

Minutes of the Alamance County Planning Board

February 20, 2014

7:00 p.m., Board of County Commissioners Room

Board Members Present:

Rodney Cheek
Jimmy Ray Cobb, Jr. (Vice Chair)
Rob Countiss
Monte Holland
Don Jennings
Todd Lambert (Chair)
Robert Osborne
Edgar Pritchett
Randall Smith

Board Members Absent:

Bryan Foushee
Albert Freeman
David Smith

Staff Present:

Jason Martin, Planning Manager
Aspen Price, Planner

Public Present:

Ravi Balan
Don Nielsen

Call to Order

Mr. Jason Martin, Planning Manager, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 pm.

Election of Officers

Election of Chair: Mr. Martin opened the floor to nominations for Chair; Mr. Cobb nominated Mr. Lambert. Mr. Martin asked if there were any other nominations, there were none. Mr. Martin asked for a motion; a motion was made by Mr. Cobb to appoint Mr. Lambert as Chair, seconded by Mr. Holland, and approved unanimously.

Election of Vice Chair: Chair Lambert opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair; Mr. Cobb nominated Mr. Osborne. Mr. Lambert asked if there were any other nominations, there were none. Mr. Lambert asked for a motion; a motion was made by Mr. Cobb to appoint Mr. Osborne as Chair, seconded by Mr. Jennings, and approved unanimously.

Approval of 2014 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Martin presented a proposed meeting schedule for 2014. Mr. Countiss noted that the heading of the meeting dates read "2010 Meeting Schedule" and should read "2014 Meeting Schedule."

Motion: Mr. Countiss made a motion to adopt the 2014 meeting schedule with suggested changes; it was seconded by Mr. Osborne.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lambert asked if there were any changes to the minutes. None were suggested.

Motion: Mr. Jennings made a motion to approve the June 13, 2013 minutes and the November 14, 2013 minutes; it was seconded by Mr. Holland.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Public Comments

Mr. Lambert asked if there were any public comments. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

New Business

Review of Planning Board Applications:

Mr. Martin stated that there is one vacancy on the board, as Mr. Richardson has submitted a written resignation due to his relocation out of the state. Mr. Martin stated that tonight the board has two applications to consider, one from Mr. Balan from Melville Township, and one from Mr. Spruill from Burlington Township, both of which are eligible townships for appointment. Mr. Balan introduced himself and described his interest in serving on the Planning Board. Mr. Martin stated that the new member would be an Alternate member and would finish out Mr. Richardson's unexpired term. Mr. Lambert asked if the other applicant, who was not present, was aware of the meeting tonight. Mr. Martin confirmed that he spoke with Mr. Spruill this week, and that he had made both applicants aware of the change in meeting schedule due to the inclement weather. Mr. Countiss asked Mr. Balan why specifically the Planning Board was his choice of community involvement. Mr. Balan stated that he found out about the vacancy on the Planning Board through his involvement as an Ambassador with the Chamber of Commerce. He said that when he did more research on the Planning Board, it piqued his curiosity even more, as he is all about delving deep into where you live and having an appreciation for it.

Mr. Lambert stated that they need to make a recommendation for one of these applicants, and asked Mr. Martin for clarification that they have the option of not making a recommendation as well. Mr. Martin confirmed this was the case but asked the board, if they chose not to make a recommendation tonight, to give him a directive, as they do have an opening. Mr. Cobb asked if there had been any effort to advertise the opening. Ms. Price responded that it was posted on the Planning Department website, and that she had also created a blog post about it in the News & Updates section of the website. Mr. Martin stated that they did not run it in the newspaper, but that they did have two applicants. Mr. Osborne asked about distribution of representation throughout the county. Mr. Martin stated that the townships that are not currently represented on the board are Albright, Coble, Faucette, and Haw River. Mr. Osborne said it was probably harder to gauge the second piece of his question, which is looking at the cross-section of urban versus rural on the board. Mr. Martin stated that it was almost an even split. Mr. Martin reminded the board that the way the ordinance was written, no more than two members can be from any given township, and no more than one can be a voting member.

Mr. Lambert stated that he personally would like to see more members from townships not currently represented, but that he was not sure how staff could get interest from particular areas. Mr. Lambert added that he would be in favor of waiting a month and putting a notice on the website on the home page for the county. Mr. Martin suggested in that case that the board table any action, because they do have applicants. Mr. Osborne thanked Mr. Balan for coming and addressing the board, and stated that he would like to see the opportunity to have the feeling that the vacancy has been understood by the community and that they have an opportunity to see multiple candidates. He added that he did not feel like they were under the gun to pick any one person immediately, and would like to look at multiple candidates. Ms. Price noted that these applications came in in November, and that notices had been posted on the Planning Department webpage since then and they have not seen any additional

applications. Mr. Osborne acknowledged that after hearing that this is out there, the degree to which an additional three weeks will develop any additional interest sounds unlikely.

Motion: Mr. Osborne made a motion to postpone taking any action until the next meeting with direction to staff to post the vacancy notice on the front page of the County website with details on where the Board currently does not have representation; it was seconded by Mr. Cheek.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Discussion of Planning Board Goals for 2014:

Mr. Martin noted that the previous year was a quiet year for the Planning Board and asked the board if there were any specific ordinances or issues they want staff to look at. Mr. Lambert stated that he felt it would be helpful for staff to give a summary on progress on the Destination 2020 Plan, as they were more than halfway through it. Along those lines, he suggested a quarterly or biannual county snapshot with building permits, growth in certain areas, school population and other information. Mr. Lambert added that he was interested in seeing conservation subdivisions brought up again. Mr. Martin offered to provide a presentation to the board on these issues. Mr. Osborne stated that he remembered that these were additional permissive revisions, not restrictions. Mr. Lambert confirmed that was the case. Mr. Martin added that they were seven years into the Land Development Plan, and it was related to Destination 2020, so it may be worthwhile to do a review of that as well.

Mr. Cheek asked if they had the technology to know if there are liquid storage facilities with drain pipes underneath them that are straight piped into the rivers or creeks or streams. He clarified that the coal ash issue in the news made him aware of this issue. Mr. Martin responded that unless there was something through Environmental Health, probably not. Mr. Lambert asked if it would be through NC DENR through their direct discharge permitting. Mr. Martin offered to look into it.

Mr. Jennings asked if there was anything they needed to be aware of in regards to the preliminary floodplain maps. Mr. Martin stated not at this time, that at the earliest they were looking at new maps and ordinances in December of this year.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

With no other business to be discussed the Planning Board was adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason S. Martin, Planning Manager