



# Planning Department

Powell County Planning Department • 409 Missouri Ave., Suite 114 •  
Deer Lodge, Montana 59722 • 406.846.9795 • [planning@powellcountymt.gov](mailto:planning@powellcountymt.gov)

## POWELL COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

### MINUTES

**Regular Meeting – Thursday, June 8, 2023 – 1 PM**

**Members present:** Earl Hall, Randy Mannix, Justin Williams, Tracy Manley, and John Beck

**Members absent:** Rick Hirsch, Bill Pierce, John Hollenback, John Wagner

**Staff:** Amanda Cooley, Ann O'Toole

**Public:** Gene Coughlin, Levi Coughlin

1. **Attendance:** With five members being present at the onset of the meeting, a quorum was established. President Hirsch and Vice President Pierce were absent so Member Manley led the meeting.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion to accept the agenda as written was made by Member Williams. Member Beck seconded the motion and the motion was carried 5-0.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. **May 11:** Member Mannix motioned to approve the minutes with an amendment to the wording on the McIntosh CUP. Member Williams seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.
  - b. **May 18:** Member Williams motioned to approve the minutes. Member Hall seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.
4. **Non-Public Hearings**
  - a. **Coughlin FC & BR**
  - b. **Coughlin/Blackfoot River Ranch BR**

Planning Director Cooley presented the requests by Eugene Coughlin and his son Levi to relocate the common boundaries between lots within the Blackfoot River Ranch holdings and a parcel owned by Eugene Coughlin. In addition to the boundary relocation, the COS also depicts a family transfer to his son, Levi Coughlin, amounting to 4.13 acres.

No Planning Board members recused themselves from the discussion.

Member Mannix asked whether the Ranch still owned the small triangle to the South of Gene Coughlin's home. Mr. Coughlin explained that when his grandfather passed away, he had not left a will. They had to sell another piece of real estate in order to acquire the property in question. Mr. Coughlin further explained that he is the controlling interest and president of the Blackfoot River Ranch. Mr. Coughlin will be giving up irrigated acres to the Ranch in exchange for dryland around his home site. Member Manley questioned how the family transfer fit into the proposal. Mr. Coughlin emphasized that financially, you cannot buy 160-acres to move home. He is doing

it for his children. He also remarked that the state is assessing the tax rate at four (4) tons per acre. Mr. Levi Coughlin added that he will be constructing his home so as not to block the view of the neighbors' pivot. The parcel being created for Levi is all dry land. Member Mannix stated that this is a good day for Helmsville, and the Blackfoot Valley, to see Levi moving home and raising his kids there. The Ranch has been in the Coughlin family since the 1860s. Mr. Levi Coughlin will operate the Ranch as a 'side hustle' to his day job working remotely as an engineer. With no further inquiries, Member Hall motioned to approve the two boundary relocations and family transfer. Member Mannix seconded the motion and the vote was carried 5-0. Member Mannix made an additional motion that none of these proposals are an attempt to evade subdivision review. Member Williams seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

## **5. Public Hearings**

### **a) Harbour CUP**

Member Manley opened the public hearing. He noted that the public notice for this hearing circulated twice in the Silver State Post in the May 24 and May 31 editions. Director Cooley presented the Staff Report. Mrs. Harbour had mistaken the date of the meeting and attended via phone.

The petitioner, Vickie Harbour, presented a request to open a small gift shop – Red Shed Gifts – in a corner of her husband's (Ben) existing shop and office just outside of the Ovando town square. The building is existing and no new water or septic will be installed. There are no public restrooms. The gift store has a separate entrance from the main shop entrance, and has a rear exit to the main shop, for additional fire safety.

The Planning Board inquired as to whether there was any local opposition toward Mrs. Harbour for opening the gift shop. Mrs. Harbour responded that everyone seemed to be happy with the proposed gift store and that she had received no negative feedback. Admin O'Toole asked if Mrs. Harbour had followed up with the County Sanitarian's office about selling pre-packaged foods. Mrs. Harbour confirmed that she had filled out the appropriate form and had submitted it for review.

No public comments were received prior to the meeting regarding this request.

With no comments by the public at the meeting, Member Manley closed the public hearing.

Member Mannix moved to provide a favorable recommendation for the Harbour Conditional Use Permit with amended conditions listed by the planning staff. Member Beck seconded the motion. The motion was carried 5-0.

## **6. Continued Business**

### **a. None**

## **7. Planning Board Comments:**

The Planning Board inquired as to whether the Planning Department had been seeing any issues with Missoula Electric tearing roads up and not getting the required permits or providing courtesy notice. A discussion was held that there had been some issues, primarily with private land owners.

## **8. Staff Updates**

### **a. County Attorney** – not present

### **b. Planning Staff** – Miss Cooley informed the Board that the Commissioners had voted to sign a resolution to reduce the speed in Ovando to 15 mph. There will be electronic signs installed.

### **c. Other**

## **9. Public Comments - none**

**10. Announcement of the July 6 Meeting**

**11. Adjourn: 2:52 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda Cooley  
Powell County Planning Director

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President Rick Hirsch

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Date

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**The Planning Board will meet at the Powell County Community Center  
416 Cottonwood Ave., Deer Lodge, MT 59722  
For Further Information Contact:  
The Powell County Planning Department**