

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Meeting of Thursday, March 27, 2025, 6:30pm**

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**COMMISSIONERS**

**PRESENT:** Sam Tucker, Vice Chair, John Standley, Malcolm Millar, Emery Gentry and Tami Green

**COMMISSIONER**

**PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Kim Gillet, Ann Minton and Andrew Morris

**COMMISSIONERS**

**ABSENT:** Suni Danforth, Chair

**PLANNING STAFF:** Robert Waldher, Community Development Director, Megan Davchevski, Planning Manager, and Shawwna Van Sickle, Administrative Assistant

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*NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING. RECORDING IS AVAILABLE AT THE PLANNING OFFICE.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Sam Tucker called the meeting to order at 6:32PM and read the Opening Statement.

**MINUTES**

Vice Chair Tucker called for any corrections or additions to the January 23, 2025 meeting minutes. No additions nor corrections were noted.

Commissioner Standley moved to approve the draft minutes from the January 23, 2025 meeting minutes, as presented. Commissioner Gentry seconded the motion. Motion carried by consensus.

**NEW HEARING**

**TEXT AMENDMENT #T-100-25, AMENDMENT OF UMATILLA COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CODE, SECTION 152.250 DIMENSIONAL AND DESIGN STANDARDS.** Umatilla County Community Development Department proposes changes to the Umatilla County Development Code (UCDC) Section 152.250, which would modify the dimensional and design standards required for a Design Review in the Retail Service Commercial (RSC) and Light Industrial (LI) zones for projects located adjacent to the Highway 395 North Corridor. The criteria of approval for amendments are found in Umatilla County Development Code 152.750-152.755.

Vice Chair Tucker called for any abstentions, bias, conflicts of interest, declarations of ex parte contact or objections to jurisdiction. No reports were made.

Vice Chair Tucker called for the Staff Report.

### **STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Robert Waldher stated Umatilla County is seeking an amendment to Section 152.250 of the Umatilla County Development Code (UCDC), which outlines the Dimensional and Design Standards. The proposed amendment would revise these standards for Design Review in the Retail Service Commercial (RSC) and Light Industrial (LI) zones for projects located along the Highway 395 North Corridor. He explained, the current design standards have been in place since their adoption by Ordinance 2019-09 in 2019. These standards were developed through a comprehensive public engagement process as part of the Highway 395 North Economic Development Project, which was supported by a Transportation Growth Management (TGM) grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

He added that the primary goal of the project at the time was to enhance the aesthetic appeal and economic viability of the corridor. However, planning staff responsible for reviewing design applications had identified several dimensional and design criteria that, although well-intended when the 2019 code was adopted, are now deemed impractical and not conducive to new development or redevelopment along the Highway 395 North Corridor.

Mr. Waldher stated, the criteria of approval for amendments are found in Umatilla County Development Code 152.750-152.755 and applicable Statewide Planning Goals 1-14 had also been evaluated.

He added, this hearing before the Umatilla County Planning Commission is the County's first evidentiary hearing. A subsequent Public Hearing before the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 9:00 AM in Room 130 of the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 SE 4th Street, Pendleton, OR 97801.

Mr. Waldher concluded that the Umatilla County Planning Commission holds an obligation to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for adopting the proposed text amendment to the Dimensional and Design Standards.

Commissioner Green asked with how the current Code reflects today, have the current standards prevented a business from obtain permits or operate the business they want to? Mr. Waldher stated, potentially yes, these standards may have prevented some from being able to follow their original vision for development. He added, in some cases applicants have requested a variance, for example on storage units, you wouldn't necessarily want to have windows for security and safety reasons.

Mr. Waldher went through the proposed changes within the redline document, and highlighted each change.

Commissioner Millar asked about the minimum lot size of one acre, but upon checking along the Highway 395 corridor he noticed many properties with less than one-acre. Mr. Waldher stated this applied to newly created parcels. Any new partitions in these zones have to be at least one acre. The properties under one acre were already preexisting.

Mr. Waldher also addressed a question later from Vice Chair Tucker regarding the enforcement of maintenance for landscaping. Mr. Waldher responded this would be very hard for us to enforce, but the hope was that the investment the business was making on their landscaping would be an incentive to maintain it to attract more prospective customers. He also mentioned that if there was overgrowth and complaints called in, it could be something Code Enforcement would address at that time.

Vice Chair Tucker asked about page 25, under UCDC 152.250 (H)(1)(b) where it references only needing a combined value of six (6) points from the Table 152.250-1 under the Design Matrix. Mr. Waldher stated he believed that referred to the addition to an existing structure and only involving the addition of said structure to reduce and be able to meet the criteria under the Design Standards.

Mr. Waldher ended stating approximately ten (10) businesses have applied for permits and implemented these standards. The developments seem to really make a difference along the Highway 395 corridor. Attractive facades and landscaping have really improved the look of the area and are drawing more businesses and generating growth to this area.

**Opponents:** None

**Public Agencies:** None

**Rebuttal Testimony:** None

Vice Chair Tucker called for any requests for the hearing to be continued, or for the record to remain open. There were none.

Vice Chair Tucker closed the hearing for deliberation.

### **DELIBERATION & DECISION**

Commissioner Gentry made a motion to recommend approval of #T-100-25, Amendment of Umatilla County Development Code, Section 152.250 Dimensional and Design Standards based on foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

Commissioner Green seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 8:0 recommending approval to the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs. Davchevski mentioned the next Planning Commission hearing was being changed from the originally scheduled April 24<sup>th</sup> hearing and moved to Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm. She mentioned this would be an application regarding an appeal to the Planning Commission from a letter from the Planning Director and that she was trying to get packets out to the Planning Commissioners early for review of the packet.

Vice Chair Tucker added that he appreciated the design of the system like this. He stated when something is implemented, tested and found the process may need altered he appreciated the notice of changes needing made and to fix language to better suit the needs this affects.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Tucker adjourned the meeting at 7:01PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawwna Van Sickle,

Administrative Assistant

**Minutes adopted by Planning Commission on May 1, 2025.**