

**Siskiyou County Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
February 19, 2025**

The Siskiyou County Planning Commission meeting of February 19, 2025, was called to order by Chair Fowle at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the Siskiyou County Meeting Chambers, 311 Fourth Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Yreka, California.

**Present:** Commissioners Hart, Melo, Lindler, Veale and Fowle

**Absent:**

**Also Present:** Rick Dean, Director, Community Development Department; Hailey Lang, Deputy Director of Planning; Dan Wessell, Deputy Director of Environmental Health; Rachel Jereb, Senior Planner; James Phelps, Senior Planner; William Carroll, Assistant County Counsel; Janine Rowe, Commission Clerk

**Minutes: January 15, 2025:** It was moved by Commissioner Melo, seconded by Commissioner Hart, to approve the January 15, 2025, Planning Commission Minutes as presented, with Commissioner Lindler abstaining because she was absent from that meeting.

**Voted** upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present.

**Unscheduled Appearances: None**

**Conflict of Interest Declaration:** Commissioner Lindler said she was contacted by JH Ranch for advice, but no money was exchanged.

**Presentation of Documents:** The Chair read this item.

**Availability of Public Records:** The Chair directed those in attendance to review this item which is outlined on the Agenda.

**Public Hearing Protocol; Right of Appeal Statement:** The Chair reviewed these items with members of the public who were in attendance.

**Changes to the Agenda: None**

**Old Business:**

**Agenda Item 1: Monte Shasta Mutual Water Company / Siskiyou County Road Department Road Abandonment (UP-RA-01) / Categorically Exempt**

General Plan conformity determination regarding a proposed abandonment of a portion of Shasta Way (County Road 2M082) by Board Resolution 86-273 on July 9, 1986. Prior to the Board of Supervisors considering the proposed abandonment, the Planning Commission will review the proposal in order to make a recommendation to the Board. This portion of roadway is located in a portion of the Northwest quarter of Section 14, Township 40N, Range 4W, Section 14, M.D.M; APN: 037-340-500.

**Categorically Exempt  
Road Abandonment**

**Recommending Adoption  
Recommending Approval**

**Staff Report:**

The previously circulated Staff Report was reviewed by the Commission, and a presentation of the project was provided by Ms. Lang.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that the project was initially discussed in September. The purpose of the project is to abandon a portion of Shasta Way to construct a solar array for the mutual water company. After comprehensive discussions and neighborhood opposition, the project was elevated to the Board, and the Board directed staff to continue developing the project. Staff suggested opening the abandoned road portion for a competitive bid to either adjoining property owners, Mr. Briggs or the Schwartz family, to avoid creating a non-conforming and unusable parcel due to its size.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that staff is asking the Planning Commission to make a General Plan conformity decision regarding the roadway abandonment. If approved, the final decisions on prospective and current use, as well as bicycle and pedestrian usage, would be left to the Board of Supervisors. She said staff received comments from the public both in support of and in opposition to the project and that Public Works Director Tom Deany was present to answer questions.

**Commission Questions: None**

**Agency Input: None**

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

**Public Hearing:**

**In Support:**

Mr. Roger Emerson of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. Mr. Emerson said he has been a resident in the subject subdivision for 40 years and was president of the mutual water company board early on when they established a study of the system and established a new rate schedule that allowed for improvements, maintenance, etc. Mr. Emerson said he received notice of a rate increase from Pacific Power so he believes it is important to approve the road abandonment so they can move forward with installing a solar array.

Mr. Rod Merys of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He said there are several supporters of the project which includes the mutual water company board as well as numerous residents of the subdivision. Mr. Merys said he wanted to address some of the concerns mentioned by those in opposition to the project. He said the proposed project to abandon a dead-end portion of Shasta Way and construct a solar array does not hinder the establishment of fire egress, as the County lacks the necessary easements for a fire exit. He said the project does not prevent the neighboring property owner from building a driveway or using the nearby pedestrian trail, which is on private property and subject to trespassing. He said it will not damage the fragile ecosystem or valuable agricultural land, as the site is an abandoned roadway with road base. Mr. Merys said alternative sites were deemed unacceptable. He said the solar project does not create a toxic waste site, as supported by regulations requiring solar installation on new constructions in Siskiyou County and California.

