

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

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1 2025

Hybrid 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/p4ltlvxkweb9n0ayna59n/December-1-2025-Planning-Commission-Zoom-Recording.mp4?rlkey=nubar5ytjfosa87sn5371g253&st=o1bw0vzp&dl=0>

1. Call to Order

(00:00:08) Vice Chair Alexander calls the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. on December 1, 2025.

2. Roll Call

(00:00:37) Vice Chair Alexander conducts a role call and declares a quorum present.

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

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

(00:00:57) Minutes from the November 3, 2025 meeting are presented for adoption.

(00:01:44) A motion to approve is made by Commissioner Nystrom.

(00:01:48) The motion is seconded by Commissioner Chen.

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

4. Opportunity for Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

(00:02:16) Vice Chair Alexander 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 her know that no one from the public had signed up to give testimony or was present in the audience to give comment.

5. Work Session – Zoning code Improvement Project Near Term Code Amendments

(00:03:05) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, and Cathy Corliss, MIG, present on proposed near-term code amendments regarding full compliance provisions and non-conforming situations. The existing code requires proving up everything on a property as legally permitted, which is time-consuming and acts as a barrier to even minor projects. The proposal is to streamline the process for demonstrating compliance and expand exceptions for minor projects. A key suggestion is to expand the definition of a "minor project" to be less limited by use (no longer limited to residents, farm use, or natural habitat activities) to include things like trade permits for schools or businesses.

(00:10:54) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, presents proposed changes to nonconforming situations. The current code is considered difficult to understand and lumps nonconforming uses and improvements together. The proposal introduces three distinct categories including Nonconforming Lot of Record, Nonconforming Improvement, and Nonconforming Use. *Nonconforming Lot of Record* - the approach would largely stay the same, allowing allowable uses on a lot of record even if it doesn't meet today's minimum lot size, *Nonconforming Improvement* - this separates physical structures (like a barn in a setback) from the use. The intent is to be more lenient, allowing flexibility and adaptive reuse, as long as the change does not increase the nonconformity. *Nonconforming Use* - this relates to the activity (e.g., a commercial use in an EFU zone). The strict standards from state statute (ORS 215) will generally continue to apply, with minor amendments for clarity. If both nonconforming use and improvement exist, both sets of rules apply, with the stricter non-conforming use standards governing expansion.

(00:30:49) Commissioner Foster discusses the function of the nonconforming lot of record category. A personal example of the current burdensome full compliance requirement for minor structures (greenhouse, chicken coop) during a remodel was shared, confirming the new proposal aims to alleviate this. The discussion covered how the separation of use and improvements would help businesses needing to make physical changes without changing the use (e.g., parking lot improvements not meeting new landscaping standards).

6. Work Session – Planning Commission Rules of Order

(01:11:11) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, presents a discussion draft of updates to the Rules of Order, last updated in 2011. The changes are intended to reflect current practices, especially hybrid meetings, and comply with updated state public meetings law. Key changes discussed include: Section 3 updates reflect state law regarding making a digital recording or written record, Section 5C clarifies that motions to withdraw or postpone would apply only to matters that are the subject of a hearing, not any matter, and Section 6 updates address attendance and notification of staff/Chair.

(01:30:32) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, encourages the commissioners to email any comments or proposed changes to him by December 24th for review before the meeting on January 12th. The topic of public outreach to increase participation was also raised as an important area for future discussion

7. Management Schedule Updates and Announcements

(01:34:05) Alex Howard, Deputy Director, announces that three new planners have been hired and land use is now fully staffed. The three new planners are Lucas Rhyon, Keri Tallorin, and Natalie Olivier. Staff is working on process improvements to consolidate serial applications and reduce the overall time it takes for applicants to move through the permitting process. The new planners will be invited to a future Planning Commission meeting to meet the commissioners.

(01:42:33) Kevin Cook, Principal Planner, reminds the commission that the next scheduled meeting is on Monday, January 12th and will be a virtual meeting.

(01:42:47) Vice Chair Alexander adjourns the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Scott Robison