

COUNTY OF PLUMAS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

DATE: March 20, 2025
TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Plumas County Courthouse Building
Board of Supervisors Chambers
Room 308
520 Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

THE PUBLIC MAY PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY AS FOLLOWS

Zoom Meeting / View and Verbal Public Comment Opportunity:

Members of the public who wish to watch live and provide public comment on any item on the agenda can join via the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92668567598?pwd=T21qNFFGem1PWXBUIUFFZSnJwZEIKdz09>

Call: 1-669-900-9128

Meeting ID: 926 6856 7598

Passcode: 461910

Written Public Comment Opportunity:

Members of the public may submit written comments on any matter within the Commission's subject matter jurisdiction (Plumas County Code Title 2, Chapter 2, Article 1, Sec. 2-2.107 – Duties), regardless of whether the matter is on the agenda for Commission consideration or action. Comments will be entered into the administrative record of the meeting. Members of the public are strongly encouraged to submit their comments on agenda and non-agenda items before and/or during the Planning Commission meeting, using e-mail address

publicplanningcommission@countyofplumas.com

www.countyofplumas.com

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS



In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Planning Commission Clerk at 530-283-6207. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the County to make reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility. Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.

Note: *A majority of the Board of Supervisors may be present and may participate in discussion.*

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Jack Montgomery, Harvey West, Chris Spencer, Dayne Lewis

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Plumas County Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Jennifer Langston, stated that she would like to propose definitions for the “storing” of recreation vehicles (RVs) and for “human habitation” of RVs in the camping ordinance update for consideration. She stated that she has looked at language from Tehama County. She stated that their ordinance language speaks to meeting setback requirements and conditions of RVs. She read aloud the definitions for “storing” and for “human habitation.”

V. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Items to be continued or withdrawn from the agenda

Motion: Move item IX. PUBLIC HEARING – STANIGER ZONE CHANGE (ZC 9-23/24-10) to VIII and item VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2024 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT to IX.

Moved by Jack Montgomery, **Seconded by** Chris Spencer

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: West, Montgomery, Spencer, Lewis

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 6, 2025

Motion: Approval of the Meeting Minutes of March 6, 2025, as presented.

Moved by Jack Montgomery, **Seconded by** Dayne Lewis

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: West, Lewis, Montgomery, Spencer

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

VI. 2021 WILDFIRES LONG-TERM RECOVERY PLAN STANDING UPDATE

Planning Director Tracey Ferguson stated that she gave a presentation with American Planning Association, California Chapter, Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) last Tuesday, March 11, 2025, before the Board of Supervisors. Ferguson presented the Commissioners with copies of the report issued by CPAT in January 2025, entitled 2021 Dixie Fire Implementation Strategy for Recovery and Rebuilding of the Town of Greenville and Canyon Dam, in addition to the presentation that was made to the Board of Supervisors. Ferguson stated that this information is available to the public on the Plumas County 2021 Wildfire Recovery webpage and hardcopies are available at 555 Main Street, Quincy, Planning Department. She stated that she will be delivering the same presentation in association with CPAT at the Greenville Community Meeting on Saturday, April 12, 2025, 11 am to 1 pm.

VII. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS/COMMENTS

Commissioner Spencer stated that wolves are at the top of the list. She stated that her district (Sierra Valley, District 1) is characterized by a lot of ranching and livestock. Ferguson stated that Supervisor Ceresola is the supervisor for District 1 and that he is in communication with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regarding wolf concerns in Plumas County. Spencer stated that Supervisor Ceresola is also in touch with Rick Roberti, President of the Pumas-Sierra Cattlemen's Association.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING – STANIGER ZONE CHANGE (ZC 9-23/24-10) (Tracey Ferguson, AICP, Planning Director)

Ferguson gave an overview of the staff report prepared for the project to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Spencer inquired about the parcels to the south of the proposed Zone Change which also has the Farm Animal Combining Zone ("F"). Ferguson stated that the Farm Animal Combining Zone was applied to those zones circa 1985 and 1991, with County approval.

