



**Minutes**

**DESCHUTES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS JOINT WORK SESSION MEETING**

**DESCHUTES SERVICES CENTER**

**1300 NW WALL STREET, BEND, OREGON, 97703**

**OCTOBER 10, 2024 – 5:30 P.M.**

*THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED IN PERSON, ELECTRONICALLY, AND BY PHONE. IT WAS AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDED AND CAN BE ACCESSED AT THE DESCHUTES COUNTY MEETING PORTAL WEBSITE [WWW.DESCHUTES.ORG/MEETINGS](http://WWW.DESCHUTES.ORG/MEETINGS)*

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**I. Call to Order**

Planning Commission (PC) Chair Toni Williams called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. Planning Commissioners present in-person: Vice Chair Jessica Kieras, Nathan Hovekamp, Mark Stockamp, Kelsey Kelley, Susan Altman and Matt Cyrus. Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) present in-person: Chair Patti Adair, Vice Chair Tony De Bone, Phil Chang. Staff present: Nicole Mardell, Senior Planner; Tarik Rawlings, Senior Transportation Planner; Tanya Saltzman, Senior Planner; Kyle Collins, Associate Planner; Will Groves, Planning Manager; Peter Gutowsky, Community Development Director; Nick Lelack, County Administrator, and Stephanie Marshall, Legal Counsel, Senior Assistant

**II. Public Comment**

None

**III. Action Items**

**1. Dark Skies Initiative**

- Commissioners expressed enthusiasm for addressing the “dark skies” initiative, emphasizing community support and the need to preserve the natural beauty of the night sky. There was considerable discussion among the commissioners and staff about balancing public safety with dark sky preservation.
- Commissioners highlighted how reducing light pollution could benefit residents and wildlife alike, referencing bird migration as an area of concern. They explored simple solutions such as shielding lights to direct them downward rather than outward, minimizing unnecessary light spillage.
- Other commissioners voiced their support for the initiative but noted potential challenges in enforcement, especially in rural areas where safety and visibility are concerns. The commission agreed to continue exploring best practices for both lighting and safety.

**2. Newberry Country Plan Update**

- Commissioners reviewed forthcoming updates to the Newberry Country Plan, which will address trends in housing, transportation, water resources and economic development. Staff noted that public input would be integral to the process.
- There was significant concern expressed about water resource management in the area, particularly as it relates to the increased demand on groundwater from new developments.

Commissioners reiterated that updating the plan would need to involve careful consideration of the environmental impacts of growth.

**3. EPA Community Change Grant**

- The county is awaiting a decision on a \$20 million-dollar grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fund a series of initiatives, including defensible space for wildfire protection, improvements to domestic wells, and alternative wastewater treatment systems for eligible residents.
- Commissioners discussed how grant funding would assist in addressing some of the infrastructure challenges in Southern Deschutes County, particularly for communities grappling with groundwater depletion.

**4. Clear and Objective Standards for Residential Development (HB 3197)**

- Staff presented an overview of the legislative requirements stemming from House Bill 3197, which mandates that counties adopt clear and objective standards for housing developments in unincorporated communities. These code updates will impact zoning regulations and land use processes across Deschutes County.
- Commissioners expressed concerns about how these standards would affect future developments, particularly in terms of maintaining community character while accommodating growth.

**5. Recreational Vehicle (RV) Regulations (SB 1013)**

- The BOCC and the PC briefly discussed Senate Bill 1013, which would permit RV's as rental dwellings in rural residential areas under specific conditions. Deliberations on the topic are expected to take place in November 2024, with community feedback playing a key role in shaping the final decision.

**IV. Planning Commission and Staff Comments**

- Commissioner DeBone commented on the importance of balancing development with environmental preservation, particularly in the context of ongoing projects such as canal piping and groundwater management.
- Commissioner Chang emphasized the need for proactive water conservation measures, highlighting the impact of canal piping projects on the local aquifer and stressing the importance of long-term water resource planning.
- Commissioners discussed funding options for Long Range Planning and Code Enforcement.
- Commissioner Altman asked the BOCC for feedback on encouraging greater community participation during meetings. The group discussed several options to encourage and utilize community member input.

**V. Adjourn**

Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tracy Griffin

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