

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHINO VALLEY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026
6:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 202 N. STATE ROUTE 89 | CHINO VALLEY,
ARIZONA 86323**

1. CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

Mayor Armstrong called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

Absent:

Staff Present: Town Manager Terri Denemy, Town Attorney Andrew McGuire, Officer Robert Sanchez (Sgt. at Arms), Executive Analyst Jessi Sorteberg, Executive Assistant Mike Coomer, Development Services Director Laurie Lineberry, Assistant Development Services Director Will Dingee, Senior Planner Jessica Barragan, Finance Director Katie Pehl, Police Chief Josh McIntire, Lieutenant Amy Chamberlin, Officer Dylan Wilhide, Community Services Director Cyndi Thomas, Recreation & Events Coordinator Morgan Heiner, IT Support Technician Matt Widner, Audio Visual Technician Nicholas Harwick, Deputy Town Clerk Sara Burchill, Town Clerk Erin N. Deskins

2. INTRODUCTIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS

- a. Presentation and update from Brian Sutton, President, and Mark Lipp, Special Events Coordinator with the Chino Valley Flyers in advance of their upcoming contract renewal.

Brian Sutton, President of the Chino Valley Flyers, presented the following:

- Discussed who the Chino Valley Flyers are, where they operate, their length of operation, and where their members travel from.
- Discussed the airfield and reported some of the positive reviews they've received regarding the airfield.
- Listed their major events including the Steve Crowe Memorial Airshow, various competitions, pylon racing, glider endurance, etc.

- b. Presentation on America's 250th Anniversary and Route 66 Centennial — Town participation, planning, and branding and proposed logo and tagline to be used consistently across Town materials and events for the remainder of the year.

Cyndi Thomas, Community Services Director, presented the following:

- Presented a commemorative logo to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America and the Route 66 Centennial. It will be on all Town printed materials, marketing pieces, emails, and event promotions through the end of the calendar year.
- Provided a brochure highlighting events throughout the year and providing contact information for communities hosting events and the official committee. The brochure is attached to these minutes.
- Announced a new Town event: Stars, Stripes, and Syrup, a community pancake breakfast. Staff is currently in communication with local groups about partnering to host the event.
- Recognized staff that helped create these materials and initiatives.

Council and staff discussed the following:

- Councilmember Holt stated that he loved the logo and suggested the Town have Tom's Print and Sign make patches to sell as a way to finance the pool.

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC - Individuals requesting to speak, please complete a Speaker Comment Card and return to the Clerk.

Call to the Public is an opportunity for the public to address the Council on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Council. Public comment is at the discretion of the Council and not required by law. Individuals are limited to speak for three (3) minutes, yielding of time will not be permitted. The total time for Call to the Public may be up to 30 minutes per meeting. Council action taken as a result of public comment on items not on the agenda will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date, or responding to criticism. Public comment is invited and encouraged, however, personal attacks on individuals is not appropriate. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated; this includes loud outbursts, profanity, and disruptive discussions among our audience.

Erin Deskins, Town Clerk, stated there were no comment cards filed.

4. CURRENT EVENT SUMMARIES AND REPORTS

This item is for information only. The Mayor, any Councilmember, or Town Manager may present a brief summary or report of current events. If listed below, there may also be a presentation on information requested by the Mayor and Council and questions may be answered. No action will be taken.

- a. Status reports by Mayor and Council regarding current events.

Councilmember McCafferty celebrated that the men's and women's hockey teams beat Canada in the Olympics.

Mayor Armstrong stated that the Arizona Women's Network awarded Terri Denemy as Woman of the Year.

- Ms. Denemy stated that being a good leader is predicated on working with great people and recognized the Council and staff.
- b. Status report by Town Manager Terri Denemy regarding Town accomplishments, and current or upcoming projects.

Terri Denemy, Town Manager, presented the following:

- The Community Development Block Grant program was coming up, and the Town would be looking for input from the community via a public hearing on March 9 from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The grant opportunity is for \$300,000. The matter will then come to Council for a vote to support one of the proposed projects.
- The Town received a new grant today and an announcement will be forthcoming.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

All those items listed below are considered to be routine and may be enacted by one motion. Any Councilmember may request to remove an item from the Consent Agenda to be considered and discussed separately.

MOVED by Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, seconded by Councilmember John McCafferty to approve Consent Agenda items a, b, c, d, and e.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: None

7 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- a. Consideration and possible recommendation to approve the application from Agent Gregory Collins for a Permanent Extension of Premises for Lucy's Place, located at 3020 North Highway 89, Chino Valley.
- b. Consideration and possible action to approve Resolution No. 2026-1299 approving a Call of Election for Fall 2026, designating election dates and purpose, voter registration deadlines, and the place and last date for candidates to file nomination papers.
- c. Consideration and possible action to acknowledge scrivener's correction on Ordinance No. 2026-962 approved on January 27, 2026, pursuant to Town Code § 10.20 Authority to Correct Scrivener's Errors.
- d. Consideration and possible action to approve the January 26, 2026, study session minutes.
- e. Consideration and possible action to approve the January 27, 2026, regular meeting minutes.

6. ACTION ITEMS

The Council may vote to recess the public meeting and hold an Executive Session on any item on this agenda pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussion or consultation for legal advice with the Town Attorney. Executive sessions are not open to the public and no action may be taken in executive session.

- a. Consideration and possible action on Resolution 2026-1302 for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2025-06) to allow for the construction of a freestanding electronic message center sign at the Ace Hardware Store located at 1395 South State Route 89, Chino Valley, Arizona 86323.

Recommended Action: i) Hold a Public Hearing

ii) Approve Resolution 2026-1302 for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2025-06) to allow for the construction of a freestanding electronic message center sign at the Ace Hardware Store located at 1395 South State Route 89, Chino Valley, Arizona 86323.

Jessica Barragan, Senior Planner, presented the following:

- This application is for an electronic message center sign at Ace Hardware.
- Discussed the zoning of the subject and surrounding parcels.
- Reviewed the criteria for signs and Conditional Use Permits (CUP).
- Presented a rendering of the proposed sign and discussed specifications; the current sign will be demolished.
- Discussed operation of the sign and dark sky compliance procedures.
- Planning & Zoning unanimously recommended approval.

