



# Marion County OREGON

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

### PLANNING COMMISSION

George Grabenhorst - Chair  
Mike Fischer - Vice Chair  
Paulette Alexandria  
Stanley Birch  
Glenn Holum  
Mike Long  
Carla Mikkelson  
Gary Monders  
Michael Shrock

**DATE:** July 25, 2011  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Marion County Public Works

Present: Board of Commissioners Milne, Carlson and Brentano and Planning Commission members Grabenhorst, Fischer, Monders, Long, Birch, Shrock, Mikkelson, Holum and Alexandria

Chair Grabenhorst called the meeting to order.

1. Chair Grabenhorst welcomed everyone and introductions were made.
2. Tami Amala, Planning Division, indicated the purpose of the joint meeting was to have a general discussion on the county's land use program, policies, etc. Commissioner Carlson added the question is whether the PC is being used to the fullest. Chair Grabenhorst agreed that is an issue and he would like to see the PC used for more issues. Commissioner Milne indicated she concurred and the board is looking for ideas and wants to give the PC more opportunities. The group briefly discussed recent legislative action the PC could work on and someone asked if the new members might have any ideas? Another suggestion was to look at what other counties do. It was explained that Les Sasaki, Principal Planner, brings long range projects to the PC and he added he can prepare some possible projects in the near future to see if the group is interested. Commissioner Carlson added the hearings officer hears some cases, staff does the rest, but perhaps the PC could be involved in policy making and gave the example of the recent wind turbine issue the board dealt with. She suggested the PC consider looking at the book of interpretations Sterling Anderson, Planning Director, provided to consider including some in county code. Commissioner Milne agreed and indicated the PC could become more advisory for the board – what should be included and what should not. Gary Monders commented he feels the PC should be more involved in partitions and mentioned neighbors complaining about not knowing of a land use decision until “after the fact”. The group then briefly discussed how many partitions are done each year, how long it takes staff to complete a partition, and the appeal process. Gary added he does not want to change anything in the process that might “bog down” requests. Carla Mikkelson stated it is important for citizens to feel heard and sees the PC as the first step in the process but is not sure how to fit that more into the PC role. The group briefly then reviewed the state-mandated notification area for land use decisions. Gary stated the group should meet more often – he likes summers off but after that the group should meet on a regular basis. Paulette Alexandria added citizens are concerned and it's nice to get information ahead of time. Joe Fennimore, Principal Planner, explained the requirements for partition cases and explained there isn't a lot of debate if the request meets the zone regulations.

The group briefly discussed the hearings officer process and Tami Amala explained most cases are now decided by staff, for the past 15+ years, after it became too expensive to use hearings officers. The idea of using the PC for partitions was briefly discussed but the general consensus was that it would slow the process down too much as staff can complete those requests within 30 days or so.

Mike Shrock asked the PC to review adding uses allowed in the EFU zone, especially uses that could help local farmers deal with the economy and keeping viable, continuing the family farm, living on the property, etc. He gave the example of hardship mobile homes that are placed on property and then must be removed but have little or no value. Commissioner Milne stated she has considered allowing caretaker type homes that farmers with larger farms could use to protect from vandalism, assist with farm activities, etc. The group discussed various issues with that type of change. Mike Long added the board should consider allowing uses that would not result in loss of farmland. Commissioner Milne agreed and gave the example of allowing a farmer to have someone else use an empty building on the farm on a temporary basis. Perhaps someone helping a neighbor or friend in certain hardships. She added the group should look at expanding temporary uses that have no impact or loss of farmland. Gary commented that type of allowed use might have a negative impact on someone with industrial or commercial buildings available for purchase or lease. The group discussed how to do something to allow more uses without disrupting others or creating more issues. Mike Shrock indicated the PC should look at all of these issues during the current down time. Commissioner Carlson added the PC should look at these issues and those coming from the legislature or those that might be taken to the legislature that the county cannot implement. The group discussed Measure 37 and 49 and the impact on any possible development of resulting new parcels from the poor economy. The group then discussed the current real estate market.

Paulette asked about the group looking at ways to protect the environment and Gary replied all of those types of regulations result in other issues. Carla added eventually we all pay and need to find ways to make projects “green” yet profitable. Commissioner Carlson stated it might be helpful and interesting for the PC to have presentations by other Public Works sections on natural hazards mitigation, erosion control, etc. Commissioner Milne added there are a number of organizations that could come and inform the PC on a variety of topics, not necessarily just those related to changing county code but to learn.

Mr. Fennimore indicated there is one subdivision application coming and a hearing could be scheduled in September. Mr. Sasaki added there is only one remaining Periodic Review task that has no foreseeable resolution. Commissioner Brentano added the issue of Keizer’s UGB is an issue the PC might want to look at and provide recommendations to the board. The group discussed this project involving mitigation with specific properties that the county could be involved with. Mr. Fennimore stated there are legislative changes coming that could provide an opportunity for review by the PC with recommendations to the board. Mr. Sasaki stated the PC could become involved in floodplain management, hazard mitigation planning to review or just learn about. Paulette asked about the agri-business legislation and how other counties advertise more about business opportunities. Commissioner Carlson explained Marion County has such good soil and farmland that it is very restricted from allowing many new uses. Making substantial changes could result in action by either the state or 1000 Friends. This is why the county is currently restricted from allowing much activity out in the rural areas. Commissioner Milne stated she would like the PC to review the list of possible allowed uses resulting from new legislation and the group briefly discussed this project. Mr. Sasaki also suggested the PC could look at the area advisory committee program outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Amala mentioned the upcoming retirement of Sterling Anderson, Planning Director, this title now going to Les Sasaki, staff workload and 90% schedule, and existing staffing. Commissioner Brentano mentioned the zero sediment pre-development proposals being discussed that involves the City of Stayton and that this issue might eventually come to the county and would be disastrous. The group discussed briefly.

2. Adjournment.

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.