

## STAFF REPORT

Planning Department File No. 2023-09-014

### CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION FOR TWO NON-FARM DWELLINGS AND TWO NON-FARM PARTITIONS

Planning Commission Meeting Date: October 26, 2023

1. **APPLICANT:** Gary & Kathleen Pozzi  
PO Box 337  
Vale, OR 97918
2. **PROPERTY OWNER:** Gary & Kathleen Pozzi  
1875 5<sup>th</sup> Ave W  
Vale, OR 97918
3. **PROPOSED ACTION:** Conditional Use approval for two non-farm dwellings and two non-farm partitions. Proposed non-farm partition #1 will be approximately 4 acres and will include the existing home site. Proposed non-farm partition #2 will be approximately 1.53 acres, and will be adjacent to the proposed non-farm partition #1.
4. **PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION:** Tax Lot 700, T17S, R44E, Sec. 36; Assessor's Map 17S44E36; Malheur County Reference #13151.
5. **PROPERTY LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS:** The property is located about 5½ miles northwest of Vale, on John Day Hwy, at 1875 5th Ave W, Vale, OR: from Vale, head north on John Day Hwy for about 5 miles. Turn left on 5 Ave W. The site of the proposed partitions will be on the left.
6. **ZONING:** Exclusive Farm Use (C-A1).
7. **PARCEL SIZE:** The property is 109.97 acres.
8. **PARCEL USE:** The property is currently being farmed (row crops: alfalfa, corn and wheat and pastures for cattle grazing). There is also a residence and other residential improvements.
9. **SURROUNDING USE:** The property is surrounded in entirety by farms with farm dwellings .
10. **ACCESS:** The proposed non-farm partitions will have separate accesses off 5<sup>th</sup> Ave W (see Exhibit #2).
11. **SANITATION REQUIREMENTS:** A DEQ approved sanitation system would be

required for the new proposed non-farm dwelling site. There is an existing septic system in use for the existing dwelling.

**12. FIRE PROTECTION:** The sites of the proposed non-farm partitions are within Vale Fire and Ambulance District. (see Exhibit #3).

**13. NATURAL HAZARDS:** None.

**14. WATER RIGHTS:** The property has 26.6 acres of water rights. There are 0.8 acres of water rights on the site of the proposed non-farm partition #1, that are currently being underutilized and the applicants will coordinate with Warm Springs Irrigation District to transfer those rights to the farmed ground. There are no water rights on the site of the proposed non-farm partition #2. (Map and letter attached – Exhibit #4).

**15. SOIL TYPE:** The soils on the parent property are predominately of class IV and the farmed ground is mostly class II. There is a small portion of soils of class III.

The site of both the proposed non-farm partitions is covered in soils of class IV (or class VI when there is no irrigation capability).

**16. ZONING HISTORY:** The existing dwelling was constructed in 1967 and several residential and farm improvements were added over the years. Additionally, there is an old home site to the southeast of the existing dwelling, that was built prior to 1960 and was subsequently used as labor housing. That house is no longer being lived in and is left as a vacant structure.

The applicants also own the adjacent tax lot 600, and in 2017, there was a property line adjustment processed to adjust property lines to occupational lines. Tax lot 600 is and has been a vacant lot, with no water rights.

There is no other known zoning history.

## **GENERAL CONDITIONAL USE CRITERIA**

**MCC 6-6-7 - GENERAL CRITERIA TO EVALUATE SUITABILITY:** In considering the suitability of proposed conditional uses, the Planning Commission shall base its decision upon the following criteria:

- A. Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, as applicable.
- B. Specific plan recommendations

**Proposed Finding: MCC 6-6-8-1 regulates the conditional use process for a non-farm dwelling and MCC 6-6-8-2 regulated the conditional use process for a non-farm partition.**

- C. Existing development and viewpoints of property owners in the surrounding area.

**Proposed Finding: Letter notice was sent to adjoining landowners on October 6, 2023 and published in the Argus Observer on October 6, 2023. A letter of**

support was submitted on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by an adjacent property owner – Tonya Fulk (exhibit #5).

