen to community concerns.
4. Dedicated Webpage and Email List: The County will create a dedicated "Estes Valley" landing page on the county website to host maps, static information, and project updates. This page will

allow residents to opt-in to a distribution list to receive notifications about neighborhood meetings and open houses.

5. Task Forces or Committees: For Estes-specific projects, such as updates to the Estes Forward comprehensive plan or major code changes (e.g., short-term rentals), the County will convene time-bound task forces or planning committees with direct Estes representation.

6. Planning Commission Seat: Staff will present a request to the Board of County Commissioners to consider dedicating a Planning Commission seat specifically for the Estes Valley or broadly for mountain communities. This aims to ensure geographic diversity and representation for the area.

7. Countywide Working Groups: The County commits to recruiting Estes Valley residents for working groups regarding countywide projects, such as the Transfer of Development Rights program or countywide comprehensive plan updates.

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

The Committee discussed implementation considerations and expressed support for several options.

The Committee asked whether neighborhood meetings would be recorded and how factual accuracy is maintained. Staff explained that staff attend these meetings to clarify process or code requirements and to help manage discussion. The Committee also asked about remote participation options for hearings, and staff confirmed that hearings always include a Zoom option.

The Committee expressed strong support for in-person town hall events and emphasized the importance of a clear feedback loop, so residents understand how their input is considered and used.

The Committee discussed Planning Commission representation, noting Estes Park's lack of representation for approximately 15 years and raising concerns about the time commitment required for Commissioners. The Committee suggested that if a voting seat is not feasible, an ex officio position could be considered.

The Committee emphasized the importance of rural representation in countywide working groups, noting that issues such as invasive species management and fire mitigation affect rural areas differently than urban communities.

ADJOURN

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.