



Minutes For May 14, 2025
Crook County Planning Commission
Meeting

Meeting minutes are not a complete representation of discussions at the meeting. An audio recording is available from Crook County Community Development at plan@crookcountyor.gov or (541) 447-3211.

Chair Warren called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

The meeting was conducted by Zoom, phone, and in-person at the Crook County Annex.

Attendance

Commissioners Attending:

In Person	Zoom	Commissioner	Excused Absence	Unexcused Absence
		George Ponte	x	
	x	Marlo Dill		
x		Laquita Stec		
x		Les Williamson		
x		Mike Warren		

Staff Attending:

In Person	Zoom	Crook County Staff
x		John Eisler
x		Katie McDonald
x		Hannah Elliott

Public Comment

None

Final Decision

The Chair stated that the commissioners had the Final Decision for Hegele conditional use, record number 217-24-000198-PLNG before them. Commissioners had no questions so the Chair signed at the conclusion of the meeting.

Public Hearing

Record Number 217-25-000034-PLNG: A proposal to amend the Crook County Zoning Map ("Zoning Map") to change the zoning of Tax Lot No. 1614110000601 from Exclusive Farm Use zone, EFU-3 (Powell Butte area) to Rural Residential 10, R-10. The situs address is 11404 SW Reif Rd, Powell Butte. The property is located approximately 3 miles south of Highway 126, in Powell Butte.

The hearing was being held pursuant to: Crook County Code (“CCC”) 18.172 (Administration Provisions), 18.168 (Legislative Amendments)

The Planning Commission evaluated the request against the following applicable criteria. Crook County Code, Title 18, Chapter 12, Chapter 16, and Chapter 92, the Crook County Comprehensive Plan, Oregon Administrative Rules, and Oregon Revised Statutes.

The Chair asked if any Commissioner had any bias, prejudice, personal interest, or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Commissioner	No	Disclosure
Marlo Dill	X	
Laquita Stec	X	
Les Williamson	X	
Mike Warren	X	

The Chair asked if any Commissioner had any Ex Parte Contact with the Applicant or any Member of the Public regarding this matter, noting that Commissioners should disclose if they have visited the site.

Commissioner	No	Disclosure
Marlo Dill	X	Did not specifically view this site, although is familiar with the area.
Laquita Stec	X	
Les Williamson	X	
Mike Warren	X	

The Chair asked if any member of the public, including those participating by phone, wished to challenge any member of the Commission.
None.

The Chair reviewed the order of proceedings.

The Chair asked if any Commissioners wished to impose a time limit on testimony.

The Commissioners did not set a time limit as there were not many public members in attendance.

The Chair asked to hear from staff.

Senior Planner, Katie McDonald, presented the zone map amendment request for an approximately 19-acre property currently zoned Exclusive Farm Use Zone 3 (EFU-3). The applicant seeks to rezone the parcel to Rural Residential R-10, a change that aligns with Ordinance 127 and the previously adopted Powell Butte Study. McDonald clarified that although the property is currently classified as EFU, it was part of a goal exception area determined to be irrevocably committed to non-farm uses, and the current request simply updates the map to reflect that established status. No further development or partitioning is proposed at this time. Staff noted that the application follows the same quasi-judicial process as the neighboring property recently heard by the commission and complies with all notice requirements to the DLCD. If the Planning Commission finds the burden

of proof has been met, the recommendation will move to the Board of County Commissioners for the final adoption of an ordinance to officially enact the zone map change.

Commissioner Dill had no questions and felt that the application meets the requirements and burden of proof has been met.

Commissioner Williamson agreed.

Commissioner Stec clarified the record number and asked about the SDC's and why they were never implemented.

McDonald responded that there was a discrepancy in the record, noting that while certain findings were included in the Comprehensive Plan, portions of those findings were never officially codified into the county's legal code. She observed that some elements from the plan were only integrated into the PBR-20 zone, though staff were unable to determine if the exclusion of other areas was intentional or an oversight. The department is only moving forward with elements that have been previously codified to ensure consistency with existing regulations.

Chair Warren asked if there were any plans for the property.

McDonald confirmed no, this application is only rezoning.

No additional questions from the Commissioners.

Agency Testimony

None

Applicant Testimony

Shannon Lester spoke on behalf of herself and her husband, Drew, to thank the Commission and staff for the opportunity to apply for the rezoning. In response to inquiries regarding the timing of the request, Mrs. Lester clarified that they did not own the property during the original Powell Butte study and received no information from the previous owner at that time. She further noted that previous attempts to investigate rezoning were met with some departmental uncertainty; however, the recent neighboring application provided the necessary clarity and incentive to move forward with their own request now.

Commissioner Dill added that she believes the area is well suited for 10-acre rural residential development.

Chair Warren asked when they purchased the property.

