

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
LAND USE PLANNING DIVISION
MULTNOMAH COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JUNE 2 2025

Virtual Meeting

This is not a full transcript. Time indicators reference the meeting recording, which is accessible at the following Dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/78se5z4xt1hufdpadqibg/June-2-2025-Planning-Commission-Google-Recording.mp4?rlkey=bufqjvhfku6igpkd22z11g72g&st=7110n0ow&dl=0>

1. Call to Order

(00:00:10) Chair Bill Kabeiseman calls the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. on June 2, 2025.

2. Roll Call

(00:01:03) Chair Kabeiseman conducts a role call and declares a quorum present.

- Present – Chris Foster, Stephanie Nystrom, Kari Egger, Barbara Alexander, Bill Kabeiseman, John Houle, Victoria Purvine
- Absent – Tim Wood, John Chen

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

(00:01:20) Minutes from the March 3, 2025 meeting are presented for adoption.

(00:01:35) A motion to approve is made by Commissioner Nystrom.

(00:01:40) The motion is seconded by Commissioner Purvine.

(00:01:53) A roll call vote is held. The motion to approve minutes is passed unanimously.

4. Introduction – New Deputy Planning Director, Alexandra (Alex) Howard

(00:02:00) Megan Gibb, Director, introduces Alex Howard, the new Deputy Director of Land Use. Alex then shares her background, highlighting her experience in planning in the region since 2005, including work with Washington County and the City of Portland on comprehensive planning and other significant projects. She's excited to join Multnomah County and learn about the county's processes. It was also announced in this section that Kevin Cook has been promoted to a Principal Planner, who will manage code compliance, solid waste and recycling, and long range planning.

5. Recognition – Victoria Purvine's last Commission Meeting

(00:04:15) Chair Kabeiseman sadly acknowledges that this is the last meeting for Commissioner Purvine after eight years of service. The Commission thanks her for her contributions and dedication over this period, and how valued her east county perspective has been.

6. Opportunity for Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

(00:06:30) Chair Kabeiseman asks to see if there is anyone from the public joining the meeting wanting to give public comment on non-agenda items. Scott Robison, Recording Secretary, lets him know that no members of the public have joined have the meeting.

7. Briefing – Presentation by the Zoning code Improvement Project Team

(00:06:43) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, introduces Matt Hastie and Emma-Quin Smith from the MIG group. Matt shares his powerpoint presentation with the commission that covers the following: Introductions, Project Background & Timeline, Code Issues, Key Findings, Next Steps, and Questions & Discussion.

(00:11:26) Matt Hastie, MIG consultant, goes over the project goals which are to update and modernize the zoning code, and make the code consistent with county policy priorities. Also, he wants to ensure housing related provisions are Clear & Objective (C&O) and comply with state legal requirements. This project is being funded with county and state grant funding.

(00:18:00) Matt Hastie, MIG consultant, goes over the overall process for the project. There will be a code audit, followed by policy options & direction, followed by a code rewrite, and then finished with adoption of the new code. He confirms that community engagement is integrated throughout the process, with some planned for the summer around initial findings. The team will consider utilizing existing neighborhood association meetings and a combination of in-person and digital engagement methods.

(00:27:12) Commissioner Nystrom asks about the rationale for choosing specific counties for code comparison. Matt Hastie, MIG consultant, explained that the selection was based on familiarity of the consultant team and staff, including experience in other counties. They considered counties with different characteristics, including those adjacent and those with relatively large cities, and also aimed to include an NSA county. Washington County was considered but has a significantly different land complexion.

(00:41:02) EQ, MIG consultant, outlines the key code issues identified by the county as high priorities for updates. These include code organization (two-column format, cross-references, outdated language, inconsistencies, text-heavy nature), application and review procedures (lengthy lot of record verification, modifications process, clarity of approval pathways), common development standards (bus shelters, parking, signs, dark sky, fill and removal potentially not relevant in rural areas), conditional uses (review and refine criteria and procedures), other specific use standards, and flexibility in variances and adjustments. Input from the Planning Commission work program was also considered.

(00:47:36) EQ, MIG consultant, walks the commission through key findings and recommendations. Some include the need for clearer and more accessible code information, with suggestions for incorporating graphics, checklists, and short videos to cater to different learning styles. Other findings include making standards for the development of housing C&O, clarify the decision process for development of housing, consolidate definitions, update conditional use purpose and criteria, and address high priority specific issues. Specific issues include lot of record verification, full compliance, parking and other site development requirements, and non-land use requirements. Clear and organized information can lead to better understanding and increased compliance.

(01:01:06) Matt Hastie, MIG consultant, goes over the next steps in their process. This includes community meetings, refine amendment options based on commission and community input, brief

planning commission and BOCC on results, and then embark on phase 2 (Code updates) in coordination with state-funded work.

8. Briefing – Fee Reductions/Waivers

(01:15:15) Megan Gibb, Director, provides a briefing on the proposed fee reduction and waivers, explaining that this is being developed to accompany the recent fee increase. The goal is to create opportunities for waivers in circumstances aligned with county values, such as economic hardship and farmland accessibility. She hopes to bring a proposal to the planning commission at the July meeting and then to the board of commissioners, aiming for implementation with the budget.

6. Management and Schedule Updates

(01:23:24) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, talks about the ongoing recruitment for the Planning Commission, with one open seat and two members eligible for reappointment. Staff aims to maintain a balance of representation from different parts of the county. Additionally, an update was given regarding the Portland Water Bureau's decision process, and a decision deadline coming in a few weeks.

(01:32:55) Alex Howard, Deputy Director, talks about the plans to gradually reopen the planning counter for in-person services, contingent on hiring of a new planner. Two vacant planner positions are expected to be filled, with an additional new position to be added as well.

(01:35:26) Chair Kabeiseman notes the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting is scheduled in July. The meeting is adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Scott Robison