Mayor Armstrong opened the public hearing.

There were no requests to speak.

Mayor Armstrong closed the public hearing.

MOVED by Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, seconded by Councilmember John McCafferty to approve Resolution No. 2026-1302 for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2025-06) to allow for the construction of a freestanding electronic message center sign at the Ace Hardware Store located at 1395 South State Route 89, Chino Valley, Arizona 86323.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: None

7 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- b. Consideration and possible action on Ordinance No. 2026-965 to rezone approximately 390 acres of land located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona, from single-family residential, 2-acre minimum,

to agricultural/residential, 36-acre minimum.

Recommended Action: Approve Ordinance 2026-965 for Zone Change ZC-2025-03 to rezone approximately 390 acres of land located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona, from single-family residential, 2-acre minimum, to agricultural/residential, 36-acre minimum.

MOVED by Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, seconded by Councilmember John McCafferty to enter Executive Session at 6:22 p.m.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: None

7 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

The regular meeting resumed at 6:53 p.m.

Laurie Lineberry, Development Services Director, and Will Dingee, Assistant Development Services Director presented the following:

- Staff gave the bulk of their presentation at the public hearing, but would address some items that came up from speakers during the public hearing.
- Addressed the text message brought up between Mr. Dingee and an ERAU representative. The characterization that the text was meant to withhold information regarding flight paths was inaccurate. The full text exchange reveals that the applicant indicated they would prepare an updated version. The purpose was not to suppress, but rather to not show incorrect information.
- Addressed the allegations of private meetings and arrangements with developers outside the public process. Discussed other projects that included meetings with developers before the process went to the voters, including the Del Rio Springs purchase. The meetings were not approvals, rather part of the evaluation process. Further discussed earlier meetings with Perkins and ERAU stating that staff was already drafting the AR-36 zoning district when Mr. Perkins suggested including airfield and related uses. After staff discussions, they determined that it could fit if it was a conditional use, not a permitted use. The draft AR-36 ordinance was also brought to the zoning group with the addition of an airfield as an accessory use and the group made edits to the ordinance. Further discussed the process of approval as it went to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Town Council.
- Discussed a modification to the Resolution to remove Condition #15. And a portion of Condition #16.
- Planning & Zoning recommended approval of the rezone and CUP.

Council and staff discussed the following:

- Councilmember Schacherer referred to the Housing Impact for Zone Change Requests detailed on page 157 of the packet. He inquired why a non-residential use would be permitted in a residential zone.

- Staff stated the zoning district has some residential uses and some non-residential uses as defined by permitted and conditional uses. Staff is currently updating the zoning code which does not match the General Plan. Corrections such as these would be made in the update.
- Councilmember Schacherer inquired about the fiscal impact and asked staff to give an example of possible income. He further inquired about the \$15 million estimate for the construction of the airstrip.
 - Staff stated that Phase 1 would bring in construction tax. Phases 2, 3, and 4 are projected to have the most benefits, but a lot of that information is unknown as they would be done at each phase of the process.
 - Staff discussed calculations on taxes for construction and stated that they won't know the total cost of the contract until it goes through for permits as it is a private party transaction. Further discussed some of the possibilities for revenue including fuel sales, cafeterias, purchase of development materials, commercial lease tax, etc.
- Councilmember Schacherer inquired about a lot split that should have happened before any zoning or conditional use hearing.
 - Staff stated that has been completed and approved and is ready to be recorded. It does not go to Council as it is a minor land action and, therefore, an administrative action.
- Councilmember Holt referred to the map presented and stated that the houses are closer to Love field than the proposed airstrip.
 - Staff agreed.

Council and applicant discussed the following:

- Councilmember Holt inquired if there were any funds from federal grants for this project that would require it to be open to the public.
 - Dr. Witcher stated there were none.
- Councilmember Holt inquired how long they anticipated for completion of Phase 1.
 - Mayor Armstrong directed that questions be kept to the zone change until they get to the CUP.
- Mayor Armstrong asked Mrs. Perkins about her anticipation for the rest of the property.
 - Mrs. Perkins stated that it would remain ranch land and they would take care of the antelope. She felt it was a great opportunity for the future of Chino Valley and the children. She stated they have no problems with ERAU and the airstrip would be just for touch-and-goes, and would not be a full blown airport. Her house is very close and stated the noise would be minimal and would not harm the animals.

Mayor Armstrong opened discussion for the Council to discuss their votes if they wished.

- Councilmember Schacherer stated that he would be voting "No."
- Vice-Mayor Granillo thanked everyone for coming to the public hearing and all the emails and input for the Council to take into consideration. He stated that he had been in the area his whole life and his kids graduated from Chino Valley High School. He discussed some potential benefits of the airstrip and potential detriments of the project. He hoped that everyone could be neighbors and respect each other. He

referred to comments made on social media against the Perkins family and stated they were uncalled-for.

MOVED by Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, seconded by Councilmember Robert Schacherer to deny Ordinance No. 2026-965 to rezone approximately 390 acres of land located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona from single-family residential, 2-acre minimum, to agricultural/residential, 36-acre minimum.

Councilmember McCafferty clarified that a yes vote is saying "No" to the zone change.

AYE: Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember Robert Schacherer

NAY: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

2 - 5 Failed

MOVED by Councilmember Robert Switzer, seconded by Councilmember John McCafferty to approve Ordinance No. 2026-965 to rezone approximately 390 acres of land located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona from single-family residential, 2-acre minimum, to agricultural/residential, 36-acre minimum.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember Robert Schacherer

5 - 2 Passed

- c. Consideration and possible action on Resolution No. 2026-1303 for Conditional Use Permit 2025-05, establishing a footprint of all phases for a privately owned and operated airfield and associated uses of approximately 390 acres located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona, 86323.

Recommended Action: Approve Resolution No. 2026-1303 for Conditional Use Permit 2025-05, establishing a footprint of all phases for a privately owned and operated airfield and associated uses of approximately 390 acres located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona, 86323.