D. Availability of services and utilities.

**Proposed Finding: The entire parent parcel is located within the Vale Fire and Ambulance District. All services and utilities are available.**

E. The effect of the proposed use on the stability of the community’s social and economic characteristics.

**Proposed Finding: The proposed dwellings will have no effect on the farming/ranching practices that would interfere with the stability of the community’s social and economic characteristics, due to the fact that both the proposed partitions are on land that historically hadn’t been used for farming.**

F. It does not interfere with traditional fish and wildlife use of habitats determined critical or sensitive in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan for Malheur County.

**Proposed Finding: The proposed dwellings are outside the sage grouse habitat. There is no identified critical fish habitat. Because of those findings, the proposed structure would not interfere with traditional fish and wildlife.**

G. General Criteria

1. Increasing setbacks of structures to reduce possibilities of overshadowing adjoining property, noise, odor or night lighting nuisances.

**Proposed Finding: The proposal is 2 non-farm partitions and 2 non-farm dwellings. The nearest home site will be more than 1,000 ft away and there will be no impacts on adjoining properties due to natural barriers.**

2. Landscaping improvements for the visual benefits of the subject site and for the improved appearance of the neighborhood and County.

**Proposed Finding: The proposed new dwelling, as well as the existing dwelling would benefit the appearance of the neighborhood and County.**

3. Location and size of driveway access points and right-of-way widening and improvement for present and future traffic circulation and safety.

**Proposed Finding: Each of the proposed non-farm partitions will have access off 5<sup>th</sup> Ave W and there are already existing approaches in place that have been deemed to be adequate, with enough visibility in both directions, per Malheur County Roadmaster (Exhibit #2). Culverts will not be required to be put into the approaches.**

**The new drive-way that will be constructed for the new non-farm partition #2, must follow the International/Oregon Fire Code: it must be an all-**

weather surface that has 20' unobstructed width and 13'6" unobstructed vertical clearance. Any access road must include an improved turnaround on roads greater than 150' in length and not exceed a grade of 10%. The proposal is for a driveway 250' in length. The driveway must also be capable of supporting live loads of at least 75,000 lbs. The driveway angle of approach/departure cannot be less than the design limitations of the Fire Department apparatus.

4. Visual screening of outdoor waste and storage areas.

**Proposed Finding: The proposed development is for dwellings. Outdoor waste storage will be minimal.**

5. Control and focusing of outdoor lighting to avoid glare being directed beyond property limits.

**Proposed Finding: Control of outdoor lighting will not be necessary.**

6. Special criteria listed below, as applicable:

H. Allowance of Certain Uses: A use allowed under Section 6-3A-3 of this Title shall be approved only where it is found that the use will not:

1. Force a significant change in accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest use; or
2. Significantly increase cost of accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest use. (Ord. 86, 12-7-1993)

**Proposed Finding: The proposed non-resource dwellings will not force significant change in accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm use, nor significantly increase the cost of accepted farm practices. There will no net loss of the farmed ground on the parent parcel. The parent parcel is surrounded by properties that are zoned exclusive farm use. These properties will not be impacted by the placement of one new dwelling on the proposed non-farm partitions. The proposed dwellings will have private driveways, designated to only access the proposed dwellings, so there will be no impact to the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave W traffic.**

#### **SPECIFIC CONDITIONAL USE CRITERIA**

##### **MCC 6-6-8-1 - NONRESOURCE DWELLINGS IN EFU, ERU OR EFFU ZONES:**

A. The use:

1. Is compatible with farm uses and is consistent with ORS 215.243; and

**Proposed Finding: The current farming will continue. All existing farm ground in this proposal will remain unchanged. The granting of this application will not result in loss of natural resources, and the amount of open land used for agriculture use will not change. Therefore, the proposed use is compatible with farm use.**

2. Does not interfere seriously with accepted farming practices on adjacent lands; and

**Proposed Finding: The sites of both the proposed partitions are not currently being farmed. Therefore, a single-family dwelling on these partitions will not interfere with adjacent farm practices.**

3. Does not materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern of the area; and

**Proposed Finding: Due to the condition of the soils and zoning history of the parcel, there is no other further development anticipated within the study area.**

**Added by OAR 660-033-130(4)(a)(D) - June 1, 1998:** In determining whether a proposed non-farm dwelling will alter the stability of the land use pattern in the area, a county shall consider the cumulative impact of possible new non-farm dwellings and parcels on other lots or parcels in the area similarly situated. To address this standard, the county shall;