Commissioner Veale asked and the Chair confirmed that the item being discussed today involves the abandonment of a portion of Shasta Way only.

Mr. Richard Montoya of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He said the purpose of the project is to save money. He said the mutual water company board is entirely volunteer-based, and they

provide water at cost without profit. He said savings on power will allow for updates and repairs to infrastructure. Mr. Montoya said the road abandonment needs a stipulation for an easement to ensure the project can proceed; otherwise, the property owners could deny construction on their property. He said the opposing party has solar collectors on their roof even though they may think the panels could be a hazard.

Ms. Shanti Cliff of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. She believes there are portions of roads in the county that are adjacent to private property and are unusable or too small to build a house. She said these parcels could be a liability for the county and that nearby adjacent landowners can take better care of them. She said she owns several properties in the county with this situation and described them as dead parcels next to unusable land.

Mr. Ken Burger of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He said during the Lava fire three years ago, the subdivision faced challenges in protecting their properties due to the inability of the current water system to meet the demand. Mr. Burger emphasized the need for a solar power system to ensure water supply during power outages. With solar power, the pumps could provide water to the three fire hydrants in the subdivision, which would give residents a better chance to save their property in case of fire.

Before the Chair called the next speaker to the podium, he clarified with staff that the project being discussed at today's meeting is whether or not to approve road abandonment. Ms. Lang said conformity of the road abandonment with the General Plan is what is before the Commission.

Chair Fowle told those in attendance that if the road abandonment is approved by the Planning Commission, it would then go to the Board of Supervisors who have jurisdiction to decide how to disburse that abandoned road parcel. Chair Fowle reiterated that the project of solar was not before the Commission. He said if the proposed abandoned road parcel is acquired by an entity, it would then come before the Planning Commission for any type of development.

Mr. Mark Wolynn of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He said after investigating all potential alternatives for the solar project placement, the only suitable site was the parcel of road base, and there is overwhelming support for the road abandonment, with a petition signed by 53 community members and 30 letters of support. Mr. Wolynn said one major consideration is the location of wells on the Briggs property which is adjacent to the project site, and the road abandonment would provide a new site for a leach field to prevent contamination of the water supply. The project has strong community support, and it would help alleviate the county's responsibility for the small parcel of road.

Mr. Eugene Duda of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He thanked the Commission for their time and hoped the road abandonment is approved for future projects to support the community's water system.

Mr. Gaylord Briggs of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He said he has been involved in the solar project since its inception in 2019 and fully supports the road abandonment and solar project, which are closely linked. He said vacating the underutilized road segment will facilitate the solar project, leading to substantial cost savings for the water company and increasing system resilience during power outages. Mr. Briggs said the project has been under county review for six years, with each new issue being re-evaluated by the water company's board of directors, who continue to see its merit. Mr. Briggs said he found it ironic that issues raised in opposition to the project could apply to

many homes in the area with little controversy. In order to move the proposal forward, Mr. Briggs said he is willing to accept the title of the vacated road segment since he is as an adjacent owner and would grant an easement to the water company for the solar project.

Ms. Deborah McDowell of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. She said the water company board has done a lot to support their community. Ms. McDowell said the person who is creating the most resistance to the project has only lived in the community for a couple of years and that they were aware that the project was in progress when they bought the property. She said the opposing party's statements are full of falsehoods and arguments that do not apply to the project.

