

STAFF REPORT

Planning Department File No. 2026-05-022

**CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION
FOR
A HOME BUSINESS**

Planning Commission Meeting Date: June 25, 2026

1. **APPLICANT:** Hillary Morales
1979 Graham Blvd.
Vale, Oregon 97914
2. **OWNER OF RECORD:** Thomas Family Trust
1997 Graham Blvd.
Vale, Oregon 97914
3. **PROPOSED ACTION:** Conditional Use Permit to allow the continued operation of a home business wedding venue in conjunction with the neighboring property, consistent with the approval granted under File #2023-07-006.
4. **PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION:** Tax Lot 900, T18S, R44E, Sec. 26; Assessor’s Map 18S44E26; Malheur County Reference #13558.
5. **PROPERTY LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS:** from Vale, head west for 3 miles on Graham Blvd. The property is located at 1997 Graham Blvd, Vale, OR.
6. **ZONING:** Exclusive Farm Use (C-A1).
7. **PARCEL SIZE:** The parcel is 75 acres.
8. **PARCEL USE:** The subject parcel is currently utilized for agricultural production and contains an existing homesite. The property also includes a vacant, non-irrigated area that is used for the storage of farm equipment and livestock corrals, as well as an existing former dairy barn.
9. **SURROUNDING USE:** All the adjacent properties are being farmed and have homesites.
10. **ACCESS:** Access is directly off Graham Blvd. (Exhibit 3)
11. **SANITATION REQUIREMENTS:** No sanitation system will be required as only porta potties will be used to provide restroom accommodations.
12. **FIRE PROTECTION:** The parcel is located within the Vale Rural Fire District

- 13. NATURAL HAZARDS:** No natural hazards have been identified.
- 14. WATER RIGHTS:** The property currently has 72 acres of water rights. (Exhibit 4).
- 15. SOIL TYPE:** The entire property is covered in soils of class IV.
- 16. ZONING HISTORY:** The existing stick-built home was constructed in 1952 and it was remodeled in 2000. 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 6-6-7 regulates the general criteria to evaluate suitability and MCC 6-6-8-6(C) regulates the conditional use process for a home business.

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

Proposed Finding: Letter notice was sent to adjoining landowners on June 2nd, 2026 and published in the Argus Observer on June 3rd, 2026. No comments were received.

- D. Availability of services and utilities.

Proposed Findings:

ROADS: The entrance to the property will be off of Graham Blvd. No additional access points will be required.

FIRE & POLICE PROTECTION: The proposed venue site is located in the Vale Rural Fire District. All driveways and facilities will comply with current fire and safety regulations. There will be little to no impact on the police protection.

SEWER & WATER: The proposal is for a wedding venue and portable restroom will be made available for the events as needed. The property currently has a private well and water will be made available as needed.

ELECTRICAL & TELEPHONE: No additional power will be required to support the operation of the venue.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL: The property already has existing contracted service provided by Ontario Sanitary.

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

Proposed Finding: The proposal is to operate a registered business, which will act a regulated tax-paying entity. The operation will increase the County's tax revenue. The venue will also be hosting events which will source local restaurants, bakeries, grocery stores, RV parks and hotels.

- 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 site of wedding venue is not located in an area that contains fish or wildlife deemed critical or sensitive, and will 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 wedding venue will operate in conjunction with the adjoining property; therefore, the use is designed to function as a coordinated operation between those properties. The potential for overshadowing adjacent properties is minimized by the natural topography of the site, as the venue is located downslope from surrounding areas. Noise and lighting impacts will be limited through compliance with applicable County Code regulations. Any odors associated with food preparation are expected to be minimal and occasional in nature. The nearest dwelling is occupied by the venue operators, while all other neighboring dwellings are located more than 500 feet from the proposed venue site. As a result, the proposed use is not expected to create significant noise, lighting, odor, or other nuisances affecting surrounding properties.

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

Proposed Finding: Landscaping improvements will include an overall site clean-up, installation of sturdy fences to define the venue area and bordering trees.

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: The access points are existing. No new access points are being proposed for this development. Any new access road must be constructed as per Vale Fire and Ambulance standards prescribed in Exhibit 2. All parking will be contained within the boundaries of the subject property.

4. Visual screening of outdoor waste and storage areas.

Proposed Finding: There will be no outdoor waste areas or storage.

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

Proposed Finding: All lighting will be limited to the proposed area only. During non-operating hours, outdoor lighting will be minimal and for security purposes only and will not have any impact beyond the boundaries of the subject property.

