

ATTACHMENT B

Estrella

VILLAGE PLANNING COMMITTEE



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary PHO-3-25--Z-62-13-7

Date of VPC Meeting	January 20, 2026
Date of Planning Hearing Officer Hearing Request	January 21, 2026 1) Request to modify Stipulation No. 1 regarding general conformance to the site plan and landscape plan
Location	Approximately 1,320 feet south of the southwest corner of 59th Avenue and Lower Buckeye Road
VPC Recommendation	Approval
VPC Vote	4-0

VPC DISCUSSION:

No members of the public registered to speak on this item.

Staff Presentation:

Nayeli Sanchez Luna, staff, displayed the location of the subject site and noted the acreage of the proposal. Ms. Sanchez Luna stated that the proposal was located within the Village Core. Ms. Sanchez Luna provided the original rezoning request information and summarized the proposed modifications proposed by the Planning Hearing Officer (PHO) applications. Ms. Sanchez Luna concluded the presentation by noting that staff had not received any correspondence regarding this request.

Applicant Presentation:

Benjamin Graff, representing the applicant with Quarles & Brady LLP, began the presentation by introducing his clients and noting the location of the site and that the site was currently undeveloped. Mr. Graff noted the minimum 330-foot distance between the battery storage and any residential property. Mr. Graff summarized how the proposed battery storage development would meet numerous principals of the Estrella Village Plan and the Estrella Village Core Plan. Mr. Graff stated that the proposed use would not generate a lot of traffic and would support all the construction and development in the area by providing sufficient energy. Mr. Graff displayed the site plan and noted that his only request was to modify the first stipulation regarding general conformance to the site plan and landscape plan. Mr. Graff concluded the presentation by noting that the proposed battery storage development has met all the Fire Department requirements and that the batteries are made from a safer material that is

less flammable.

Questions From the Committee:

Vice Chair Lisa Perez asked if the wires would run overhead or be located underground. **Mr. Graff** clarified that the wires would run overhead and serve the adjacent substation. Mr. Graff added that the battery storage would only be 10 feet tall. Mr. Graff noted that they had done extensive outreach that is not required through the PHO process. Mr. Graff stated that they hosted a neighborhood meeting and that notification letters were sent in English and Spanish. Mr. Graff added that they did not receive any correspondence and no one attended the neighborhood meeting.

Kristine Morris asked how long the site would be leased to the battery company. **Mr. Graff** stated that the lease would be for approximately 30 years. Mr. Graff noted that a plan was in place to safely remove the batteries and to prevent any contamination of the site. Mr. Graff noted that the rehabilitation plan would have to meet all environmental standards and requirements. **Ms. Morris** noted the Rio Reimagined Initiative and added that this site was somewhat close to the Tres Rios area. **Mr. Graff** stated that they had continued the case to work with the Fire Department and ensured that all necessary departments did not have any concerns. **Ms. Morris** asked if water would be contaminated if the site were to catch fire. Ms. Morris added that her school district was located close to this site.

Romona Burris asked about recycling batteries and if they were planning on doing any sort of recycling on site. **Mr. Graff** stated that they have a revitalization plan for the site once battery storage is not required. Mr. Graff added that these batteries were made of safer metals but that any disposal of batteries would require great attention to detail and safety. Mr. Graff stated that all possible hazardous materials would have to be removed to prevent pollution.

Ms. Morris asked how the batteries would contribute to air quality and pollution in the area. Ms. Morris noted that this area had a lot of existing industrial uses. **Mr. Graff** stated that the proposed battery storage development does not emit any toxic pollutants. Mr. Graff added that the material is safer than traditional batteries and that it was mined ethically.

Ms. Burris asked what type of training would be provided for individuals who would work on site. Ms. Burris asked if the Phoenix Fire Department would be involved in the training. **Brian Scholl**, with the applicant's team, stated that he worked with the Phoenix Fire Department for over 23 years. Mr. Scholl noted that training would be provided on a yearly basis. **Mr. Graff** stated that special training would be required and that fire alarms and temperatures are monitored very closely. Mr. Graff added that the Phoenix Fire Department would have to be notified if the temperature increased.

Ms. Morris asked for more information on the battery life cycle. **Mr. Graff** noted that the average span was about 30 years and once a battery is not useful, then appropriate

steps are taken for deconstruction and transportation. **Ms. Morris** voiced her concern regarding transporting the batteries on the road. **Mr. Graff** reassured her that technicians would ensure that the battery would not have any residual energy stored within it. **Ms. Morris** asked if the site had any special design to contain contaminated water. **Mr. Graff** stated that the floor would not be permeable. **Mr. Scholl** noted that the Fire Department has a specific team that focuses on hazardous fires. Mr. Scholl added that if water needs to be sprayed, then the Fire Department would follow up with continuous testing. **Ms. Morris** asked if water was required to cool down the batteries. **Mr. Graff** noted that very little water was necessary.

Ms. Burris asked for more information regarding the outreach radius. **Mr. Graff** noted that they notified everyone within a 600-foot radius. Ms. Burris noted that a lot of individuals do not have the ability to attend meetings in person and suggested hosting virtual meetings. **Mr. Graff** added that they did not host a virtual meeting for this request but would consider it for the next request. Mr. Graff stated that they did send letters in English and Spanish. **Ms. Burris** stated that she would like renters to also be notified in the future.

Vice Chair Lisa Perez stated that she had numerous calls with the Fire Department before this case came back to the Village Planning Committee. Vice Chair Perez noted that she felt comfortable with the request after speaking with the Fire Department. Vice Chair Perez asked for more information regarding the Councilmember Hernandez's comment regarding the Democratic Republic of Congo. **Mr. Graff** stated that this company was based in Denver and that their company utilized ethical mining operations and that is why it was included in the narrative.

Ms. Burris asked for more information regarding the procedure of this request. **Vice Chair Perez** noted that the zoning on the site was not being changed but a stipulation modification request has been submitted. Vice Chair Perez stated that this request would go through the Planning Hearing Officer, but that the Village Planning Committee could request the case be presented for recommendation. Vice Chair Perez added that this case would go to PHO the following day. **Ms. Burris** asked if the case could be approved if they did not have all the necessary permits. **Vice Chair Perez** stated that for the proposal to receive permits, they would have to first go through this PHO process. Vice Chair Perez noted that if the case is adopted by City Council, then they would be able to continue the process of applying and receiving permits.

Public Comment:

None.

Committee Motion, Discussion, Vote:

Motion:

Kristine Morris motioned to recommend approval of PHO-3-25--Z-62-13-7. **Markus Cenicerros** seconded the motion.

Estrella Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

PHO-3-25--Z-62-13-7

January 20, 2026

Page 4 of 4

Vote:

4-0, motion to recommend approval of PHO-3-25--Z-62-13-7 passed with Committee Members Burris, Cenicerros, Morris, and Perez in favor.

Staff comments regarding VPC Recommendation:

None.