Mr. Richard McDowell of Mt. Shasta spoke in support of the project. He urged the Commission to focus on the benefits of the project for over 100 residents of the subdivision, even those who object. He said Nearly 90 percent of the members support the project. He encouraged approval of the road abandonment so an unused piece of land can be transformed into a project that will protect homes from wildfire and ensure an uninterrupted water supply for the community.

**Opposed:**

Ms. Leslea LeGro of Mt. Shasta spoke in opposition to the project. She said those in opposition have valid claims. She said she would like to see the abandoned road turned into an alternate exit route leading out of the subdivision in case of fire. She said she would like the proponents to find another location for the solar project because it is visible from her property and considers it to be a massive development. Ms. LeGro acknowledged the efforts of the water board and appreciates the volunteer hours, but she is concerned about the project's proximity to her property and its potential impact on property value.

There being no further comments, the Chair closed the Public Hearing.

**Commission Discussion:**

Discussion was held regarding the fact that the portion of Shasta Way proposed to be abandoned and the subdivision in question were created before the CAL FIRE 4290 regulations existed and that there is only one route in and out of the subdivision. Discussion was held that a portion of Monroe Drive is partly privately owned and partly a county easement and that it appeared that a house was built into an easement.

Commissioner Hart said the concerns about fire evacuation were valid and was uncertain how to address them. He recommended that potential buyers in the subdivision be aware of the risks involved.

Discussion was held that the dirt ingress/egress for the Briggs parcel is not noted on a title as being a fire ingress/egress.

**Motion:** Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Melo, seconded by Commissioner Veale, to Adopt Resolution PC 2024-023, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the County of Siskiyou, State of California, Recommending the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed road abandonment (RA-24-01) based on the recommended findings, and Recommending the Board of Supervisors determine the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Voted** upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Hart, Melo, Lindler, Veale and Fowle

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

**New Business:**

**Agenda Item 1: Wilson Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA-24-25) / Categorically Exempt**

The project site is located at 5103 Stag Mountain Road in the community of Lake Shastina on APNs: 106-380-210, 106-380-220, 106-380-250, and 106-380-270; Township 42N, Range 5W, Section 2, MDB&M. The applicant is requesting Boundary Line Adjustment approval to merge four existing parcels into one 1.89 acre parcel with double frontage on Stag Mountain Road and Rainbow Drive. Siskiyou County Code Section 10-4.105.3(e) states that no lot shall have double frontage unless otherwise approved by the Planning Commission.

**Categorically Exempt  
Boundary Line Adjustment**

**Adopted  
Approved**

**Staff Report:**

The previously circulated Staff Report was reviewed by the Commission, and a presentation of the project was provided by Mr. Phelps.

Mr. Phelps told the Commission that the project involves a boundary line adjustment in Lake Shastina, and the project is before the Planning Commission because the resulting parcel will have double frontage. He said after the General Plan zoning ordinance update is complete, such projects won't require Planning Commission approval. Mr. Phelps said the applicant was seeking to merge four parcels into one, resulting in a 1.89-acre parcel. He said the project is consistent with General Plan and zoning requirements for the area and is typically exempt from CEQA.

**Commission Questions:**

Commissioner Veale wanted to know the reason for the lot consolidation, and Mr. Phelps said the applicant is not required to disclose that information.

Discussion was held that the reason there was no hold harmless clause in the Conditions of Approval is because it is contained in the initial Application for Development Review.

**Agency Input: None**

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

**Public Hearing:**

Terry Curry, land surveyor and the applicant's representative, told the Commission that the reason a lot of folks in Lake Shastina merge their parcels is to save on the POA fees.

There being no further comments, the Chair closed the Public Hearing.

**Commission Discussion: None**

**Motion:** Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Lindler, seconded by Commissioner Melo, to Adopt Resolution PC 2025-002, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the County of Siskiyou, State of California, determining the Wilson Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA-24-25) exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act and approving the Project.