Lester responded in 2005.

Testimony in Support

Makayle Rich testified that they are neighbors and are in support.

Neutral Testimony

None

Testimony in Opposition

None

Chair Warren asked the applicant if they would like to waive their 7-day final argument.

Lester waived their final argument.

Planning Commission Action

Commissioner Williamson made a motion to approve the zone map amendment, record number 217-25-000034-PLNG.

Commissioner Dill seconded the motion.

Chair Warren asked for discussion.

No Discussion.

Chair Warren called for the vote:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain
Marlo Dill	x		
Laquita Stec	x		
Les Williamson	x		
Mike Warren	x		
Motion passes 4-0-0			

Public Hearing

Record Number 217-24-000293-PLNG: Conditional use application for a photovoltaic (pv) solar power generation facility located on property zoned Exclusive Farm Use zone, EFU-3. The proposal includes a ground mounted solar array, gen tie transmission lines, a substation, an energy storage system, and an operation and maintenance facility. The project is pro-posed to be a 320-acre site, on a portion of property identified as map tax lot: 1615000000300. It is north of an existing solar facility.

The hearing was being held pursuant to: Crook County Code ("CCC") 18.172 (Administration Provisions)

The Planning Commission evaluated the request against the following applicable criteria.

Crook County Code, Title 18, Chapter 16, Chapter 160, Chapter 161, Chapter 180, the Crook County, Comprehensive Plan, Oregon Administrative Rules, and Oregon Revised Statutes.

The Chair asked if any Commissioner had any bias, prejudgment, personal interest, or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Commissioner	No	Disclosure
Marlo Dill	X	
Laquita Stec	X	
Les Williamson	X	
Mike Warren	X	

The Chair asked if any Commissioner had any Ex Parte Contact with the Applicant or any Member of the Public regarding this matter, noting that Commissioners should disclose if they have visited the site.

Commissioner	No	Disclosure
Marlo Dill	X	Has not visited the site or had any contact

Laquita Stec	X	
Les Williamson	X	Has not visited the site or had any contact
Mike Warren	X	Has not visited the site or had any contact

The Chair asked if any member of the public, including those participating by phone, wished to challenge any member of the Commission.

None.

The Chair reviewed the order of proceedings.

The Chair asked if any Commissioners wished to impose a time limit on testimony.

Commissioner Stec suggested five minutes. The commission agreed.

The Chair asked to hear from staff.

McDonald presented the initial public hearing for the Moffatt Road Solar Facility. The proposed project is a 320-acre conditional use facility located in an Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zone, situated directly north of the existing Gala solar site and west of a major transmission corridor near Millican Road. McDonald provided photographic context of the site, noting its proximity to the Dry Creek Air Park subdivision and describing the landscape as consisting of juniper-cleared rangeland. The project is subject to a complex set of criteria including Crook County Code Chapter 18.16, ORS 215.283, and OAR 660-033, which require the applicant to meet a rigorous burden of proof regarding impacts on agricultural lands and the necessity of associated transmission lines.

Due to a formal request submitted by the applicant the previous day, the hearing was subject to a mandatory continuance under County Code 18.172. While the Planning Commission is required to grant this request, the hearing remained open for the evening to collect initial evidence and testimony from the public. McDonald noted that the applicant intends to submit supplemental materials that have not yet been received by the county. Consequently, the Commission must establish a "date and time certain" for the continued hearing to allow for the review of new information while maintaining the public's right to participate.

McDonald informed the Commission that while the initial staff report is currently available, the department recommends deferring the formal staff presentation until the continued hearing. This delay is intended to allow staff and the Commission to review the anticipated supplemental materials from the applicant alongside the existing record, ensuring the final presentation is comprehensive and reflects all submitted evidence.

Staff clarified the parties have a right to bring evidence and testify, but that doesn't prevent them from doing the same thing at the next hearing.

Agency Testimony

None

Applicant Testimony

James Curtin, representing Moffatt Road Solar Farm LLC, introduced his legal team and provided background on the applicant as a Bend-based renewable energy firm with over a decade of experience in Oregon. He emphasized the company's local investment, noting that since 2022, they have contributed over \$156,000 to Crook County through scholarships, trail projects, and community event sponsorships, such as the Crooked River Roundup. Curtin confirmed that the application was deemed complete on November 22, 2024, and explained that the

requested continuance is intended to provide the Commission and the public ample time to review supplemental materials currently being finalized in coordination with county staff.

Commissioner Dill asked about the junipers removed from the pictures, if that was on the site or adjacent to it.

Max Yoklic, representing Moffatt Road Solar Farm LLC, confirmed that the photographs provided by staff accurately represent the project site. He clarified that the recent juniper clearing observed on the property was conducted by the landowner within their rights as a property owner. Yoklic noted that this clearing overlaps with the proposed development footprint and suggested that such efforts could lead to environmental benefits, such as reduced water usage, which will be relevant to the conditional use permit application.