Council and staff discussed the following:

- Councilmember Schacherer referred to comments about larger aircraft and helicopters utilizing the airstrip and stated he saw nothing in the CUP about that.
 - Staff stated that the applicant would be able to address that.
- Councilmember Schacherer clarified that this CUP encapsulates all four phases.
 - Staff stated that is correct, the CUP is for the footprint and uses for all four phases. Each phase would have to return to Council for a development agreement. Approval does not automatically allow construction to begin.

- Councilmember Schacher referred to page 135 of the packet calling out a total lot coverage of 15%, which would be 58.5 acres, but the airfield is 366 acres.
 - Staff discussed how they calculate lot coverage on buildings. This does not include roads, etc. They won't know the total amount of acres for buildings until the phases come back for development, but it would have to stay under the 15% lot coverage.
- Councilmember Schacherer referred to different descriptions of Phase 1 and inquired what it would actually be.
 - Staff stated that Phase 1 is what is in the Resolution as recommended by Planning & Zoning under 5(a) of Section 2. Staff stated that additional details are in the staff report because the item evolves throughout the public hearing process and conditions are added.
- Councilmember Schacherer inquired when staff received the information about a contract between CAFMA and the applicant and that the Town would not be responsible for any taxes.
 - Staff stated that occurred within the last two weeks.
 - Councilmember Schacherer inquired about terms of the contract.
 - Staff stated it would be part of the development agreement for Council approval if this item were approved.
 - Councilmember Schacherer inquired if there would be a fire department on the airstrip.
 - Staff stated it would be dependent on what the parties work out in the contract. CAFMA would cover the airstrip privately in Phase 1 for emergency response.
 - Councilmember Schacherer stated that CAFMA had told him that there would be a trailer with suppression in case of fire.
 - Staff stated they could not speak for CAFMA.
 - Mr. Perkins discussed various meetings and conversations that were had regarding a fire station on the land ultimately resulting in Mr. Perkins agreeing to donate the land and have a contract to provide services to the airfield. He discussed the fact that only two and a half percent of airfields and heliports in the U.S. have a fire station. Mr. Perkins stated that student pilots are always with an instructor pilot, but there is always the risk of a crash.
- Councilmember Schacherer referred to comments that had been made regarding this location presenting fewer conflicts with existing developments than in other communities where aviation already occurs. He inquired why staff would be concerned with conflict in other communities.
 - Staff stated they brought it up as a comparison to show that Chino Valley is very different from places like Seligman, Bagdad, and Cottonwood and having fewer conflicts with existing buildings.
 - Councilmember Schacherer stated there was more conflict with people here than having the airport anywhere else.
- Councilmember Schacherer referred to page 106 which states the development agreement would address optional matters not fully resolved through the CUP and asked staff to explain that.
 - Staff stated that this would be all of the items that come out as part of the resolution itself.

- Staff stated that even if the CUP is approved, a lot of things will come back with the Development Agreement.
 - Councilmember Schacherer further inquired about language stating that the applicant may proceed with construction prior to the execution of a development agreement and inquired if the Town gives any other developer leeway to start construction prior to execution of a development agreement.
 - Staff stated that Brightstar is currently grading at their risk. They still have to pull permits and if something happens it's on them, and they will have to fix it.
 - Andrew McGuire, Town Attorney, stated that at risk means at risk, and it doesn't vest any rights or give applicants opportunities other than what they currently have on the property. If the development agreement doesn't go through, that is on them.
- Councilmember Schacherer stated that he wanted to discuss condition #16a (operation times).
 - Councilmembers stated that they had already heard and discussed it and suggested waiting for a development agreement to discuss it further.
 - Staff stated they would discuss whatever Council would like.
- Councilmember Schacherer inquired who would be in charge of the airstrip.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that ERAU would be the lessee and would be in charge of the flight schedule. He stated that he understood people were scared about the hours and numbers of operations and explained some definitions around flights and maneuvers and the amount of flights that would occur, as have been explained in previous meetings. He further explained that the extended hours are necessary as students need instruction during those times to meet their qualifications, but the early and late hours would not be utilized often.
- Councilmember Schacherer brought up issues at the Clarkdale airport and stated that in nine months Dr. Witcher had not solved problems brought to his attention.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that he would guide the project to be friendly and managed properly.
 - Mr. Perkins further stated that the Clarkdale/Cottonwood airport is not a private airport, it is public and collects public money. The airport sits right on 89A, and people are still building around it.
 - Councilmember Schacherer stated that this project would build an airport near houses.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that they have selected to place the airstrip as far away from buildings and Highway 89, as they possibly could and stated that the only reason the Town has land out there is because it was incorporated by the Perkins family.
 - Dr. Witcher stated that he meets with the mayors, managers, and county supervisor of Clarkdale and Cottonwood every month to address any complaints. Concessions are also discussed. Since April there have been multiple complaints and twice it was found that ERAU deviated from the flight information file. Otherwise, complaints were validated and addressed.
 - Councilmember Schacherer stated that he does not want the Clarkdale situation to come to Chino. He inquired who would field all the calls.

- Dr. Witcher stated that he currently takes all the calls from Clarkdale and stated that calls to councilmembers could be forwarded to him.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that he is ultimately responsible and will field the calls.
 - Mayor Armstrong stated that the Town Manager will also take complaints about the airfield.
 - Ms. Denemy stated that the Town gets complaints for anything that happens in town. She would expect to have regular meetings to deal with complaints.
 - Mayor Armstrong stated that he has also spoken to the mayors of Clarkdale and Cottonwood and they are happy with the way things are going now, but are not happy with the way things were in the past.
 - Staff pointed out that the CUP calls out the owner designating a representative to serve as a primary point of contact for airfield operations.
- Councilmember Holt inquired if there would be an increase in what's flying today if the project were approved.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that the 80,000 operations would remain, not increase. The airfield is designed for a total of 90,000 operations, but they are only asking for 80,000 per year.
- Councilmember Holt stated that if the flights are not increasing, the pollution already exists, and therefore won't increase.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that the planes are up no matter where they are going.
- Councilmember Holt inquired about night flights stating that there were six ERAU aircraft at 10:30 p.m. last night but they were not doing touch-n-goes.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that a lot of that night flying is instrument training. They are not doing touch-and-goes.
 - Councilmember Holt stated that he noticed those planes were going toward Seligman and inquired if they would be moving to the Chino airstrip.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that if it's instrument training they would not be doing touch-and-goes. Night approaches to the Chino airstrip would utilize pilot-controlled lighting, there would be not be a continuous beacon.
- Councilmember Switzer inquired if the amount of flights out of Prescott have changed in last two months on average.
 - Mr. Perkins stated they have not, and they will not go up with this airfield.
- Councilmember Switzer referred to the proposed airspace and left exit that already exists in the proposed flight pattern.
 - Mr. Perkins discussed the different classes of airspace and explained that Prescott has to control the flow of aircraft coming in and out for safety reasons. He further stated that traffic flow has been designed to circumnavigate the built-up areas.
 - Councilmember Switzer surmised that the airstrip would cause there to be less air traffic over Chino Valley as the aircraft currently flying right over Chino would be rerouted to follow along Granite Creek.
 - Mr. Perkins agreed stated that the airfield would require more control over where students and instructor pilots go to stay away from built-up areas.