Nicole Staniger, applicant, provided a statement, as follows: My husband Jason and I want to thank the planning commission for having us here today and especially Tracey Ferguson and Tim Evans for their support and help with this project. My grandfather, moved to this area because he fell in love with the mountains, lakes, and rural living. He served these communities by owning Lassen Hardware and as supervisor. My father, Alex, now owns and runs that business. Though I moved away for a long time, when we began a family of our own, I could think of no where else I would rather raise my children than these same mountains that raised me. Thankfully, my husband Jason, joins me in having a deep love and appreciation of this area as well as a desire to steward the land here. Within a few months of moving back, we brought the Westwood Farmers Market to life and the following year, created a non-profit organization whose central purposes are to increase food security and agricultural sustainability in the Lake Almanor basin, which the USDA classifies as a "food desert". Our commitment to sustainable living is underpinned by an acute awareness of the challenges our communities face on a daily basis. Every empty egg carton

serves as a poignant reminder of the need for local, sustainable food sources that can withstand global disruptions. We wholeheartedly believe that if more people had backyard gardens and small-scale homesteads, it would increase local economy and health, create food security, and stabilize our communities. The vision for our property on highway 147 is to embrace what rural families have done for centuries - grow enough food to feed our family. We applied for the combined farm zoning as the next step in our journey towards sustainable living. To be specific, we currently keep a dairy goat (with her young for a time), a seasonal hog, and chickens. We understand that the planning commission has to make this determination based on the maximum allowance of 18 hooved animals. But even at that rate, we are talking about an extremely minimal environmental impact. Our initial step in creating our homestead was addressing the increasingly important issue of fire safety. With the help of CalFire and our local forester, we have successfully created reduced fuels as well as created an access zone for CalFire to defend Little Dyer Mtn as well as the communities along the East Shore and Hamilton Branch from future fire threats. To this end, and as guided by CalFire, on our property we "retained the largest and most vigorous dominant and codominant trees while cutting trees that were secondary, suppressed, dead, dying or diseased." Our efforts have not only enhanced public safety but also contributed to a healthier forest ecosystem. While we've received support and cooperation from many of our neighbors, we were certainly disheartened to hear the comments from others. As a general response, we would like to say that we are in alignment with many of the concerns raised. With the desire to live full-time and homestead on this property, we have the greatest vested interest in maintaining a clean water source, predator abatement, soil ecology and integrity, odor & waste management and overall land stewardship. In applying for this combined farm zoning, we are ourselves incurring the burden to comply with not just local ordinances but also act in a manner that shows the utmost respect for the land itself and serves as an example of sustainable rural living for the surrounding communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Commissioner West opened the public hearing at 10:58 am.

Ferguson read aloud the nine (9) public comments received after the notice of public hearing to property owners within 300 feet.

Ferguson read aloud comment number 5 and asked the applicant to comment on the location where the planned barn would be located. The applicant confirmed that the barn would be located at the bend at the top of the property.

A public commenter (Craig Finta) stated that he has been living on his property since 1958. He stated that he has no adversity towards the 4-H program. He stated that he, his wife and his son own a company called Finta Enterprises, formerly known as Finta Hay services. He stated that the company delivers hay and composts manure. He stated that he is familiar with the consequences of composing manure. He stated that code enforcement issues are slow processes. He stated that sometimes it takes months to correct the problem. He stated that he agrees that the soil permeates great, except in intense thunderstorms. He stated that he is familiar with predators, and that the coyotes have increased in intensity. He stated that he has seen a mountain lion and that his neighbor has seen a wolf. He stated that farm animals bring in predators. He stated that he believes that the scope of what the applicant wants to accomplish can be done without a zone change. He stated that the Commission should find a balance and give the applicant what they want without permanently rezoning the property.

A public commentor (Cody Clayton) stated that he has lived in Plumas County for 25 years. He stated that Plumas County is one of the last great places that hasn't been ruined by California. He stated that we are forcing people to ask permission to feed themselves through this process. He stated that he hopes that we can find a way through this.

A public commentor (Leslie Finta) stated that she wanted to thank the applicant for sharing her plan. She stated that she came to the meeting without knowing exactly what was being planned. She stated that she loved the sustainability comments. She stated that she is concerned about the hotwire fence because she has grandchildren visit. She inquired about what would happen if a child touched the fence.

Nicole Staniger, applicant, stated that one of her children could tell her what would happen. Lewis inquired about the hotwire fence being secondary fencing. Nicole Staniger stated that they would only fence the areas where the animals would be kept with the hotwire inside.

Leslie Finta stated that she also appreciated the forest thinning behind her property. She stated that if she had a choice between houses and animals that she would pick the animals.

Nicole Staniger stated that she wanted to address the issue of smell and flies because it came up in every comment. She stated that the prevailing winds off of lake Almanor blows North-East away from the neighboring properties. She stated that the properties are all within 700 feet of the railroad tracks, where trains run all day and night.

Commissioner West closed the public hearing at 11:46 am.

Ferguson inquired with the applicant if she wanted to make any final comments. Nicole Stanger thanked Planning Department staff and the Commission for all the time spent on this project.

West inquired about the rules and regulations on noticing the public. Ferguson stated that per government code, it is a ten (10) day public notice mailed to the property owners within 300 feet of the parcel. She stated that this hearing was noticed on March 10, 2025. Spencer stated that there was also a notice that went out with the filing of the application.

