



Minutes For July 23, 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.

Acting Chair Neuharth 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.

Prior to roll call, County Clerk, Cheryl Seely, joined to swear in Commissioner Kirk Giovanini.

Attendance

Commissioners Attending:

In Person	Zoom	Commissioner	Excused Absence	Unexcused Absence
x		George Ponte		
	x	Marlo Dill		
x		Laquita Stec		
x		Kirk Giovanini		
x		Hunter Neuharth		
		Mike Warren	x	
		Les Williamson	x	
x		Monty Kurtz, pro tem		

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 agenda item for Final Decision signature of Mueller Subdivision, record number 217-25-000150-PLNG will be held over until the next regular meeting of August 13, 2025.

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 Planning Commission considered a request for an additional continuation of the public hearing. Community Development Director John Eisler reported that staff and legal counsel are still working to resolve a foundational issue identified during the July 2, 2025, hearing. Eisler noted that while the delay is not ideal, approximately two additional months are required to finalize the necessary legal review. Consequently, staff recommended continuing the hearing to a date certain of September 24, 2025.

Planning Commission Action

MOTION: Commissioner Ponte moved to continue for deliberations only for file number 217-24-000293-PLNG to September 24th, 2025 at 4:00 PM.

Commissioner Stec seconded the motion.

No Discussion.

VOTE: Yes votes: Monty Kurtz, George Ponte, Laquita Stec, Marlo Dill, Hunter Neuharth, Kirk Giovanini. No Votes: none. Motion passes 6-0-0.

Work Session

Senior Planner Katie McDonald and Community Development Director John Eisler led a work session to provide a six-month update on the 2025 Work Plan and a high-level orientation for new commissioners regarding Oregon's land use system.

2025 Work Plan Update (Six-Month Review)

Staff provided progress reports on several key projects and legislative implementations:

Goal 5 Cultural Resources: Currently in a holding pattern while waiting for state guidance on the logistics of notifying tribes for all ground-disturbing activities.

Farm/Forest Code Updates: New rules codifying "farm impacts" case law and child care facilities on resource lands are slated for an August or September work session.

Replacement Dwellings: Staff clarified that recent legislative changes sunsetted a previous extension, reinstating the three-year "clause" for replacement dwellings on resource land to ensure timely construction.

Agricultural/Equine Exemptions: Staff are working with the Building Department to align county criteria with Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). While these structures are exempt from structural permits, they still require electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits.

The Transportation System Plan (TSP) update is nearing completion, with an open house scheduled for August 20, 2025, specifically focusing on the Juniper Canyon area.

The "Safe Streets for All" grant is identifying high-crash intersections and segments to improve safety and reduce fatalities.

Energy Code & DOD Overlay: The Board of Commissioners has a hearing scheduled for the following Monday; technical energy code updates are expected to reach the Planning Commission by September or October.

Ongoing/Back-Burner Projects: The Floodplain Code update is complete and in use. However, the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) management agreement and Title 17 updates have been moved to the "back burner" due to staffing levels and the need for better coordination with the City.

Administrative Procedures & Decision Tiers

The Commission reviewed the Decision List, which categorizes applications by review type (Administrative vs. Planning Commission) and appeal periods.

Agritourism: Staff explained the tiered system where small events (1 event) are handled administratively, medium tiers (2–6 events) may be referred to the Commission, and large-scale agritourism (7–18 events) requires a formal public hearing.

Mass Gatherings: Clarification was provided that "mass gatherings" (such as large concerts or one-time solar eclipse events) are not standard land use items; they are processed through the Board of County Commissioners with a focus on emergency planning.

Temporary Hardships: Staff noted that the department processes approximately 39–40 temporary hardship permits per year using the new e-permitting system.

Oregon Land Use Overview (Training)

For the benefit of new members, staff recapped the history and structure of Oregon's land use system:

Foundations: Established by Senate Bill 100 in 1973 under Governor Tom McCall, the system is designed to protect resource lands (farm, forest, and coast) through 19 statewide goals.

Framework: The hierarchy consists of ORS (laws passed by the Legislature) and OAR (rules adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission/DLCD).

Comprehensive Plan: Director Eisler noted that while much of the County's Comprehensive Plan dates back to the 1970s, staff intends to prioritize an assessment of Goal 5 (Natural Resources). This update would address wildlife overlays, aggregate resources, and cultural resources to provide a more stable legal foundation for future decisions.

MOTION: Commissioner Ponte moved to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Stec seconded the motion.

VOTE: Yes votes: Monty Kurtz, George Ponte, Laquita Stec, Marlo Dill, Hunter Neuharth, Kirk Giovanini. No Votes: none. Motion passes 6-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.