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: Adjacent farmland will not be impacted by the development. The property is adjacent to Graham Blvd to the north. Along the property borders to the west and south, there will be better weed control, which will be beneficial for the neighbor's crops.

6-6-8-6: HOME BUSINESS: A home business shall comply with the following standards:

1. Location: Any zone, not excluded below, in which a home business is a conditional use.

Proposed Finding: The subject property in zoned C-A1 (Exclusive Farm Use) and a home business is subject to the conditional use MCC 6-3A-3 (L).

2. Scale: A home business must fit within the dwelling and must be incidental to the use of the dwelling as a residence. If there is no existing accessory building, one may be built,

provided the side walls are no higher than ten feet (10') from the elevation of the floor and the building covers no more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet in area.

Proposed Finding: There are no proposed new structures. The proposed business office will be located within the neighboring property inside existing home at 1979 Graham Blvd. All office-related activities (scheduling, bookkeeping, organizing, etc.) will be conducted from the office. The venue will be outside. There will be no permanent structures. Temporary tents and restrooms will be installed in the designated area. This criterion is met.

3. Participants: Family members living on the property and a combination of no more than ten (10) full time employees are the only persons that may be employed in a home business.

Proposed Finding: There will be no employees. The sole operator will be Hillary Morales – leased owner of record. This criterion is met.

4. Character: The property upon which a home business exists shall be and kept in a clean, neat, orderly fashion.

Proposed Finding: The home business will have no effect on the character or visual appearance of the property. Clean up will be conducted after each event and the property will return to its natural pasture. This criterion is met.

5. Storage: All materials associated with home business shall be screened from view or contained within the allowed dwelling or accessory structures of the home business.

Proposed Finding: All materials associated with the home business will be contained within the existing conex container on the neighboring property at 1979 Graham Blvd, which is out of sight from the public eye. The office and office equipment will be confined to the existing dwelling. This criterion is met.

6. Display: There shall be no display of products visible from outside the allowed dwelling or accessory structures of the home business.

Proposed Finding: The proposal is for an outdoor event venue along with the use of temporary structures which are normally associated with uses in the EFU Zone. The existing conex container will be used to store any additional resources for the business. This criterion is met.

7. Signs: A home business must comply with chapter 7 of this title.

Proposed Finding: There will be two visual signs: one at the base of the hill, approximately 340 yards before the entrance of the property, and another one, double-sided, at the entrance of the property to show the entrance. This criterion is met.

8. Traffic: Customer, client and/or business traffic shall not exceed fifteen (15) trips per day. Business delivery vehicles shall not exceed gross vehicle weight of eleven thousand (11,000) pounds. U.S. postal service deliveries are exempt from this requirement.

Proposed Finding: The proposal is for a venue able to host events of various party sizes. At this time, there is no anticipation on hosting events every single day of the week or even every weekend of the year. There will be no parking in the public right-of-way. There will be no delivery vehicles exceeding 11,000 lbs.

9. Parking: Vehicles owned, leased or operated by the participants of a home business shall not be parked or stored on the street or in the public right of way.

Proposed Finding: There will be dedicated parking space allotted on the property. There will be no offsite parking beyond the boundaries of the subject property and the neighboring property. The pasture will be mowed for events, to provide additional parking.

10. Noise And Other Nuisance Factors:

- a. Noise: Noise shall be kept to a minimum at all times, especially between the hours of ten o'clock (10:00) P.M. and eight o'clock (8:00) A.M. Equipment that creates a shrill or penetrating sound shall, at all times, be operated only within an enclosure that effectively prevents noise measured at the nearest dwelling exceeding the otherwise ambient noise level of the neighborhood. Where a question arises regarding noise levels, the planning director's determination shall be final.

Proposed Finding: The proposal is for an event venue. There will be music playing during some events, but will be kept to a minimal and non-disruptive to neighbors. No other equipment will be used. The proposed operation hours are from 09:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Sunday-Saturday.

- b. Odors: Odors shall not be detectable from any boundary of a home business property at any time.

Proposed Finding: No odors will be generated by the business.

- c. Electrical Interference: A home business shall not create visual or audible electrical interference in any radio, television, or other electrical device off the subject property or cause fluctuations in line voltage off the subject property.

Proposed Finding: The proposal is for an event venue. There is no anticipated visual or audible electrical interference.