Commissioner Lewis stated that the idea of a homestead is to be sustainable. He stated that he has to think about the land in perpetuity. He stated that someone could move in and want to put horses or cattle. He stated that it does not seem like an appropriate location for cattle or horses for any kind of profit.

Commissioner Spencer stated that it is clear that the project is not for commercial use. She stated that it was enlightening to hear what the applicant has planned for the property. She stated that because the zoning is in perpetuity with the land, that the worst case scenario needs to be considered. She stated that she feels confident in the inspections and the rigor regarding CEQA investigation. She stated that she is confident that it would not inspire someone to have 18 head on the property. She stated that she appreciates the forest thinning promoting safety in that small area.

Commissioner Montgomery stated that he lives in the vicinity and had visited the property recently. He stated that the 19 percent grade is very significant. He stated that he agrees with the applicants' plans. He stated that his concern is with the perpetual nature of the zone change. He stated that he knows what the Environmental Health Department has said about the proximity to wells. He stated that he doesn't know what the slope of the property does to the aquifer underneath. He said that if there ends up being 18 cows on the property that the potential for E. coli is a "what if." He stated that his bigger concern has to do with someone buying the land with S-1 zoning and then wanting it to have an F combining zone. He stated that it would be a radical change of use. He stated that we are looking at the question of Right to Farm, and that in a way, this is the flip flop where property owners have the right first, and not the farm.

Spencer stated that commercial would be a code violation. She stated that 4-H and FFA are not commercial endeavors. Ferguson read aloud Section 9-2.209 Animal Husbandry, Large. "...for the personal use of residents of the property..."

Montgomery stated that it seems like the noise, odors, and flies are being kicked down the road to Code Enforcement. He stated that it would invite a lot of nuisance complaints.

Motion: Adopt the Planning Commission Resolution No. P.C. 2025-01 making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to: A. Find the Zone Change (ZC 9-23/24-01) approval by Ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, making Findings 1 through 20 as shown in Planning Commission Resolution Number 2025-01; and B. Adopt the Zoning Ordinance approving the Zone Change as shown in Exhibit "A" to Planning Commission Resolution No. P.C. 2025-01.

Moved by Chris Spencer Seconded by Dayne Lewis

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: West, Spencer, Lewis

Noes: Montgomery

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

In closing, Ferguson stated that based on the Planning Commission's recommendation approving Resolution No. P.C. 2025-01, the Board of Supervisors Public Hearing for this proposed Zone Change is scheduled for April 1, 2025, 11:00 am at the Board of Supervisors chambers, 520 Main Street, Quincy, 3rd floor.

IX. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2024 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (Tracey Ferguson, AICP, Planning Director)

Ferguson presented each of the commissioners with a draft copy of the Annual Progress Report. Ferguson Stated that she will bring this to the Board of Supervisors on April 1, 2025, with a deadline to submit to the state on April 1, 2025. Ferguson gave an overview of the Annual Progress Report to the Planning Commissioners. Ferguson stated that the Seneca Hospital project should be included in the significant plans and projects section of the Annual report. Lewis inquired about the Plumas District Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility. Ferguson stated that the Plumas District Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility should also be included.

Motion: Forward the 2024 General Plan Annual Progress Report to the Board of Supervisors with the addition of the Seneca Healthcare District Hospital Replacement project and the Plumas District Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility project to the 2024 Significant Plans and Projects section.

Moved by Jack Montgomery, **Seconded by** Chris Spencer

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: West, Montgomery, Spencer, Lewis

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

X. 2024-2029 HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 (Tracey Ferguson, AICP, Planning Director)

Motion: Continue to the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting of April 3, 2025.

Moved by Chris Spencer, **Seconded by** Jack Montgomery

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: West, Montgomery, Spencer, Lewis

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout

XI. INFORMATION ITEMS/ON-GOING PROJECT UPDATES

- A. California 2021 Dixie Fire Implementation Strategy for the Recovery & Rebuilding of the Town of Greenville and Canyon Dam (January 2025), American Planning Association, California Chapter, Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) – SEE ABOVE UNDER “VI. 2021 WILDFIRES LONG-TERM RECOVERY PLAN STANDING UPDATE”

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. 2024-2029 Housing Element Update public workshops
2. Amendments to the Resolution Establishing the Rules of Conduct of Business of the Plumas County Planning Commission
3. Discussion of Agriculture and Forestry Element of the 2035 Plumas County General Plan
4. Brown Act Training for Planning Commissioners

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Adjourn to the regular meeting scheduled on April 3, 2025.

Moved by Jack Montgomery **Seconded by** Chris Spencer

Vote: Motion carried.

Yes: Montgomery, West, Spencer, Lewis

Absent: Moorea Hoffman Stout