- Councilmember Switzer inquired if the item could be put up for vote via any method other than referendum.
 - Andrew McGuire, Town Attorney, stated that the Town has a limited number of things they can put directly to the voters with only one or two statutory opportunities to do so and zoning and conditional uses are not on that list.
 - Councilmember McCafferty further clarified that putting the matter to the voters, as many asked at the public hearing, is legislatively not allowed.
 - Mr. McGuire stated that the Council does not have statutory authority for that. The only avenue is a referendum on the Council's decision.
- Councilmember Switzer referred to concerns about lead pollution and stated that it would be up to the Prescott airport or the FAA to bring in this unleaded fuel.
 - Mr. Perkins stated that is infrastructure and they would have to provide the fuels to the different airfields. The newer aircraft can burn the new fuel, but older aircraft cannot. ERAU replaces their planes every four years.
 - Councilmember Switzer further surmised that traveling to farther distances like Cottonwood, Seligman, etc., would cause the planes to be in the air longer, burning more fuel.
 - Mr. Perkins agreed.

Mayor Armstrong opened the floor for the councilmembers to explain their vote.

Councilmember Holt stated that the proposal has taken a great amount of time and effort from the Perkins Ranch, ERAU, Development Services, staff, Council, and the public. He thanked everyone for the time they spent on this matter. He discussed the claims of diminishing rural character and stated that this project is less than 1% of the Town's footprint and is located at the extreme easterly boundary of the town to have minimum impact on the Town or its rural atmosphere and allows property owners to keep thousands of acres of open space. He discussed the claims of impact to wildlife and stated the Perkins have already agreed to set aside land for wildlife preservation and did not believe that the pronghorn would be disturbed by airplanes at 1,000 feet. He discussed noise and increased vehicular traffic, stating that many have had to adapt to it as their neighborhoods have developed. He discussed property values and stated that homes in Deep Well ranch have gone up in value by \$110,000 to \$205,000 since 2020. He discussed councilmembers needing to balance considerations such as landowner rights, potential benefits for the Town, and potential disruption to others while being forward-thinking and considering what the future might bring. He stated this is considering Phase 1 and is no guarantee that Phases 2, 3, and 4 will ever be completed, nor can they be considered without additional hearings. He discussed ERAU and the Perkins Ranch and their long history in the Town. He stated that Chino Valley is known for friendly people that come together, but this proposal has made him rethink that belief, as he has seen a lot of hatred during the process in the form of false statements, lies, and accusations against the Perkins family, ERAU, Town staff, and elected officials, very similar to last year's solar hearings. He suggested that nearby residents focus on addressing their municipalities' concerns, noting that several individuals live closer to the Prescott airport than to the proposed project site.

Councilmember Switzer thanked Councilmember Holt for his comments as he agreed. He stated that Chino Valley is not Cottonwood. Cottonwood is a public airport with 8,089 buildings within two miles of the Cottonwood airport. This airstrip has 12 owners within two miles and stated there is no comparison between the two. He believed this would reduce noise because the flights are already occurring, and this will put them in an area where they should

be, away from most inhabited areas. He stated that roosters, barking dogs, and cicadas in the summer all contribute to noise. He stated this is a great project for Chino Valley and the majority of residents.

Councilmember McCafferty stated this came down to competing interests. He discussed public concern and stated that he agreed with a lot of the sentiment that was shared during the public hearing. He stated that he trusts Finance Director Katie Pehl and stated that economic stability is a big risk for the Town and stated that the Town is only a couple years from having to cut services or capital improvements. He stated the Town has to increase revenue to keep up with costs, and it's not easy to find other ways to increase revenue like people often suggest. He further stated the Town has had a propensity to reject projects that could have put the Town in a better economic position. He stated that he has been watching the trends and that the Town is at a crossroads economically. He stated this body has been elected to look out for the Town's long-term economic sustainability. He stated that there are risks and no guarantees about ERAU, but he felt it was a calculated risk that the Town needs to take to put itself in a better position. He suggested the possibility that if the Council says yes to this project, others may see that Chino is open to business. He stated that this Council is trying to change the Town's reputation for not being business-friendly. He listed several projects that had a lot of resistance, but ended up being very successful. He stated that in 2001, the Mayor made an arrangement with the Perkins' to have a runway as part of the pre-agreement when they incorporated. He believed the government needed to honor their commitments. He further stated that doing what you want with your land is one of the pillars of conservative values in this community, but every time something comes up it's denied.

Vice-Mayor Granillo stated that he respects the Perkins family, but stated this project is not in compatibility with the Town's rural character. He stated that he listened to planes near his properties in Paulden and said it was really annoying. He said he feels for the nearby residents. He stated that we do need to grow the Town, but felt it should be started with an RV Park or something else, but they can't start with this.

Mayor Armstrong stated that he received a comment that if he wasn't on Facebook he wasn't paying attention. He stated that he had received 562 emails that he read and answered, and 162 phone calls that he answered or responded to.

