



UNION COUNTY
Planning Department

Inga Williams
Planning Director

1001 4th Street, Suite C La Grande, OR 97850 • Phone (541) 963-1014 • www.UnionCountyOR.gov
IWilliams@Union-County.org • PTracy@Union-County.org • PHall@Union-County.org

Union County Planning Commission Regular Session
May 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Joseph Annex Conference Room

Draft

ATTENDANCE

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

Excused: Chas Koenig

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

March 23, 2026 approved. Mrs. Warren motioned to accept minutes and Mr. Robinson seconded the motion.

II. HEARING

Application No. 2026- 0007

A major partition, which extends Longview Lane to the west and creates two additional parcels. The property is described as T03S R40E Section 15BB Tax Lot 100. The situs address for the subject property is 69733 Highway 237, Cove, OR. Applicable zoning district is R-2, Rural Residential. The property owners/applicants are Josh & Caitlin Russell. The applicable land use regulations are UCZPSO Article 7 and UCZPSO Article 25.

Ms. Williams presented the staff report. The applicants propose to divide a 34-acre property in the Rural Residential zone into 3 parcels: two 2.6-acre lots and one 24.75-acre parcel. Ms. Williams stated the application meets the requirements of the subdivision ordinance per the staff report findings. There is a condition requiring the applicants to improve the new extension of Longview Lane but also the existing grassy, gravel section. That portion of the road, has not been improved since the original subdivision was created.

Mr. Hasse asked the applicants to come forward.

Caitlin and Josh Russell, 69733 Hwy 237, Cove, OR. We thank the Union County Planning Department, past and present, and their surveyor for all the help creating this proposal. The proposal is thoughtful, compliant and responsive to fire concerns raised by this property. Their intent is modest and straightforward to partition two 2.6-acre lots. Mrs. Russell stated they would like to object to condition 2(a). There is already a road ending in a cul-de-sac covered with grass and they do not object to continuing the road to county specifications. We appreciate the guidance received throughout the process, and have tried to approach this proposal carefully, collaboratively, and respectfully. After a small discussion on the cul-de-sac, road standards and figuring out the maps, Mrs. Russell said that they had no objection to having the road re-evaluated for the road to be useable.

Mr. Hasse asks if there is any testimony in favor of this application: none. He asked for testimony in opposition of this application, give us your name and address for the record.

Derek Reddington, 61141 Longview Lane. He gave a quick history of the subdivision, done in phases with the road originally intended to connect with Hwy 237. Mr. Reddington states that it is not the parcels the residents are objecting to, but the extension of Longview Lane. In 2006 Longview Lane got approval to go all the way to Hwy 237, since there were only two subdivisions developed, they did not extend the road and put in a hammerhead turn around. He stated the roads constructed were not to County road standards and are deteriorating, with trenches forming in the middle from water runoff. Mr. Reddington argued for having the road from Hwy 237 constructed first before extending Longview Lane further. There are a number of people walking, jogging, biking or dog walking in the area and the roads are not safe.

Warren Esty, 61083 Longview Lane. He states he is not opposed to the two parcels proposed and he thanks the planning commission for hearing them out. He has a map he drew to illustrate that making the road go through to Hwy 237 makes the best sense. It is shorter to get to the two parcels and the obvious choice.

Dixie DeLarm, 60947 Mountain View Lane. She notes that Cove is a wonderful place to live, great community, wildlife and slow pace. The neighbors would like to protect the sanctity of why they live there. She would like to suggest two considerations. First option would be to extend Longview Lane down to Hwy 237.

This would eliminate any traffic impact and safety for Longview Lane and other roads around. The other option would be to have developers completely rebuild their existing road up to standards. She also has a concern for the water resources. She believes it is part of any subdivision approval or a consideration. When doing a subdivision, it encompasses all the utilities, the sewer, the water and streets.

Lisa Reddington, 61141 Longview Lane. She will not read her letter but would appreciate the planning commission to read it. She spent time and research to put it together. She states she is not going to try to hit on issues that have already been discussed. You probably already understand the issue is not the two lots but the conditions of the roads. We moved to Cove for a specific reason and because we love it. We did not know when we moved to Longview Lane that it was a local access road where the owners of the properties were to maintain. Property owners received no communication or indication that the road would be their responsibility. She researched Article 25 about the requirements for a road and none of the items happened for Longview Lane. She talked with the county road person who came out to look at the road he stated it was not built to county standards. The road is more concave than built up in the middle. The other thing Article 25 talks about is the sewer and water needing to be assessed before new lots can be built. Their road cannot handle another 10 trips a day per household. The infrastructure is not there to sustain more cars.