**Voted** upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present.

**The Chair called for a break at approximately 9:48 a.m.**

**The Chair called the meeting back to order at approximately 9:53 a.m.**

**Agenda Item 2: JH Ranch Zone Change (Z-23-06) and Use Permit (UP-24-16) / Categorically Exempt**

The applicant is requesting a Zone Change (Z-23-06) to amend the Planned Development Master Plan (approved October 1993) with the associated Planned Development Ordinance (Ordinance #93-41) and a Use Permit (UP-24-16) to bring current uses into compliance with current operations of the property. No expansion of occupancy, uses, or structures is involved in the proposed project. JH Ranch seeks to establish the baseline and historical occupancy of 505 persons. The Planned Development District (PD) applies exclusively to land in Township 41N, Range 9W, Sections 29 and 32, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian (MDB&M), approximately 79 acres, which excludes the portion currently zoned Rural Neighborhood Commercial (C-R). The Assessor Parcel Number (APN) involved in this proposed project is 023-190-510.

**Categorically Exempt  
Use Permit  
Zone Change**

**Recommending Adoption  
Conditionally Approved  
Recommending Approval**

**Staff Report:**

The previously circulated Staff Report was reviewed by the Commission, and a presentation of the project was provided by Ms. Lang.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that the project is an amendment to the JH Ranch Planned Development and a use permit. She said there are three different zoning districts within the parcel which consist of 79 acres of planned development, about 6.5 acres of neighborhood commercial zoning, and about 80 acres of rural residential zoning which is open space.

Ms. Lang said the project is a compliance effort for what currently exists and its purpose is to bring the property into compliance with existing uses, structures, programs, and occupancy, and would maintain a historical baseline of 505 persons during the summer months. No new structures, programs, or uses are being proposed.

Ms. Lang listed several prior approvals that were made for the property since 1970. She said the current zone change amendment would bring the entire property into compliance.

Chair Fowle asked at what point the restaurant was approved and whether the license still exists. Ms. Lang said it was mentioned in the 1993 Planned Development but not in the staff report or ordinance and that it was permitted.

Ms. Lang said the project is consistent with the General Plan, the Scott Valley Area Plan, and the zoning code. She said all planned developments must have an attached master plan, and the most recent approval was in 1993. The current PD master plan was created using a template from other PD master plans, such as the Mt. Shasta Ski Park. Ms. Lang said the master plan includes an accurate project description, development objectives, approved uses, structures, and programs, operational information, and an emergency evacuation plan reviewed by OES and CAL FIRE. She said it also outlines compliance review procedures for the county to confirm compliance or handle modifications, and a site plan showing everything currently existing on the ground is attached to the master plan document.

Ms. Lang said there have been questions regarding the CEQA review for the project. Staff proposed a Class I exemption for existing facilities, which involves no expansion of existing or former uses. The project is eligible for the Class I exemption because it aims to bring the property into compliance without increasing occupancy, uses, structures, or programs.

Ms. Lang said Section 15215 of the CEQA guidelines requires the lead agency to determine if the project affects the environment. She said the baseline for this evaluation is the current conditions and excludes hypothetical situations. Any deviation would require substantial supporting evidence, which is not necessary in this case.

Ms. Lang said staff received a lot of questions regarding authorized and unauthorized uses. She said CEQA does not specifically address unauthorized uses, and they are considered part of the baseline regardless of local approval. She said prior legal actions do not influence the baseline and that CEQA does not address illegal actions so both legal and illegal uses that weren't approved are included in the CEQA baseline. She said the baseline is defined within CEQA guidelines.

Ms. Lang said a lot of questions were received asking why the 1993 Planned Development is not enforced. She said a use permit is required for planned developments with multiple uses or phases, which is the case with JH Ranch since they have multiple zoning districts and uses. Ms. Lang said there was a PD amendment in 1993 without an associated use permit which made everything a by-right use with no enforceable conditions. She said the 250 occupancy is only mentioned in the PD plan but not in the staff report or zoning ordinance, and this made enforcement challenging without conditions of approval. The current proposal includes an enforceable use permit that the county can use to verify compliance and will address the missing piece from the 1993 approval.