- i. Identify a study area for the cumulative impacts analysis. The study area shall include at least 2000 acres or a smaller area not less than 1000 acres, if the smaller area is a distinct agricultural area based on topography, soil types, land use pattern, or the type of farm or ranch operations or practices that distinguish it from other adjacent agricultural areas. Findings shall describe the study area, its boundaries and the location of the subject parcel within this area, why the selected area is representative of the land use pattern surrounding the subject parcel and is adequate to conduct the analysis required by this standard. Lands zoned for rural residential or other urban or non-resource uses shall not be included in the study area.
- ii. Identify within the study area the broad types of farm uses (irrigated or non-irrigated crops, pasture or grazing lands), the number, location and type of existing dwellings (farm, non-farm, hardship, etc.), and the dwelling development trends since 1993. Determine the potential number of non-farm / lot-of-record dwellings that could be approved under subsections (3)(a), (3)(d) and section (4) of this rule, including identification of predominant soil classifications, the parcels created prior to January 1, 1993, and the parcels larger than the minimum lot size that may be divided to create new parcels for non-farm dwellings under ORS 215.263(4). The findings shall describe the existing land use pattern of the study area including the distribution and arrangement of existing uses and the land use pattern that could result from approval of the possible non-farm dwellings under this subparagraph:
- iii. Determine whether approval of the proposed non-farm / lot-of-record dwellings together with existing non-farm dwellings will materially alter the stability of the land use pattern in the area. The stability of the land use pattern will be materially altered if the cumulative effect of existing and potential non-farm dwellings will make it more difficult for the existing types of farms in the area to continue operation due to diminished opportunities to expand, purchase or lease farmland, acquire water rights or diminish the number of tracts or acreage in farm use in a manner that will destabilize the overall character of the study area.

4. Is situated on generally unsuitable land for the production of farm crops or livestock considering the terrain, adverse soil or land conditions, drainage and flooding, location and size of tract.

**Proposed Finding: The site of the proposed non-farm partitions has not been historically farmed and does not have water rights. The irrigated soils capability is categorized as class IV, however, due to the lack of the water rights, the soil capability is downgraded to class VI, which is deemed as non-high-valued farm land and of significant value to farming productivity.**

- B. As a condition of approval, the owner is required to allow the following statement to be entered into the chain of title for the non-farm parcels: (the use of a straw-man may be necessary):

“The property herein described is situated in or near a resource (farm or ranch) zone, where the intent is to encourage agricultural use and minimize conflicts with non-resource uses. Non-resource residents may be subjected to common, customary and accepted farm and ranch practices that are conducted in accordance with federal and state laws but ordinarily and necessarily produce noise, dust, smoke and other impacts. The grantees, including their heirs, assigns and lessees, by the recording of this statement, and in return for allowing a non-resource dwelling on this property, hereby accept the potential impacts of accepted farm and ranch practices as normal and necessary and part of the risk of establishing a dwelling in this area, and grantee acknowledges the need to avoid activities that conflict with nearby resource uses.” Evidence shall be provided showing the lot or parcel upon which the dwelling is proposed to be located has been disqualified for valuation at true cash value for farm use under ORS 308.113.

**Proposed Finding: Due to the inexistence of the water on the proposed partitions, it cannot be reasonably put to farm use in conjunction with other land. From these facts, it is concluded that the proposed dwellings will be generally placed on unsuitable land for the production of farm crops and livestock.**

#### **MCC 6-6-8-2: NONRESOURCE PARTITION IN AN EFU, ERU OR EFFU ZONE:**

- A. Nonfarm Use: The creation of all new parcels intended for nonfarm use shall meet the following requirements:

1. Is the proposed use compatible with agriculture uses and is it consistent with ORS 215.243. How? Address each issue;

**Proposed Finding: Each of the proposed non-farm partition will be just large enough to reasonably accommodate the placement of a home with landscape. Neither one of the proposed partitions sites will have water rights. The remaining farm land will not be impacted.**

2. Is the proposed use located where it may interfere seriously with accepted farming practices on adjacent lands? What conditions exist to avoid this problem?