Sue Raynor, 60848 Mountain View Road. She made mention that not all her neighbors received notice of this application. She is speaking for herself and the McKones who are on vacation. Ms. Raynor strongly encourages not allowing access through Longview Lane, not because of development but safety issue. If the Russells add two parcels, then add 13 more parcels, Longview Lane cannot handle the traffic it will cause. The road was not built to specifications and it is currently deteriorating. All the neighbors fill in the potholes just trying to maintain the road. In the winter, it becomes an ice skating rink. The end of Longview going onto Love road is a safety issue. The extra homes will create more traffic on Antles and Lantz lanes and those roads already have sight and speed concerns. Ms. Raynor also spoke to ODOT's access permit specialist, Lynn Elliott. There may be some options with ODOT involvement. Ms. Raynor states that the Russell's need to pay for all the roads in Mountain View Estates to approved county standards.

Madeline Moore, 69768 Hwy 237. She has been a long time resident of Cove, been gone for a while but now is back. She opposes all the development in Cove mainly due to the poor infrastructure. She has had two near head-on collisions trying to

get on Hwy 237. The safety of the highway is a major concern for her. The water issue is a big concern for the citizens in the area and needs to be addressed.

Mike Looslie, 60864 Mountain View Dr. Mr. Looslie's main focus is the response times for emergency vehicles. The access from Hwy 237 to Longview Lane would be faster from 10 minutes down to 2-3 minutes.

Scott Beardsley, 60981 Mountain View Dr. He agrees with what his neighbors mentioned so far and his concern is with all the dust that this will create. Mr. Beardsley agrees the road won't be able to handle the extra traffic and hopefully, the planning commission will consider this in making their decision. There are water issues in the neighborhood. His personal well along with a few other neighbor wells have had to be reworked.

Mr. Hasse made a comment about a study of the Cove area from the water resource people said there is enough water coming off the mountain behind it that water is not an issue. However, we keep hearing from people about their wells.

Mike Seabold, 60990 Mountain View Dr. He estimated approximately 40 vehicles generating 80 daily trips and 840 monthly trips once the subdivision is fully developed. Mr. Seabold described the current road having 6-inch wheel ruts and 4-inch water trenches. He states the construction equipment would destroy the road and all the costs would fall on the residents. Mr. Seabold demands that the road be: widened, ditched, and graveled or paved to the county road standards.

Cheryl Ingram, 61158 Longview Lane. She is concerned about the safety issues because the road does not have a centerline. It does not have enough road for two cars without one having to wait for the other to go by and many mailboxes close to the road. She agrees that going 1.5 mile through the subdivision is illogical compared to 0.2 mile access to the highway.

Ross Rogers, 61116 Longview Lane. He invites the planning commission to come out to visit the site so they can fully understand the conditions.

Dennis Ingram, 61158 Longview Lane. He argued that the cost savings to the developers from using the shorter Longview Lane extension justify the burden put on the other homeowners for the cost they are going to pay for road maintenance.

Mr. Hasse asked if the applicants wanted to rebut any comments before closing the hearing.

Josh Russell, applicant. He and wife Caitlin are partitioning two 2.6-acre lots at the end of Longview Lane. Mr. Russell sympathizes with the neighbors if he was in their shoes, someone wanting to put in 15 lots. That is not their intention. The two 2.6-acre lots is it, any future development would be after they are long gone and his kids inherit the property. It took them 5 years to find the right property and area. As far as the road concerns, he thinks two more houses would help finance the maintenance of the road. The neighbors are not opposed of the addition of two more parcels and they have no intention of a full subdivision. There are no plans of this happening.

Mr. Hasse closed the hearing and discussion started among the Planning Commission. There was discussion around the roads and access to and from them. Ms. Williams explained the county code states; “if there is a local road access then access must be from the there.” Mr. Hasse remarks that at the time the Longview Lane road was developed, they built it to county code and road standards. Obviously it did not get built to those standards. Mr. Robinson clarifies it is a county code ordinance stating local access road. Mrs. Warren asked if it still applies to a county maintained road. Ms. Williams says yes.

Many audience conversations were going on that Mr. Hasse had to step in and make it clear, “We do not make these rules guys. We just try to figure our way through them and trust me that is not easy.” He understands everyone’s concerns but we have to come up with a solution. A person from the audience commented about extending Longview Lane through the Russell’s access to Hwy 237. Mr. Robinson asked the Russells if they had explored the idea of pushing the road through to the Hwy or can you tell us why you wouldn’t want do it. Mrs. Russell responded that they live on the property. We have plans for the whole part it is where our children play, being kids. We have no intentions of turning the property into a subdivision, it is where we live. The portion we are partitioning is not useable for a farming endeavor but it does flow nicely into the current aesthetics of Mountain View. That is all we are asking to do, that is our plan. If there were a future where we were developing more than the two lots, we would not be living here. We would push the road all the way through because it would no longer be our driveway and no longer our front yard for our children. I am sorry this is the first time we are meeting our neighbors. We have been here for two years working very hard on the property. It is unfortunate that the misconception of the past owner’s plans have transferred to our ownership. There was a lot of talk from the audience and Mr. Hasse had to stop the free-for-all. He explained what he understood the ordinance to be. With the hammerhead at the end of Longview

Lane, they have fulfilled the county's ordinance, making it possible for the road to extend at a future date.