Ms. Lang said comments were received from CAL FIRE and Environmental Health. She said public comments were received regarding water usage and current permits, 4290 and 4291 regulations, the proposed baseline occupancy, and concerns regarding wildfire and how evacuations would be handled. She said comments also expressed concerns related to the CEQA analysis and noise and whether the ranch would be operating year round.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that the conditions of approval regulate compliance with the PD plan and the zoning of the parcel, ensuring no expansion of occupancy, new structures, programs, or uses. She said any new proposals will require going through the approval process again. The conditions of approval allow a 505-person occupancy for summer programs, ensuring compliance with state and local laws, and current state Water Board permits. There is also a condition for an annual review of the fire emergency evacuation plan by OES and CAL FIRE, with an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to be created between OES and JH Ranch to ensure this process.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that representatives from JH Ranch and CAL FIRE as well as Bryan Schenone from OES and Tom Deany from Public Works were present to answer questions.

**Commission Questions: None**

**Agency Input: None**

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

**Public Hearing:**

Mr. Rob Hinckle, Chief of Staff, JH Ranch, spoke in support of the project. Mr. Hinckle said he and Kip Whipple have been collaborating with the county to ensure the property meets compliance standards. Over the past two years, he said JH Ranch has submitted approximately six permit applications, with most being approved and some still pending. He reiterated that they are not seeking expansion but rather official occupancy at 505 and use permit approval. The goal is to achieve and maintain compliance moving forward.

Mr. Hinckle said the 505 occupancy number is based on the availability of water, sewer capacity, and the property's acreage. He said the occupancy number includes 300 guests with operations occurring mainly from May through September. He said occasional community events are held in the off season with up to 100 guests being hosted during the day. He said the year round verbiage is to ensure that everyone knows they're open for maintenance.

Mr. Hinckle expressed gratitude for the commitment of their leadership team and board to remain in compliance and contribute positively to the community.

Mr. Kurt Weaver of Weed spoke in support of the project. He said he is a volunteer at JH Ranch and has become an advocate for JH Ranch, praising the property, staff, and the positive value it imparts on guests. He said the ranch has a significant economic impact on local businesses and a profound spiritual impact on its visitors. This influence extends nationwide and locally to Siskiyou County and Scott Valley, positively affecting generations of families. Mr. Weaver asked that the application be approved because of the immeasurable but tangible benefits of the ranch's programs.

There being no further comments, the Chair closed the Public Hearing.

**Commission Discussion:**

Commissioner Lindler asked about compliance with CAL FIRE regulations 4290 and 4291 and whether there was a timberland conversion plan. CAL FIRE Deputy Chief Cunningham said 4290 regulations would not apply because construction was done prior to those regulations coming into effect, and no new construction is currently being proposed. He said there is no timberland conversion plan.

CAL FIRE Deputy Chief Jay Burgess added that if there were any additional use permits or building proposed in the future, those projects would have to meet 4290 standards.

As far as 4291 is concerned, Deputy Chief Burgess said that JH Ranch is very compliant with those requirements and their inspectors go out to the ranch every year.

Chair Fowle asked Public Works Director Tom Deany whether there were any plans to improve French Creek Road between Highway 3 to where the county's jurisdiction ends as well as Miner's

Creek Road from French Creek Road to where the county's jurisdiction ends, and Mr. Deany responded that there are no plans for improvement and that only maintenance activities would be performed, such as snow removal, etc.

Chair Fowle asked JH Ranch representatives about the effectiveness of their Israeli water purifier. Mr. Whipple said the bioreactor is a bug-based reactor plant monitored monthly by sending grab samples to the state to check effluent emissions, specifically nitrates. Maintenance involves periodic upkeep of drapes, which is simple and easy, and the plant is regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board. He said it processes wastewater and was state-of-the-art in 2005, and with technology continuing to advance, it is one of the most efficient and clean effluent systems available. He said it is electrically powered and they have a backup generator in case of power failure, and there is a standard septic system with leach fields as an emergency backup.