**Proposed Finding: The site of the proposed non-farm partition #1 currently has an existing dwelling, and there is no new development proposed. The site of the proposed non-farm partition #2 is located on vacant land and both proposed non-farm partitions are outside of farm operations.**

3. Will the proposed use materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern of the area?

**Proposed Finding: The sites of both partitions are currently not suitable for farming.**

4. Is the proposed use situated on generally unsuitable land for the production of agricultural crops or livestock considering the terrain, adverse soil or land conditions, drainage and flooding, location and size of tract? If so, the following factors must be met:
  - a. If located on range or agricultural lands, are the proposed nonresource parcels only as large as necessary to accommodate the use and provide any buffer area needed to ensure compatibility with adjacent agricultural uses? The intent is that Class I through IV soils be included within nonagricultural parcels only when the limited extent or physical configuration of such soils make it impractical to keep them consolidated in an agricultural parcel.
  - b. Are the proposed parcels located on land with predominantly low productivity V through VII soils not suited for agricultural use and are large enough to accommodate the use and provide any buffer area needed to ensure compatibility with adjacent agricultural uses?

**Proposed Finding: The soils on both proposed partitions are categorized as class IV, only if irrigated; however, without water rights, the soils capability is only class VI and the site of the proposed non-farm partition #2 has never been farmed.**

5. A new nonfarm parcel shall not be approved for a use that will have a significant adverse impact on the quality of farm or range land, watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat, soil and slope stability, air and water quality, or outdoor recreation areas. In what ways do the proposed parcels avoid conflict with these items?

**Proposed Finding: The natural landscaping will be used to minimize the impact and conflict with the farm. The watershed from the proposed non-farm partitions will be generally contained onsite. The proposed development will meet environmental standards for air and water quality.**

6. Is an existing dwelling used as a residential home for up to six (6) persons who fit within the definition of persons listed in ORS 443.400(5) through (10)?

**Proposed Finding: Both the proposed partitions are for single-family residences that fit the criteria listed in ORS 443.400(5) through (10).**

7. Is an alternative dwelling used so that a historical dwelling may be preserved without occupation as provided by ORS 215.263(8)(b).

**Proposed Finding: There are no historical dwellings that are located on the parent parcel.**

## **PROPOSED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. The following statement must be entered into the chain of title for the new non-farm dwelling parcels: (Parent parcel is Tax Lot 700, T17S, R44E, Sec. 36; Assessor's Map 17S44E36; Malheur County Reference #13151.)

*“The property herein described is situated in or near a resource (farm or ranch) zone, where the intent is to encourage agricultural use and minimize conflicts with non-resource uses. Non-resource residents may be subjected to common, customary and accepted farm and ranch practices that are conducted in accordance with federal and state laws but ordinarily and necessarily produce noise, dust, smoke and other impacts. The grantees, including their heirs, assigns and lessees, by the recording of this statement, and in return for allowing a non-resource dwelling on this property, hereby accept the potential impacts of accepted farm and ranch practices as normal and necessary and part of the risk of establishing a dwelling in this area, and grantee acknowledges the need to avoid activities that conflict with nearby resource uses.”*

2. Evidence shall be provided showing the parcels upon which the dwellings are proposed to be located have been disqualified for valuation at true cash value for farm use and the back taxes have been paid for the previous ten (10) years.
3. Adequate access shall be secured for each individual partition and shall be constructed to meet the Vale Fire and Ambulance District's requirements: the driveway shall be at least 20 feet wide, all-weather road with adequate all-weather turnaround space at the end, a grade that will not exceed 10% and at least 13'6" unobstructed vertical clearance.
4. Any new structure built must meet International/Oregon Fire Code requirements for structure design, considering the minimum fire-flow requirements for structure size and constructions. Adequate firebreaks shall be constructed and maintained to minimize danger from potential wildfire.
5. This approval is valid for four years from the date of this order. Substantial action must be taken within this time period or the approval will lapse.



## **EXHIBITS**

1. Conditional Use Permit application
2. Letter from Malheur County Roadmaster
3. Letter from Vale Fire and Ambulance Department
4. Letter and water rights map from Warm Springs Irrigation District
5. Letter of support from Tonya Fulk