

Special Meeting – January 16, 2002

The Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Kemp, Davis, Holmes, and Frye were present. Commissioner Mason was absent. This meeting was a work session on the proposed Growth Management Plan.

Overview of the Growth Management Plan

Hal Johnson, Planning and Zoning Director, presented the County's Land Development Map from 1986, which showed only housing characteristics at that time. It had no accompanying policies to indicate what the County envisioned for the future. Then Mr. Johnson presented the proposed Growth Management Plan Map, which shows where the County envisions most of the growth to occur in the future, based on where infrastructure is likely to be. The map is divided into primary growth areas, secondary growth areas, and rural growth areas. The rural growth areas are in relatively remote areas of the county, generally contain large tracts of land, and are not expected to have infrastructure in the next 15 to 20 years. Consequently, it is proposed that major subdivisions in rural growth areas be only large-lot subdivisions (4-acre minimum lots recommended) or open space/cluster subdivisions (4-acre lot average recommended). These types of subdivisions allow adequate space for groundwater recharge and help to maintain the rural character of the area. Mr. Johnson said the development policies at the back of the Growth Management Plan are not zoning regulations; they are guidelines for making decisions.

The Growth Management Plan is the County's vision, and the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments are the tools for implementing that vision. The implementation process consists of the following:

- *Development Impact Analysis:* The form has been developed and will be completed by the Planning Department, with input from the developer.
- *Technical Review and Site Analysis:* The Planning Department and the developer must complete this before the item can be placed on the Planning Board agenda.
- *Neighborhood Information Meeting:* This will be an informal information-gathering meeting in the Commissioners Meeting Room at a date prior to the Planning Board meeting—a walk-in session when neighbors can look at maps, talk to the developer and Planning Staff, and get correct information. This meeting should eliminate confusion, miscommunications, and misinformation during Planning Board and County Commissioner meetings.
- *Public Hearings:* Public hearings will be held during Planning Board and County Commissioner meetings as always, but they should proceed more smoothly and more quickly with these other steps in place.

Items of Discussion

The Board discussed items in the Growth Management Plan that they wanted to make changes to, as follows:

- *Forest-Harvested Clear-Cut Buffer:* A farmer should be able to clear-cut land for agricultural use without any required buffer. A 35-foot buffer along a state-maintained road should be required as a condition for rezoning for a subdivision if the land has not yet been timbered. However, if land has already been clear-cut before a developer purchases it, any requirement for replanting a buffer should be considered on a case-by-case basis during the rezoning process, but not automatically required.

- *Subdivisions Placed Next to a Working Farm:* Regulations should honor who was there first. If a subdivision is approved next to a working farm, there should be setback requirements of 100 feet from the farm's property lines for wells in the subdivision. On the other hand, if a farmer decides to lease some property for farming that is next to an existing subdivision or residence, he must abide by the 100-foot setback rule (for spreading litter, etc.) on the leased property.
- *Minimum Lot Size in Secondary Growth Areas:* The minimum size should be 40,000 square feet to make it different from the 30,000 square feet allowed in primary growth areas.
- *Minimum Lot Size in Rural Growth Areas:* The minimum lot size should be 3 acres in a large-lot subdivision and a 3-acre average in an open space/cluster subdivision.

The Board instructed Mr. Johnson to make these changes to the Growth Management Plan and to bring the revised document to them at their February 4 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Phil Kemp, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

J. Harold Holmes

Robert B. Davis

Alice D. Dawson, Clerk to the Board