

Chair
Ray Cobb

Planning Director
Matthew Hoagland



Commissioners' Meeting Room
124 W Elm Street
Graham, NC 27253
November 9, 2023 at 7:00 PM

ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Virtual-

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1QADkhkyUpac9rMs42imjA>

Members Present

Ray Cobb, Chair
Rodney Cheek
Vaughn Willoughby
Ernest Bare
Stephen Dodson
Bill Poe
Sandy Ellington-Graves
Amie Perkins
Stephen Dodson
Anthony Pierce

Members Absent

Blake Cobb
Eric McPherson
Arthur Hall
John Paisley

Staff Present

Matthew Hoagland,
Planning Director
Ian Shannon, *Planner I*
Rik Stevens, *County*
Attorney
Michelle Horn, *Assistant*
County Attorney
Brian Baker, *Assistant*
County Manager
Rob Snow, *Environmental*
Health Program Specialist

I. CALL TO ORDER

Called to order at 7:02 pm

II. ROLL CALL

Staff handled roll call through in-person roster.

III. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

1. October 12, 2023

Stephen Dodson was absent, not absent and present.
Motion to accept as amended: Vaughn Willoughby
Second: Rodney Cheek
Vote: Unanimous

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS*

Max Morgan: Max thanked the planning staff for keeping the department moving. He asked the Planning Board what data they were using to necessitate a change to the UDO for minimum lot sizes. He told the board that so far there has not been data shown to prove that there is a real problem.

Ray Cobb called for a brief recess to wait for Commissioner Pam Thompson to arrive. Called back to order 7:20 pm.

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V. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Minimum Lot Size Discussion

Rodney Cheek gave the board an update on the progress of the minimum lot size subcommittee. He told the board that they were currently in the process of gathering data from a range of sources including EMS, schools, DOT, and more to look at the growth of the county. Sandy Ellington-Graves followed up with more information from the subcommittee and went over their goal to ensure that future growth in the county aligns with the vision of the county. She highlighted three main points that the subcommittee was looking at: determining appropriate minimum lot sizes, assessing current infrastructure and its ability to manage estimated growth, and environmental impacts. She told the board that another meeting was coming up soon and they would be able to give the board a summary after that.

The Planning Board discussed the projected population growth of the county. Bill Poe brought up the question of funding and pointed out that at some point taxes would have to go up to make up for infrastructure. There was some discussion on the new school and its capacity and how several other new schools would be needed to keep up with projected growth rates. Anthony Pierce brought into consideration looking at how each of the municipalities are growing and how that would impact the county through annexations and larger developments. Ray brought up a large proposed subdivision in Green Level that put their sewer system over capacity and would potentially cost millions in utility improvements. Vaughn Willoughby raised concern over undeveloped areas in watersheds and how those areas might look 10 years down the line.

Matthew Hoagland announced that the subcommittee would be meeting again the next Tuesday. He also mentioned that it was the role of planning staff to assist with research. He told the board that he had 2 rationales when looking at this issue. The first was more scientific with concerns over well/septic and watershed. The other was policy and looking at development in line with comprehensive planning. He stated that staff will try and help inform the subcommittee but they would likely have to follow one track or the other for specific changes and recommendations.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION

Matthew announced that the Board of Commissioners had recently voted to reduce the number of Planning Board members to 9 and create a separate Board of Adjustment. He informed the board that an application had been set up for the Board of Adjustment and he also provided the board with a list of current Planning Board members and terms and some members who had expressed interest in the

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Board of Adjustment. Brian Baker followed up by telling the board that the Commissioners were planning on voting on appointments during the first December meeting.

Vaughn asked if this meant the Planning Board had to make new appointment recommendations. Ernest Bare and Bill Poe raised issues with how this was presented at the last Planning Board meeting as more of an idea and not an actualized plan. Sandy agreed and said if the board knew how far along the idea was at the time then they could have asked more questions or made different comment. Ray brought up township representation by saying the Planning Board was meant to represent all 13 townships. He asked how this would impact that representation. Rik Stevens stepped in to answer some of the questions. He told the board that they have opportunity to weigh in on ordinances but the Board of Commissioners can form and make changes to the Planning Board. In regards to the current subcommittee, the Planning Board can seek input from anyone and a non-board member could serve on a subcommittee but would not be able to make recommendations. Brian stated that this change was made in part to keep in line with other similar counties. There was some more discussion on township representation. Ray and Bill pointed out that while members on the board serve the whole county, neighbors and community members from individual townships do look to their Planning Board members for guidance.

Vaughn suggested that the Planning Board make new recommendations to the Board of Commissioners to ensure that there are good and experienced members on the boards. Sandy brought up the issue that under the new changes only 2 members from a single township would be allowed. She pointed out that both her and Rodney were up for re-appointment and a part of Newlin township and Bill is also part of Newlin township. Rodney stated that this set up the potential that neither he or Sandy could be appointed, that the Board of Commissioners has appointed members outside of the Planning Board's recommendations in the past.

Commissioner Pam Thompson brought up that there seemed to be a communication block somewhere here. She did not want to lose out on representation. Ray brought up that things are different township to township and that Alamance County is a lot different from any other county. Amie Perkins raised a question about being able to serve on both boards. Rik answered by saying that it was a possibility but it might create some conflict. Ray asked about making new recommendations. Brian said that they could likely move the Commissioners' vote to the second meeting in December to give some more time.

Matthew elaborated some more on the Board of Adjustment. Primarily they would see variance requests and appeals. The majority of cases are variances to the ordinance for road standards, setbacks, lot size, etc. He went over an example from Caswell County and mentioned that for variance cases there has to be actual hardship. He suggested that current Planning Board members would make great Board of Adjustment candidates but it would not be the same as being on the Planning Board because they would have to make unbiased rulings as opposed to recommendations.

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Rodney asked about allowing current applicants back during a special meeting to make new recommendations either next week or the 30th. It was determined that the 30th would work as a better date and that the Planning Board would want to hear from all previously considered applicants if possible. It was also mentioned that while there was no immediate need for the Board of Adjustment to be filled those members would need to be trained so it would be a good idea to make those recommendations as well.

Motion to hold a special meeting on November 30 to hear from applicants and make new recommendations to the Board of Commissioners: Rodney Cheek
Second: Vaughn Willoughby
Vote: Unanimous

Rodney give an update on Christmas dinner. The current plan was to work with a local church to hold a fundraiser dinner, which would be more private.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Rodney Cheek
Second: Amie Perkins
Vote: Unanimous
Adjourned at 8:52 pm