Chair Fowle asked Director of the Office of Emergency Services Bryan Schenone about an evacuation plan for JH Ranch. Mr. Schenone told the Commission that the lessons learned from Kidder Creek Orchard Camp (KCOC) during last year's Shelly Fire were applied to the JH Ranch project. He said multiple communications resulted in the creation of a PACE plan (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) outlining routes and steps for each event. He said the plan covers onsite and offsite fires, emergency planning, the county's role, and the ranch's incident command structure. He said communication emphasized early evacuations and pulling people out during warnings, similar to the approach taken with KCOC. Mr. Schenone said when the Shelly Fire struck last year, that plan worked exactly how it was supposed to.

Discussion was held regarding the MOU between OES and JH Ranch regarding an evacuation plan. Mr. Schenone said the MOU for JH Ranch is based on the one created for KCOC, and he wouldn't change anything in the plan since they got to test it during the Shelly Fire.

Mr. Schenone wanted to point out that due to lessons learned from KCOC, each camp would be separated into its own zone and labeled accordingly. He said they now have the ability to layer buildings into zoning which will simplify the process, and this new zoning capability will improve planning and organization for the camps.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding how to resolve an issue with a locked gate being in place on one of the fire evacuation routes. Chair Fowle said he wanted to make sure the MOU includes plans to ensure the gate did not impede evacuation.

Mr. Schenone said he would track down a way to get through the gate, but that particular route is a very, very alternate route. He said multiple plans were developed to prioritize public safety and ensure quick and safe evacuations without using difficult routes. If such routes are needed, it indicates that previous steps were not properly followed. Mr. Schenone said as an emergency manager, the responsibility is to prevent such scenarios. He said JH Ranch has been a valuable partner in preparing "what if" scenarios, and they aim to have a comprehensive plan in place, including additional public alert and warning systems. Mr. Schenone said the lessons learned from Kidder Creek have been effectively incorporated into their planning.

Commissioner Hart expressed concerns about not resolving the issue with the locked gate before moving forward with the project, and Chair Fowle said that is why he wanted to make sure Mr. Schenone is aware of the issue.

Discussion was held that JH Ranch is in the process of getting a local forester to evaluate the property and prepare a fuel reduction plan, and they are also working with the Scott River Watershed Council on a grant to help with a fuel reduction plan.

Regarding fuel load, Ms. Lang said there is a condition that states the ranch must be compliant with all applicable state and local laws. Mr. Whipple said they are actively removing dead trees and acknowledged they need a management plan. He said they started putting in a ridge line fuel break five years ago, and they are working on getting it contiguous around the property.

Chair Fowle said he wanted to add a condition requiring that JH Ranch implement a fuel loads reduction plan conducted by a professional forester before the use permit is issued.

Discussion was held regarding the water storage containers for fire emergency being proposed. Mr. Whipple said they have a well that was drilled in 2023 for fire suppression that delivers 35 gallons per minute and is permitted. He said CAL FIRE visits the facility annually, and local crews are familiarized with fill sites and the pond for helicopter dipping.

Discussion was held that should JH Ranch add water storage containers, they would not be considered baseline and the planned development would have to be amended because they would be adding footprint to the plan. Water storage containers are considered to be structures and would have to be approved by the Building Department and go through CEQA review. Discussion was held that they would also need a timberland conversion permit if they are converting timberland to a non-timber use.

Further discussion was held regarding the evacuation plan being evaluated annually by OES allowing for updating and modifying as needed.

Through the Chair, Ms. Lang pointed out that a small modification was made to the planned development master plan regarding new programs being offered. She said the programs were omitted from the posted document but do not alter the overall occupancy of 505. Additionally, Ms. Lang told the Commission that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife commented that JH Ranch should continue complying with the Fish & Wildlife code, and the current condition to meet all applicable state and local laws and regulations addresses this need.