MOVED by Councilmember Robert Switzer, seconded by Councilmember Sherri Phillips to approve Resolution No. 2026-1303 for Conditional Use Permit 2025-05, establishing a footprint of all phases for a privately owned and operated airfield and associated uses of approximately 390 acres located generally east of the intersection of East Perkinsville Road and Forest Service Road 318a, Chino Valley, Arizona, 86323.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember Robert Schacherer

5 - 2 Passed

- d. Consideration and possible action to approve Ordinance 2026-963, amending the Town of Chino Valley Unified Development Ordinance to authorize administrative personnel to review and approve preliminary and final plats without a public hearing, as required by state law.

Recommended Action: i) Hold a public hearing
ii) Approve Ordinance 2026-963 amending the Town of Chino Valley Unified Development Ordinance to authorize administrative personnel to review and approve preliminary and final plats without a public hearing, as required by state law.

Laurie Lineberry, Development Services Director, presented the following:

- This ordinance was required by the State to now have staff approve subdivisions.
- Effective January 1, 2026, Council will no longer see subdivisions for review and approval.
- Staff would continue the same process as when subdivisions did come to Council. Applicants will be able to appeal decisions and those will go to P&Z.
- Staff hoped the legislature would change their position on this soon so it can go back to Council where it belongs.

Council and staff discussed the following:

- Councilmember Schacherer inquired why the Development Services Director was referred to as the Zoning Administrator.
 - Staff stated it was just the title of the position.
 - Andrew McGuire, Town Attorney, stated that state statute refers certain obligations to the administrative person in that role, so they use the title to parallel the two policies.
- Councilmember Holt stated that he is opposed to this, but understands that they must vote for it as it is a requirement of law, but described it as the most ridiculous piece of legislation he's ever seen.
- Councilmember Switzer agreed and stated it was bad legislation and inquired if there was anything that could be done.
 - Andrew McGuire, Town Attorney, stated that staff has narrowed the ordinance as far as they can to be as broad with the Council's authority as they can under what statute now says.
- Councilmember McCafferty inquired if they would see plats during zone changes.
 - Staff stated that if they were submitted at the same time, they would show it to Council, but they wouldn't be able to approve them.

Mayor Armstrong opened the public hearing.

There were no requests to speak on this matter.

Mayor Armstrong closed the public hearing.

MOVED by Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, seconded by Councilmember Robert Switzer to approve Ordinance 2026-963, amending the Town of Chino Valley Unified Development Ordinance to authorize administrative personnel to review and approve preliminary and final plats without a public hearing, as required by state law.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: None

7 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

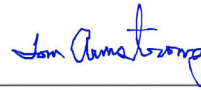
7. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilmember Sherri Phillips, seconded by Councilmember John McCafferty to adjourn at 8:38 p.m.

AYE: Mayor Tom Armstrong, Vice-Mayor Eric Granillo, Councilmember John McCafferty, Councilmember Sherri Phillips, Councilmember Robert Schacherer, Councilmember Larry Holt, Councilmember Robert Switzer

NAY: None

7 - 0 Passed - Unanimously



Tom Armstrong, Mayor

ATTEST:



Erin N. Deskins

Erin N. Deskins, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Chino Valley, Arizona held on the 24th day of February, 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 24th day of March, 2026.

Erin N. Deskins

Erin N. Deskins, Town Clerk

February 21, 2026

Mayor Armstrong and Chino Valley Town Council
Chino Valley Town Hall
202 N. State Route 89
Chino Valley, AZ 86323
(sent via email)

Mayor Armstrong and Town Council:

We write to object to the approval of the airstrip/airport project up for consideration on February 23, 2026. We oppose this project for numerous reasons, including the fact that this project privatizes the gains to the landowner and its tenant, but commonizes the numerous costs to the town, its residents and neighboring residents in the county.

The proposed use fails to satisfy the criteria required for approval of a variance, conditional use or special use permit:

- It is incompatible with Chino's voter-approved General Plan;
- It is incompatible with surrounding residential uses; in fact, there is material harm to neighboring properties, especially to the Garchen Buddhist Temple;
- It doesn't advance public health, safety or welfare; on the contrary, neighboring properties will be subjected to near-constant noise as well as aviation fuel pollution (lead and benzene, which are known carcinogens).

Additional concerns:

- The lack of ethical behavior on the part of certain members of the P&Z board as well as members of the council is alarming. (See Chino Valley Employee Handbook, Policy 400, Professional and Personal Conduct, second paragraph, item 2.) These members have stated their support for the project in numerous posts on public forums, prior to public hearings. Their comments have been rude and dismissive of residents' concerns. A complaint to the Attorney General's office is highly likely, given their behavior.
- Any economic benefits are speculative at best, and offer mostly one-time, short-lived income to the town (construction fees, short-term construction jobs, etc.). The supposed economic benefits often cited by those in favor of the project never have been adequately evaluated or explained. Chino gains almost nothing, including any water rights. (It's noteworthy that the applicant was asked to give those to the town at the recent P&Z meeting, and carefully walked away from doing so.) The town needs economic development, but this project will not fulfill that need.
- The lack of clarity and transparency should be enough to stop the project. Shifting definitions and limits of "flights" and "maneuvers" make the proposal untrustworthy. Somehow these have crept up from 50 flights/day to 80,000 maneuvers per year, with allowances for make-ups due to weather, and all on a rolling average. How was that

allowed to happen without a challenge from P&Z and town staff? It was embarrassing to see the lack of respect for town residents, and to watch the foregone conclusion of the commissioners' vote.

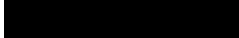
- The lack of environmental assessment, including the impact on wildlife, is a serious lapse. Good stewardship requires assessments of *all* the impacts, not estimates and avoidance.
- There are alternative sites within Yavapai County that better suit this project. Of course, Mr. Perkins doesn't benefit from that. We note the extraordinary deference paid to him and his family up to this point: reserved seating at meetings for numerous members of the family; P&Z members welcoming him "home" as the prodigal son; few challenges to his assertions of the benefits of the project.

For these reasons and many more, the proposal should be evaluated strictly as a voluntary commercial endeavor, not a necessity, and must be denied due to its inconsistency with governing land-use standards and its failure to meet (or even seek) required approval findings. Approval would represent a departure from sound land-use planning, would create a precedent for ad hoc commercial encroachment into residential areas, and would impose disproportionate and irreversible impacts on neighboring property owners.

Over the years, too many projects have promised to deliver for Chino, but have failed to do so. Let's not get stars in our eyes about this one: We urge you to deny the application.

Respectfully,

Mike and Kate O'Connor-Masse (30-year residents and business owners)



Chino Valley, AZ 86323



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Cover Letter

Re: **ZC-2025-03 & CUP-2025-05: Perkins Ranch Airfield**
Our File No. 008231.1A

This letter in opposition to the proposed zone change must be included in the record and with any presentation material prepared for the Council's consideration.



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February 17, 2026

Via FedEx Overnight Mail, First-Class Mail, and Email to:

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Chino Valley, AZ 86323

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sphillips@chinoaz.net

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Development Services

Laurie Lineberry

1982 Voss Drive #203

Chino Valley, AZ 86323

llineberry@chinoaz.net

Re: **ZC-2025-03 & CUP-2025-05: Perkins Ranch Airfield**
Our File No. 008231.1A

To: Members of the Chino Valley Town Council,

The Garchen Buddhist Institute ("GBI") has retained Provident Law to represent its interests in the ongoing deliberation and public discussion regarding ZC-2025-03 and CUP-2025-05: the Perkins Ranch Airfield Zone Change and CUP (collectively referred to here as the "Application"). As you are no doubt aware, there is overwhelming public opposition to Chino Valley approval of the Application. GBI's voice is one of many that stands in stark opposition to destruction of Chino Valley's rural, peaceful, and inspiring vistas and mode of life. GBI's location in the hills overlooking the valley gives its members and patrons a unique perspective and appreciation for the natural beauty and serenity afforded by its surroundings. That serene beauty and quiet enjoyment will cease to exist if

the Application is granted. GBI rests directly in the line of the planned “touch and go” flight path patterns. The airfield itself is aimed at the heart of GBI’s key characteristic.

This is a decision about the very essence of the valley and its surroundings. Moreover, it is that essence that allows GBI to be what it is, a silent meditation retreat and spiritual center dedicated to teaching the practices and knowledge of the Buddhist Kagyu tradition. GBI wishes to put the Town Council on notice that it fully intends to exercise every legal remedy at its disposal to protect and preserve what it has built and stewarded for almost 30 years. During the entirety of that time, GBI has been a peaceful and contributing neighbor to Chino Valley and its residents. The Application poses a direct threat to the quiet use and enjoyment of GBI on its premises and opens the Town Council to significant liability and litigation that will assuredly follow should the application be granted. Why the Town Council should reject the Application is discussed below.

I. The Airfield Application must be denied under Chino Valley’s own Development Ordinance and the Chino Valley General Plan.

Arizona Revised Statute (“A.R.S.”) § 9-462.01 governs zoning regulations. Subsection (F) of the statute states the following:

All zoning and rezoning ordinances or regulations adopted under this article **shall be consistent with and conform to the adopted general plan of the municipality**, if any, as adopted under article 6 of this chapter. In the case of uncertainty in construing or applying the conformity of any part of a proposed rezoning ordinance to the adopted general plan of the municipality, the ordinance shall be construed in a manner that will further the implementation of, and **not be contrary to, the goals, policies and applicable elements of the general plan**. A rezoning ordinance conforms with the land use element of the general plan if it proposes land uses, densities or intensities within the range of identified uses, densities and intensities of the land use element of the general plan.

Conformity with the general plan is paramount, and if the conformity of the zone change with the General Plan is in question, deference must be given so as to safeguard the goals and objectives of the General Plan. In other words, if there is doubt that the proposed zone change fails to conform with the General Plan, it must be denied. When Staff’s report to the P&Z Commission dodges the “conformity” issue, it does so by simply stating that “rural” means different things to different people. The “rural” element, if it can even be described as ambiguous, is at least a prime example when deference is given to protecting the goals and objectives of the General Plan over a submitted application. The “rural” element is discussed below.

a. The Chino Valley 2040 General Plan

Chino Valley is a peaceful, rural community that supports recreation and regional tourism. We are committed to preserving our community's expansive vistas, endless grasslands, and starry night skies while supporting limited and sustainable growth. Our proud agricultural and equestrian tradition makes Chino Valley a desirable place to build a future.

This is the "Vision Statement" contained in the Chino Valley 2040 General Plan (the "Plan"). The Plan's Land Use Element opens with this declaration:

Chino Valley values its peaceful rural character, rich agricultural and equestrian heritage, and expansive vistas. The Land Use Element supports these values by promoting carefully managed low-intensity and sustainable growth compatible with rural living and the open, rural landscape while supporting recreational opportunities and regional tourism. The overarching approach to land use balances the need for managed growth and quality services with the protection of the unique character and beauty of the area, ensuring the long-term viability of the community...

When describing the existing low density residential land use in Chino Valley, the Plan states that "[t]his low-density development pattern supports the quiet, rural lifestyle that the community cherishes and wishes to sustain as the community matures." *Chino Valley General Plan* at pg. 29. The same section states that feedback from residents while preparing the Plan indicated an "increase in efforts to preserve the rural character of the town..." was to be an objective when considering future land use and new commercial developments. *Id.* at 30. In the section discussing "Future Land Use Categories" the Plan states "[t]he nine land use categories capture the existing and visioned rural character of Chino valley and facilitate responsible and balanced land use planning to secure the high-quality rural lifestyle envisioned for the future." *Id.* Importantly for consideration before the Town Council in the Application is the understanding of Agriculture Land Use under the RA category. The Plan says that "[t]his supports the continuation of rural, agricultural functions." *Id.* at 31. Phrases like "rural quality of life," "rural lifestyle," "rural feel," "rural character," "rural atmosphere"¹ are replete throughout the Plan. Yet, into this peaceful and rural lifestyle envisioned for the future, the Application asks that the Town Council drop an airport with flights taking off every five minutes into its midst with plans for the future to grow and expand in scope beyond a disruptive airstrip to include such things as

¹ This was listed as one of Chino Valley's "Strengths" in the Plan's SWOT Analysis on page 120.

manufacturing. The absurdity is obvious to all but the applicants and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (“ERAU”).