Commissioner Williamson asked the applicant to confirm what the distance is between this proposal and the existing tract, noting there is a number on the map and asking if it's been confirmed.

Yoklic confirmed that the Moffatt Road Solar Facility maintains a separation of over one-quarter mile from the adjacent Powell East Solar Farm, which is owned by an affiliated company. To support this, the applicant noted that Geographic Information System (GIS) data and detailed mapping have been included in the supplemental materials to formally demonstrate compliance with required distance standards.

Curtin added that the applicant prefers the continuation date of June 11.

Testimony in Support

None

Neutral Testimony

Susan Shayegi, a resident of Powell Butte, provided public testimony focused on clarifying the project's location. She noted that while the application describes the property as being adjacent to the "Gala Solar Project," her review of tax lots only identified a site named "Empire Solar." She expressed confusion regarding the specific orientation of the proposed facility and sought clarification on whether the Moffatt Road project is situated directly next to the existing infrastructure mentioned in the documents.

Staff clarified that the proposed facility does not encompass an entire discrete tax lot. Instead, the project is sited on a 320-acre portion of a significantly larger tax lot. Specifically, the facility is proposed for the southeast portion of that lot, situated immediately adjacent to the blue transmission line corridor and directly north of the existing solar infrastructure.

Shayegi said there seems to be a lot of solar going up in the area and wonders how many Crook County is going to allow.

Chair Warren clarified that there is no predetermined quota or set limit on the number of approvals. Instead, the process is entirely application driven. Each proposal is evaluated based on whether it meets specific land-use criteria, including zoning requirements and location suitability.

Ken Nichols, representing Avangrid Renewables (Gala Solar), provided testimony to clarify the regional solar landscape and express concerns regarding the current application. Nichols identified his facility as a 52-megawatt project located at 12515 Southwest Millican Road and noted that the "Empire Solar" site mentioned by the previous speaker is a 2022-approved expansion situated west of Gala. He attributed the high density of solar applications in the area to the proximity of existing transmission lines and substations. Nichols voiced significant concern regarding the ongoing clearing and grading at the Moffett Road site, stating that such unauthorized pre-permit activity could damage the reputation of professional solar developers. He further alleged that equipment and trucks associated with the project have utilized BLM rights-of-way and local roads without proper easements.

Nichols questioned the proposed project's footprint, suggesting that the visible site activity appears to exceed the 320 acres cited in the application, and requested further clarification from the applicant regarding the true scale of the planned development.

Testimony in Opposition

None

Applicant Rebuttal

Yoklic reiterated that the application is strictly for a facility of up to 320 acres. He noted that the site photographs and mapping already included in the record clearly delineate these boundaries. Regarding the allegations of unauthorized site activity and easement issues, Yoklic stated the applicant intends to coordinate directly with Avangrid Renewables to address those specific concerns. He concluded by expressing the applicant’s commitment to providing further detail and supplemental evidence at the continued hearing.

Chair Warren inquired whether the applicant had knowledge regarding the recent juniper clearing on the property, specifically questioning if the eradication was an independent initiative the landowner had already planned to execute regardless of the solar facility proposal.

Yoklic replied that he would take those questions back to the team and provide a response at the next hearing.

Planning Commission Action

The commissioners discussed with staff available dates for the continuation.

Commissioner Stec made a motion to set the date of June 25 at 4:00 as the date and time certain for the continuation of the hearing.

Commissioner Williamson seconded the motion.

Chair Warren asked for discussion.

No Discussion.

Chair Warren called for the vote:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain
Marlo Dill	x		
Laquita Stec	x		
Les Williamson	x		
Mike Warren	x		
Motion passes 4-0-0			

Staff Updates/Planning Commission Comments

Staff provided the Community Development update, noting that current planning workloads have stabilized and are largely caught up. While 2025 year-to-date application numbers are slightly lower than the previous year, overall volume remains steady, featuring 21 site plan reviews (a mix of dwellings and accessory structures), land partitions, and conditional use permits. A new subdivision application is currently undergoing a completeness review, with a public hearing anticipated for early July.

Staff announced that the May 28 meeting will be dedicated to interviewing six candidates for the Planning Commission vacancy. Additionally, staff reported on a successful work session regarding a Military Overlay Zone grant, which is scheduled for presentation to the Board of Commissioners in July.

Commissioner Stec moved to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Williamson seconded the motion.

Chair Warren called for the vote:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain
Marlo Dill	x		
Laquita Stec	x		
Les Williamson	x		
Mike Warren	x		
Motion passes 4-0-0			

Meeting adjourned at 5:14p.m.