Mrs. Warren asked if the two new parcels could participate in the Longview Lane road maintenance and not just the little piece in front of their property. Ms. Williams said one of the current conditions she proposed was the applicant's maintain from the intersection to the cul-de-sac. Mrs. May also asked if Mountain View Estates had a CC&R for road maintenance or if it was just a handshake. It does not appear that they have a CC&R for road maintenance.

Mrs. May commented that the Planning Commission's purpose: "is to establish rules that get the needs met." This is why we are hearing everyone out so we can put in restrictions to protect future issues. We can't rewind the tape, all we can do is work with what's in front of us right now.

Ms. Williams stated she is the one to ensure that the conditions of the application are done and correctly. The applicants are required to provide engineered plans for the road and Union County Public Works will get them. Public Works contracts with Anderson and Perry, an Engineering firm.

Mr. Hasse asked the Planning Commission what they thought. Mrs. May thinks the application needs to be condition-heavy and she doesn't feel there is a way that we can deny the application just because it is inconvenient to drive an extra 15 minutes. She is not in favor of the road going through to Hwy 237. Mr. Hasse states he likes the idea mainly because of emergency vehicles. Mrs. May agrees with this but in a city like Cove, where it is already forever to go across to Love Rd, it is just going to be a short cut for people cutting through every day and you have the same problem times 20. Mr. Cadwell states the emergency vehicle is a big deal. If you have somebody dying of a heart attack down the road, 9 minutes makes a big difference.

Mr. Barber comments that if they punch the road through to Hwy 237, it may create a raceway that is worse than having two extra lots. He suggested if they could get some sort of agreement where everybody participates in bringing the road up to county standards then they could do a maintenance agreement. Mr. Hasse asked what it would take to get the county to take over the road. Ms. Williams states a petition then the County Commissioners would have to agree on it. Mr. Hasse goes on to say there are many properties in the subdivision and his thought would be to punch the road through to Hwy 237, making the county take on the road. Mrs. Warren doesn't think we can make the county take a road when

they have their own community. Mr. Hasse says they will if the Commissioners give it to them. The County Road Department is not doing all private roads and Mr. Wright, Director of Union County Public Works, does not want to take on any new roads. That is a problem.

Mrs. May sympathizes with the audience but she does not know that it is enough of a reason to say no to what they have in front of them. What conditions can we put in place so we do not contribute to the issues further.

The issue around the cul-de-sac vs. a hammerhead was mentioned and Mr. Hasse commented the hammerhead was better for emergency vehicles because they could turn around better.

Mrs. May stated they should try to find the right verbiage so it could be used to put enforcement on future development. Ms. Williams says they don't know what the Highway Department is going to say or if they would even allow it. It is for County Planning purposes only. Mrs. May says any future consideration for a subdivision should require improvement by the Highway Department to cut through to Hwy 237 and not continue to use Longview Lane. There is another access that may be used, the Murchison's property. Ms. Williams says they would need to provide a stub out to this property if they were to sub divide, the two roads would need to connect.

Mr. Hasse read the requirement for the Quasi-Judicial hearing. Any participant may request an opportunity to present additional evidence, arguments or testimony regarding the application. The local hearings authority shall grant such request by continuing the public hearing pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subsection or leaving the record open for additional written evidence, arguments or testimony pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subsection. If the hearings authority grants a continuance, the hearing shall be continued to a date, time and place certain at least seven days from the date of the initial evidentiary hearing. An opportunity shall be provided at the continued hearing for persons to present and rebut new evidence, arguments or testimony. If new written evidence is submitted at the continued hearing, any person may request, prior to the conclusion of the continued hearing, that the record be left open for at least seven days to submit additional written evidence, arguments or testimony for the purpose of responding to the new written evidence presented.

The Planning Commission extended the hearing for new evidence to be submitted by June 1st. The applicants will then have time to rebut if so desired.

Mr. Robinson made a motion to leave open the hearing to the next Planning Commission meeting on June 22nd, 2026. This gives time for various parties to submit new evidence before June 1st. The applicants will then have time for a rebuttal.

Mr. Hasse adjourned the hearing.