

ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday March 13, 2014
7:00 p.m., Board of County Commissioners Room

Members Present

Rodney Cheek
Jimmy Ray Cobb, Jr.
Rob Countiss
Bryan Foushee
Todd Lambert (*Chair*)
Robert Osborne (*Vice Chair*)
Edgar Pritchett

Members Absent

Albert Freeman
Monte Holland
Don Jennings
Randall Smith
David Smith

Staff Present

Jason Martin,
Planning Manager
Aspen Price, *Planner*

Guests Present

Ravi Balan

I. Call to Order

Chair Todd Lambert called the March 13, 2014 meeting of the Alamance County Planning Board to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lambert asked if there were any changes to the minutes. Mr. Cheek noted that the motion under Review of Planning Board Applications should be to postpone, rather than to table as there was not a motion on the floor to table. Staff made note of the changes.

Motion: Mr. Cheek made a motion to approve the February 20, 2014 minutes with noted changes; it was seconded by Mr. Osborne.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

III. Public Comments

There were none.

IV. Old Business

Planning Board Vacancy/Review of Applicants:

Mr. Lambert noted that there were three applications in the board packet. Mr. Martin added that Ms. McNeill had called him earlier that day and let him know that she was not able to serve at this time, but that she would like her application to remain on file for future consideration. Mr. Martin stated that at the direction of the board staff did post this the next day after the previous meeting. He stated that the post described which townships they did not have any representation from and was put on the front page of the county website. From that they did get one additional application which was withdrawn. Mr. Martin stated that all three applicants were contacted and informed about the meeting tonight, and Mr. Balan is here this evening.

Mr. Lambert noted that they were back to where the discussion ended last month and asked if there were any further thoughts. Mr. Cheek observed that this was two meetings

in a row where Mr. Balan has taken the trouble to show up. Mr. Lambert stated that he felt they made an attempt to make sure everyone is aware of the vacancy and he thinks Mr. Balan has shown his willingness to put forth the effort to be here.

Motion: Mr. Cheek made a motion to recommend to the County Commissioners that Mr. Ravi Balan be appointed to fill a three-year term on the Planning Board; it was seconded by Mr. Cobb.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Martin asked if moving forward as we have applications if it is the will of the board to not only publish that on the Planning Department website but to also put it on the front page of the website where it goes out to social media and so forth, staff is more than happy to do that. The Board affirmed they would prefer that.

Staff Update – Quarterly Development Reports:

Mr. Martin reminded the Board that they requested quarterly reports for development at the last meeting. He stated that he talked with the Inspections Department and will be able to provide that, and the first quarter will be next month so he hoped to have one available next month.

V. New Business

Proposed Watershed Protection Ordinance Amendment:

Mr. Martin stated that the Planning Department has discovered a conflict between the Watershed Protection Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance regarding exempt subdivisions. He explained that currently lots that are subdivided for the purposes of settling an estate are exempt from county subdivision regulations. He added that that is not a statutory exemption, but is something that is unique to Alamance County. Mr. Martin stated that the watershed ordinance specifies minimum lot size for the watershed areas and in that particular case the minimum lot size for the Balance of Watershed area is one acre and the Critical area is two acres. Under the exemption for settling an estate it could be in the last will and testament of someone that they subdivide their ten acres among twenty heirs at a half an acre where it is under the ordinance requirements, and it is exempt and staff has to approve it. Mr. Martin stated that staff proposes an amendment to the watershed ordinance so that it is in harmony with the subdivision ordinance by creating a new exemption under section 102 of the Watershed Protection Ordinance. This would create a new subsection (e) which would state that "the division of property among heirs for the sole purpose of settling an active estate shall be exempt from the minimum lot size requirements of this ordinance." He added that he has spoken with the State of North Carolina and they do not have an issue with that.

The Board discussed the wording of the amendment and the buildability of lots created through an exemption. Mr. Martin added that if the board approves the amendment it would have to go to a public hearing with the County Commissioners for final approval.

Mr. Lambert stated that he felt it made sense and that there are probably a limited number of cases that would have exemptions under the watershed ordinance but it at least makes it uniform across the board.

Motion: Mr. Osborne made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the Watershed Protection Ordinance; it was seconded by Mr. Cheek.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Adoption of 2014 Alamance County Community Profile:

Mr. Martin stated that the Community Profile report was created through the compilation of a lot of demographic data through the Census and the American Community Survey. He stated that the purpose was to show a snapshot of the county, and that it is similar to what the Chamber of Commerce does, but the Department wanted to do something that supplements what the Chamber of Commerce produces. Mr. Martin and Ms. Price presented the information in the sections of the Community Profile.

The Board discussed different elements of the report, including the amount of time needed to add new data every two years. Mr. Countiss asked if other municipalities include crime statistics in their profiles, and added that he believes the FBI publishes data. Mr. Foushee stated that he felt it was important to keep it under ten pages and that he appreciated the information. Mr. Osborne asked about distribution methods to the Chamber of Commerce, the Health Department, and other groups who could make use of the information, and how it could be shared with the public in a way so they know that it's there and that they can use it. Mr. Martin responded that he would share it with the Chamber of Commerce. He added that it will be useful for developers and businesses who want to locate here. Ms. Price added that this also presented an opportunity to coordinate with the Community Assessment that the Environmental Health department and other department and agencies put out. Mr. Osborne stated he felt it would be good to have cross references on the Chamber of Commerce's page and others to make the effort worthwhile. Mr. Countiss suggested sharing it with the Alamance Board of Realtors. Mr. Osborne agreed and noted that agencies that set up commutes would also find it useful.

Motion: Mr. Osborne made a motion to adopt the 2014 Community Profile as is with amendments to be made to it as staff sees fit; it was seconded by Mr. Countiss.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Destination 2020 Review Presentation:

Mr. Martin presented a review of the Destination 2020 plan. The Board did not have any questions or comments. Mr. Martin noted that the Land Development plan is a smaller microscopic view of Destination 2020, and that staff has not done a review of that but could if the board desired.

Presentation of Open Space/Rural Preservation Subdivisions:

Mr. Lambert noted that Mr. Countiss had to leave and another member would be leaving shortly and asked if anyone was opposed to pushing this agenda item to the next meeting. Mr. Osborne stated that he looked through the information on this and felt it would be a

healthy discussion, especially if they didn't feel rushed, so he felt it was a good item to take up next time. The Board agreed to discuss this item at next month's meeting.

VI. Announcements

There were no announcements.

VII. Adjournment

With no other business to be discussed the Planning Board was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason S. Martin
Planning Manager