OREGON REVISED STATUTE 215.448: Home occupations:

1. The governing body of a county or its designate may allow, subject to the approval of the governing body or its designate, the establishment of a home occupation and the parking of vehicles in any zone. However, in an exclusive farm use zone, forest zone or mixed farm and

forest zone that allows residential uses, the following standards apply to the home occupation.

- a. It shall be operated by a resident or employee of a resident of the property on which the business is located;

Finding: The event venue will be solely operated by the leased owners of the property. This criterion is met.

- b. It shall employ on the site no more than five full-time or part-time persons;

Finding: The sole employees will be the leased owners. There are no other employees proposed at this time. This criterion is met.

- c. It shall be operated substantially in:

- A. The dwelling; or
- B. Other buildings normally associated with uses permitted in the zone in which the property is located; and

Finding: All administrative business operations including the accounting, booking, and any other office related business will be conducted within the neighboring dwelling. Storage of any materials associated with the home business will occur within the existing conex container and dwelling.

The Planning and Zoning commission finds that the above described administrative and storage operations are a substantial part of the home business.

The events will be held outside. In addition, Applicant may use temporary buildings or structures. Applicable case law regarding the implications of “other buildings normally associated with uses permitted in the zone in which the property is located” as set out in ORS 215.448(1)(c) can be found in Green v. Douglas County, 245 Or. App 430 (Oregon Court of Appeals 2011).

The Court of Appeals found that any legislative intent to narrow the meaning of ‘building’ is not apparent from the relation of ORS 215.448(1)(c) to the other factors in the definition. As such, “building” is not confined to walled structures. The Court concluded, for example, that, “if gazebos and pavilions are normally associated with farm dwellings or other agricultural uses permitted by the applicable zoning district, then they are the type of buildings for housing a home occupation under ORS 215.448(1)(c).”

Malheur County Code defines ‘building’ as, “Any temporary or permanent structure built and maintained for the support, shelter or

enclosure of people, motor vehicles, animals or personal or real property of any kind.”

The Planning Commission concludes the use of any temporary or permanent structure built and maintained for the support, shelter or enclosure of people, motor vehicles, animal or personal or real property of any kind, which is normally associated with farm dwellings or other agricultural uses permitted by the applicable zoning district (EFU) will meet the criteria of ORS 215.448(1)(c) and can be used by Applicants for the venue. This may include large tents, canopies, stands, barn etc.

- d. It shall not unreasonably interfere with other uses permitted in the zone in which the property is located; and

Finding: Based upon the above findings, this use will not unreasonably interfere with other uses permitted in this zone.

- 2. The governing body of the county or its designate may establish additional reasonable conditions of approval for the establishment of a home occupation under subsection (1) of this section. Conditions of approval are set out below.
- 3. Nothing in this section authorizes the governing body or its designate to permit construction of any structure that would not otherwise be allowed in the zone in which the home occupation is to be established.
- 4. The existence of home occupations shall not be used as justification for a zone change

OTHER PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT

The applicant has submitted additional proposed findings of fact in the conditional use application.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. PREREQUISITE:

- a. All aspects of the approved home business event venue shall be conducted entirely on the subject property and in conjunction with the adjoining property located at 1979 Graham Boulevard. The use shall not extend onto or utilize any other neighboring properties without obtaining the appropriate land use approvals.
- b. Any new access roads for fire apparatuses must be constructed to the standards of Vale Fire and Ambulance. (Exhibit 2)

2. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

- a. Adequate fire standards shall be maintained. (Exhibit 2).
- b. Any deviation from this proposal, including but not limited to additions of new structures, shall void this permit and a new permit must be obtained. This permit is not transferable – it is personal to the Applicant and shall not run with the land. New owners of the property will need to obtain a permit.
- c. The home business must be operated substantially in the dwelling or a building that is associated with the farm or farm dwelling. The use of any temporary structure, which is normally associated with farm dwellings or other agricultural uses permitted in the EFU zone may be used. No event shall take place outside the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- d. Lighting shall not project off the property. Use of glaring lighting is prohibited.
- e. Events shall comply with all requirements of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) and caterers must be licensed through the Malheur County Environmental Health Department.
- f. Noise levels must not be unreasonable – ORS 166.025.
- g. Off-site parking is not allowed.

EXHIBITS

- 1. Application
- 2. Letter from Vale Fire and Ambulance
- 3. Letter from ODOT
- 4. Email from Vale Irrigation District
- 5. Email from John Eden of ODOT