



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon  
(541) 388-6570

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# BOCC MEETING MINUTES

3:00 PM

**TUESDAY April 30, 2024**

Sisters City Hall  
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Patti Adair, Tony DeBone and Phil Chang. Also present was County Administrator Nick Lelack

This meeting was audio and video recorded and can be accessed at the Deschutes County Meeting Portal webpage [www.deschutes.org/meetings](http://www.deschutes.org/meetings).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### **AGENDA ITEM:**

#### **1. Continued Public Hearing: Draft 2020-2040 Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan**

Nicole Mardell, Senior Planner, introduced the public hearing on the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, explaining that the Plan defines the community's vision for housing, recreation, transportation, and land use, among other elements. She recounted the extensive community outreach undertaken in developing the update as well as the Planning Commission's in-depth review, which included three public hearings. Major themes of the public input received thus far include the rezoning of farmland, protection of wildlife, dark skies, private property rights and water management.

The Planning Commission recommended several revisions relating to: balancing regulations with incentives; exploring a new zoning category to balance high

desert resources with housing; revising Policy 8.1.2 (collaboration among recreation agencies and property owners for trail projects); and deleting Policy 5.1 regarding the consideration of impacts to water quality and quantity for destination resorts and other large-scale developments.

Mardell summarized comments submitted by agencies and members of the public in advance of today's hearing.

*The public hearing was opened at 3:22 pm.*

- Tony Oliver commended staff for the work done on the draft update. She was concerned about the conversion of farmland to other uses and supported incentives to facilitate sustainable farming. She additionally supported a moratorium on destination resorts due to concerns about water availability. She objected that properties near her home which are zoned RR10 are being used for motorcross facilities.
- Bruce Bowen also thanked staff for their work on the update. He said the draft plan is too long and too technical, and unclear in some parts. Saying that the plan fails to provide a visionary leadership, he faulted it for adhering to the status quo and not addressing problems which proliferate in connection with destination resorts, which he considered to be rural subdivisions in disguise. He further said that the draft update does not adequately protect natural or agricultural resources—water in particular—and stated his objection to ad hoc or spot zoning.
- Eva Eagle said dense subdivisions exert pressure on services, including roads. She was concerned with the decline in wildlife populations such as deer, smaller mammals and birds, and was also concerned about the decrease in the groundwater table. She advocated for protecting the environment, water quality, and agricultural and forest land. She said large destination resorts are not needed to boost the economy and urged retaining open spaces.
- Jim Thrower advised remembering that this area is a desert, and water sources are limited. He expected the climate to become drier over time, resulting in increased demand for water. He objected that ranchers and farmers will not have enough water for agricultural uses, yet golf courses and artificial lakes are being allowed. He spoke regarding the documented decline in the mule deer population, saying this species does not easily adapt to change. He concluded that their migration patterns are disrupted by development, which affects their reproductive rates and hardiness.
- Paul Lipscomb speaking on behalf of the Oregon Land and Water Alliance, said his biggest concerns were water and destination resorts. He believed the draft update does not sufficiently address water in terms of conservation and the enforcement of rules governing water use. He

proposed changes to the section regarding destination resorts to address water usage and said golf courses in particular are not sustainable.

Discussion ensued regarding the enforcement of water permits and allocations and how to measure water use.

- Rodney Cooper said mule deer are resilient and pay no attention to property lines or boundaries in terms of their habitat. He suggested that predators—in particular, cougars and wolves—are partially responsible for the decline in the population of mule deer.

Discussion ensued regarding the reasons for the decline in the population of mule deer in Central Oregon, including that non-native junipers crowd out bitterbrush which is an important food source for the deer.

- Dorinne Tye appreciated the public engagement done for the Comprehensive Plan update. She spoke regarding the need to protect water resources and shared her concerns regarding negative environmental impacts (in particular, noise and pollution) from air and vehicle traffic.
- Morgan Greenwood, representing the Central Oregon Builders Association, suggested that the Plan be revised to reclassify non-commercially viable agricultural land to facilitate housing development. In addition, she asked that the Community Development Department implement a fee-based pre-application meeting to help streamline and expedite the review time for housing development. She supported not using surplus County land for affordable housing at the expense of a better opportunity.

*Oral testimony concluded at 4:09 pm.*

The Board was in consensus to leave the written record open for 30 days. Comments from the Commissioners will be accepted into the record until May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Chang advocated for an evening public hearing opportunity before the Board. Following discussion, the Board concurred to continue the public hearing to 5:30 pm on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner DeBone spoke to an area zoned F2 in the South County which was platted before 1973 and has long been considered to be rural residential, but is zoned as resource land. Despite the official zoning, people have built residences without septic systems or adjacent public right-of-way.

Mardell said this land is considered to be non-prime resource land. Commissioner Chang said while property owners can apply for rezones on a per parcel basis, the cost of conducting the necessary soil analysis can be prohibitive. He suggested that possibly the County could aid in those efforts.

**ADJOURN:**

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at XX:XX pm.

DATED this 29<sup>th</sup> day of May 2024 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

  
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**PATTI ADAIR, CHAIR**

**ATTEST:**

  
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**RECORDING SECRETARY**

  
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**ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR**

  
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**PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER**