



UNION COUNTY
Planning Department

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Union County Planning Commission Regular Session
April 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Misener Conference Room

Draft

ATTENDANCE

Present: Joel Hasse, Mace Cadwell, Mat Barber, Stacy Warren, Geoff Robinson

Excused: Chas Koenig & Amanda May

Absent: Sam Delano

Staff: Inga Williams, Philip Tracy, Pam Hall

Mr. Hasse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes available

II. HEARING

Application 2026-0011 Chavez & Cleaver Variance

A Variance application to reduce the 10-acre minimum parcel size in the Farm Residential zone to allow a partition in order to create two parcels less than 10 acres. The property is described as T02S R38E Section 17 Tax Lot 303. The situs address for the subject property is 63831 Lester Rd., La Grande, OR 97850. Applicable zoning district is R-3, Farm Residential. The property owners are Shawn & Adrea Chavez and the applicant is Joy Cleaver. The applicable land use regulations are UCZPSO Article 8 and UCZPSO Article 30.

Ms. Williams presented the staff report for a variance request to divide a less than 10 acre parcel into two. The applicant would like to divide their property into two parcels, one 5.3 acre and the other a 4.0 acre lot. The property is divided by Lester Road, which goes north to three other parcels. The applicants believe this would make better use of that portion of their property. There were two letters of testimony opposing the variance because of increased traffic, pedestrians and reduced forestland. The neighbors are also struggling to maintain the road.

Mr. Hasse asked if there were any questions. There were none. He asked if the applicants would like to come forward, give name and address.

Applicants: Shawn and Adrea Chavez, 63831 Lester Rd, La Grande, OR.

They had no questions for the Planning Commission. The applicants did consider an ADU but it is further than 100ft across the road, more that allowed.

Co-Applicant: Joy Cleaver, 410 H Ave., La Grande, OR. No questions.

Mr. Hasse closed the hearing. He states the parcel is in a 10-acre zone and they have 9.33 acres, under the 10 acres. Lester Road goes through the center of their property to three other parcels. Mrs. Warren mentions that it is a farm residential zone, which, is 10-acres for a reason. People want 10-acres. We do not want to set a precedent that would not be good. Mr. Hasse stated the applicants knew when they purchased the property it was a 10-acre zone and the road dividing the property is a self-imposed hardship. Mr. Barber reviewed the variance criteria and found few were being met.

Mr. Barber moved that the Planning Commission deny the variance application based on findings that there are no special and unusual circumstances for this property. The strict application ordinance would not cause undue physical hardship and all the circumstances to grant a variance not met through analysis in the staff report, written testimony, and all the items presented tonight. Mrs. Warren seconded the motion. Mr. Hasse asked if any further discussion. Mr. Robinson has mixed feelings on this, not seeing it as easily as everyone else. He felt some of the criteria was subjective. Unusual circumstances, what is an unusual circumstance? The property is not the only one in Union County split by a road. He does not think it is unreasonable having a road go through your property and he could make an argument on that point of view. Mr. Robinson asks Mr. Cadwell what he is thinking. Mr. Cadwell replies, "I agree with you but I do not know how we will get there from here. We're pretty boxed in."

Mr. Hasse calls for a question. Roll call: Mr. Barber-yes, Mr. Cadwell-yes, Mr. Hasse-yes, Mr. Robinson-no, and Mrs. Warren-yes. The motion has passed, the application denied.

There was some discussion about if granted it could potentially be four homes, two being ADU's. What we set up today is forever looking down the road and the applicant may not live there. Mr. Robinson appreciated everyone's perspective and

he could have gone either way, but he does see their point. Mr. Hasse told Mr. Robinson to vote the way he feels.

Mr. Hasse asked if the Planning Commission needed to go over the Land Use Legislation report. He made the comment it was of great interest. The Farm Stand rules changing was the biggest news. Mrs. Warren was excited for this also. She could see the Planning Commission getting many applications. Ms. Williams stated that the issue was some counties opted out of Agri-tourism, some had it and it was causing confusion. Mrs. Warren said it should be interesting around here to see if anything happens. A Farm Stand Agri-Tourism can have lots to eat, beverages and vendors. Mr. Hasse asked if this would allow White Barn, a wedding venue, to do other seasonal events. Agri-tourism does not include wedding venues. There was a brief discussion around wedding venues, who was grandfathered in and who did not before DLCD said no to wedding venues.

Ms. Williams explained another item. The Planning Department received a \$60,000 grant to update the Comprehensive Plan. RFP went out to hire a consultant and the deadline for proposals is May 26th, 2026 at 12pm. This is just the first phase then we can go for the second phase, which we should get.

Mr. Tracy explained about the Vitality Center residing at Eastern Oregon University. It helps connect students to different opportunities. Wallowa and Morrow counties have used students and been very successful. They get a break on tuition and some pay.

Mr. Hasse asked about the memorandum and if the Planning Commission needed to discuss it. Ms. Williams said they had been there with different questions and just had a discussion with him. He is the legal counsel for Union County.

There was a comment made about the 100ft distance for an ADU. It may be an option for the applicant but Ms. Williams said she would have to check with legal counsel since it is a state requirement, not county.

Meeting Adjourned.