**Motion:** Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Veale, seconded by Commissioner Hart, to Adopt Resolution PC 2025-001 of the Planning Commission of the County of Siskiyou, State of California, conditionally approving Use Permit UP-24-16 and recommending that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors determine the Project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and amend the JH Ranch Planned Development Master Plan by approving Zone Change Z-23-06, with the addition of a condition regarding implementing a fuel loads reduction plan.

Before the motion was voted on, Chair Fowle recommended that JH Ranch identify locations for evacuating their livestock. He also said it was imperative that staff include the existing permitted use for the restaurant within the planned development.

**Voted** upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present, on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Hart, Melo, Veale and Fowle

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain: Commissioner Lindler

Mr. Dean said the history of the project has been contentious due to the lack of participation by JH Ranch and their leadership and that full transparency and cooperation is expected moving forward. He said with the Board of Supervisors' approval of the project, the county will be able to better enforce activities related to JH Ranch.

### **Items for Discussion/Direction:**

#### **1. Ongoing Staff Update Regarding the General Plan Update**

Ongoing agenda item pertaining to the Siskiyou County 2050 General Plan Update. Staff will be providing an update on the project schedule, deliverables, and any other updates relating to this project.

**Staff Report:** Ms. Lang told the Commission that staff is gearing up for the special meeting on March 5, 2025. She said staff invited the entities requested by the Planning Commission at the January meeting, and the Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center indicated they would be present. Ms. Lang said staff is working with Siskiyou Economic Development Council to get the word out, and she would be meeting with the County Public Information Office to also get the word out.

Discussion was held about possibly cancelling the special meeting since most of the entities the Commission wanted to be present at the special meeting had not yet responded. James Phelps, Senior Planner, pointed out that it wasn't clear whether or not they would get more participation, but some people might still attend. He added that staff wants to move the project forward and if the special meeting were to be cancelled, it would push the project out another month.

It was ultimately decided to keep the special meeting on the calendar for March 5, 2025.

#### **2. Federal Wilderness Buffer Zone**

Proposed federal legislation to create a buffer safety zone on federal land.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Carroll said he talked to the County Administrator's Office about the idea of creating an agreement between multiple northern counties and the federal government, specifically the Bureau of Land Management and/or the US Forest Service, to establish a buffer zone between private properties in an effort to address fire and insurance concerns. He said the project must be initiated by the Board of Supervisors, and if the Planning Commission directs, it will be brought to the Board for approval. Mr. Carroll said the CAO's office will research the viability of the project, but additional staffing and expertise are required to determine fuel loads for the agreement and the Board of Supervisors will need to approve the motion to proceed.

Chair Fowle said he was in support of creating an agreement between counties and the federal government to establish a buffer zone for fire and insurance concerns. He encouraged working collaboratively with neighboring counties such as Modoc, Shasta, Trinity, Lassen, Humboldt, Del Norte, and Mendocino. He said Modoc County already has a template with BLM, and other counties are interested as well, and collaboration would extend the project beyond a single congressional district, gaining more support. Chair Fowle said LaMalfa's office is in favor of the project, and time is of the essence to move forward.

**Motion:** After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Lindler, seconded by Commissioner Melo, to direct staff to bring the matter forward to the Board of Supervisors to develop federal legislation to create a safety buffer zone around private property and federally managed land in a collaborative manner with other counties.

**Voted** upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present.

**Miscellaneous:**

1. **Future Meetings:** A special meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
2. **Correspondence: None**
3. **Staff Comments:** Mr. Dean reiterated that it was important to move forward with the special meeting since it has already been noticed.
4. **Commission Comments: None**

**Adjournment:** The meeting was concluded at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Signature on file*

Hailey Lang, Secretary