Aside from an absolute departure from the spirit of the Plan and the express desires of Chino Valley’s Citizenry gleaned during the Community Engagement phase, the Application runs contrary to multiple stated Plan goals. Those are:

- LU-7: “Develop growth areas in a manner that promotes efficient use of resources and infrastructure and **maintains or improves the rural character and quality of life for residents.**” *Emphasis added.*
- LU-12: “New development supports existing agricultural and equestrian uses **and maintains the natural beauty of the area...**” *Emphasis added.*
- LU-12.2: “Encourage the continuation of **minimal development on land east of Granite Creek to preserve open space.**” *Emphasis added.*
- ED-1.3: “Focus the majority of business attraction efforts on industries **that complement the values and lifestyle of residents,** as well as demonstrate regional market demand. These industries include, but may not be limited to tourism, retail, outdoor recreation, office, food and entertainment, healthcare, light manufacturing, and logistics.” *Emphasis added.*
- ED-7: “Promote long-term financial stability by growing the tourism industry throughout the region.”
- ED-8: Create a vibrant community to support both tourism and the town’s quality of life.”

All of these objectives share a common element; fostering growth, use, and development that conforms with the Vision Statement. They reflect that “Chino Valley is a peaceful, rural community that supports recreation and regional tourism.” A vote to approve the Airstrip Application would show conclusively that the Town Council is not “committed to preserving our community’s expansive vistas, endless grasslands, and starry night skies...” A vote approving the Airstrip Application is not in conformity with A.R.S. § 9-462.01(F) and violates that law, the express desires of Chino Valley’s citizenry, and will ultimately violate the property rights of GBI. The AR-36 category was an addition to the zoning code in 2025 that also added “airstrip” to the list of conditional uses. The date of its addition begs the question of whether or not it was deliberated in light of the General Plan or was an effort to pave the way for “spot zoning” for the benefit of a single property owner to the detriment of many others.

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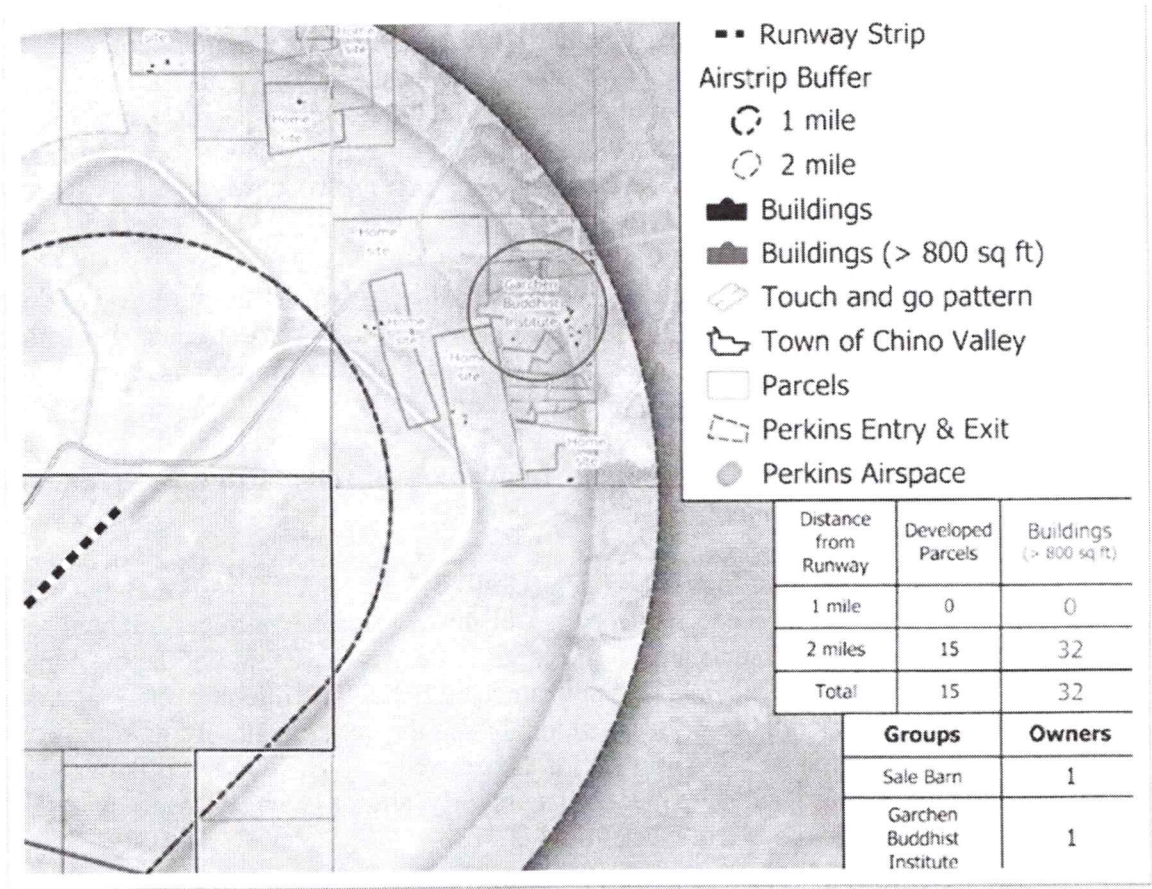
II. CUP requirements.

The zone change element of the Airstrip Application is not its only legally deficient element. The Chino Valley Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) governs the requirements for granting a CUP. Section 1.9.3 states the following:

A. Conditional Use Permits may be granted only when expressly permitted by this Ordinance, and only after the commission has made recommendations, and Council has approved the request by Motion based upon a finding that the authorizing of the Use Permit: (1) **will not be materially detrimental to persons residing or working in the vicinity adjacent to the property, to the neighborhood, or to the public welfare;** and (2) that the proposed use is reasonably compatible with uses permitted in the surrounding area. The burden of proof satisfying these requirements rests with the applicant.”

GBI does not contest that the UDO, in section 3.5(C)(5), allows CUPs for airports, aircraft landing fields, and ancillary buildings. Instead GBI, as well as the documented protests of numerous individuals living in direct proximity to the proposed airstrip² testify to the fact that the airstrip will be materially detrimental to their daily lives by disrupting the quiet use and enjoyment of their own properties. That use and enjoyment is directly tied to the “quiet, rural lifestyle that the community cherishes and wishes to sustain...” Staff included in their presentation a segment on the “Noise Impact Analysis” that states the planes intended for use at the Airstrip “produce significantly lower noise levels than a commercial jet or turbine aircraft.” The extreme levels of noise produced by a commercial jet turbine aircraft is sure to make anything else, by comparison, seem quiet. It is a completely insufficient comparison that reveals nothing about the facts on the ground for GBI and other residents in the flight path and under the proposed “Perkins Airspace.” The reality is that the aircraft flown by ERAU will create a nearly ceaseless drone. The staff analysis mentions decibel contour assessment that measures noise sensitivity 2000 ft. from the end of runways, it does not say anything about what can be heard throughout the “Perkins Airspace” or in close proximity to the “touch and go pattern.” The excerpt from the application materials provides a striking visual for consideration on this point. GBI has been circled for reference.

² These protests, in addition to the written protests provided to the Council, are also documented in the minutes of the January 6, 2026, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes.



As one counterpoint, among many, to the inference that noise is not going to be an issue, Kendall Magnussen, a volunteer at GBI decided to walk the grounds during a demonstration flyover on January 5, 2026. In the context of a silent meditation retreat center, she likened the assault upon her senses to a leaf blower. When considering that at peak operations flights will be passing every 5 minutes. The drone and interruption of these aircraft will never cease. Numerous other impacted property owners testified to the noise levels generated by flight schools, low flying aircraft, and ERAU’s training program, none spoke positively about it, except for family of the applicants. Planning and Zoning Staff claim to have measured decibels levels during ERAU’s flyover demonstration 45-62. This is the noise level of normal speech. Members of the public reported that during the second flyover demonstration on January 17, 2026, the subject aircraft flew along the east side of Highway 89 instead of over the communities the patterns suggested.

Section 1.9.1.3 of the UDO specifies that during the application review process the Zoning Administrator may consider whether “[t]he proposed development complies with all provisions of this Ordinance and all other ordinances, master plans, General Plans, goals, objectives and standards of the Town. While the ordinance makes the Zoning Administrator’s consideration of the Plan, goals and objectives of the Town permissive. Arizona statute does not grant the Council that same permissive leeway under A.R.S. § 9-462.01(F).

Properties such as GBI, and the other homesites shown on the map above derive their value, use, and essence from the quiet rural nature of their surroundings. They are by no means the only ones that would be negatively impacted by the proposed airstrip and activities.

III. The proposed airstrip and future phases will constitute a public and private nuisance.

The Revised Arizona Jury Instruction (Civil) 6th (the “RAJI”) outlines what a party must prove to a jury in order to recover on a claim of Private Nuisance. Adapted to the current situation, those elements are 1) The condition exists (here that will be the constant noise generated by air traffic); 2) The Applicants and ERAU intentionally caused, created or contributed to this condition (the intentionality of the action is not in question, it will be an established fact should the application be granted); 3) The condition unreasonably interferes with GBI’s use and enjoyment of its property; and 4) The interference with GBI’s use and enjoyment of property is substantial.

The Applicant and ERAU will intentionally create the conditions that unreasonably interfere with GBI’s use and enjoyment of its property in a substantial way. The nuisance must constitute “more than slight inconvenience or petty annoyance. The law does not concern itself with trifles, and therefore there must be a real and appreciable invasion of the plaintiff’s interest.” *Nolan v. Starlight Pines Homeowners Ass’n*, 216 Ariz. 482, 489 (App. 2008). GBI’s property is used as a *silent* retreat and meditation center. Quiet meditation has been a function and cornerstone of the site for GBI’s entire history. If the Application is granted, the Town Council will have made this private nuisance possible.

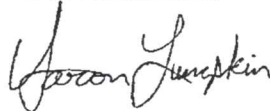
Beyond a private nuisance claim against the Applicant and ERAU, an approval of the Application and execution of the CUP will result in a public nuisance. The elements of the claim of Public Nuisance outline by the RAJI and applied to the current situation are as follows: 1) The condition substantially interferes with a community’s comfortable enjoyment of life or property; 2) Chino Valley/Applicant/ERAU intentionally caused, created, or contributed to this event or condition; 3) the event or condition is unreasonable under the circumstances; and 4) GBI was substantially damaged.

When the public nuisance claim against Chino Valley is viewed in light of the expectations and desires of the residents of Chino Valley to sustain a quiet rural community, and the complete departure from the requirement for substantial conformity under A.R.S. § 9-462.01(F), a willful decision to grant the Applicant is particularly egregious, and more than satisfies the elements of a public nuisance claim. The calculation of property damages to GBI is beyond the scope of this letter, but suffice it to say that upwards of \$5,000,000.00 in improvements and construction projects on the property will have been expended in vain³. That number alone should provide the Council with an idea of what potential damages will look like if claims against the City are brought as a result of the Application's approval. GBI's silent use is no secret to Development Services as GBI has obtained numerous permits from the Department over the years, and now the department actively seeks to deprive one property owner of its long-standing use, in favor of a newly proposed use.

IV. Conclusion.

This Application strikes at GBI's ability to operate its religious use that is fundamentally dependent on quiet, predictable conditions suitable for meditation, prayer, and religious practice. Quiet is not a preference, convenience, or amenity for GBI; it is a core operational requirement and an essential element of the free exercise of its religious mission. Approval would result in loss of GBI's financial viability and worth. Commercial flight training operations would inflict nuisance, safety concerns, and adverse environmental impacts on GBI and area residents. Application approval goes against Chino Valley's own vision statements regarding quality of life for residents. Consequently, GBI asks that you deny the Application.

Regards,
Provident Law®



Aaron M. Lumpkin
Partner

AML:na

³ It should also be noted that those dollars went directly to the local Chino Valley economy in labor, material, and professional expertise.