

MINUTES
RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
April 10, 2001

There was a special joint meeting held at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, April 10, 2001, of the Randolph County Board of Commissioners and the Randolph County Planning Board, in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Randolph County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **County Commissioners Chairman Phil Kemp and Planning Board Chairman Maxton McDowell** called the meeting to Order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Hal Johnson**, Planning Director, recognized the membership of both Boards in attendance: County Planning Board members, Maxton McDowell, Chairman; Bill Dorsett, Vice Chairman; Lynden Craven; Phil Ridge; Al Morton; Larry Brown; and Mark Brower. County Commissioners, Phil Kemp, Chairman; Darryl Frye, Vice Chairman; Robby Davis; Robbie Mason; and Harold Holmes were also present for this joint meeting.
3. **Johnson** opened the meeting and said this was the first time the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners has held a joint working session. This meeting is being held to look at the proposal of a Growth Management Plan with Zoning Ordinance Amendments. Johnson said that there will be a public hearing held at a later date for the Boards to hear public comment. Johnson provided the detailed reports to the Boards. Johnson said that in order for a government to have a successful Growth Management Plan they must have appropriate zoning amendments to implement the plan. Johnson gave a brief summary of the growth trends that Randolph County has experienced over the past 5 years. Johnson said that one of our strong points in Randolph County is our G.I.S. system that records growth in the County. Johnson described the process in determining housing patterns throughout the County. Johnson explained that the information detailed housing patterns being extended into the rural areas of Randolph County and explained that if the County government is going to continue to be able to provide cost effective services in the County we need to look into the future of how this process will take place. The Commissioners has asked the Planning Department to work on this issue of designing a Growth Management Plan. Johnson explained that the Commissioners asked him to meet with different groups throughout the County during this process. Johnson said that he has Neighborhood Citizens Groups, Chambers of Commerce, Agri-businesses, Home Builders Association, and the Board of Realtors. Johnson said that he feels confident that the issues have been identified and now this meeting is the final phase before Public Hearings.
4. **Johnson** went over the specific proposed zoning ordinance amendments developed by the planning staff during this process. Johnson said that our current zoning ordinance does not provide flexibility or options for a property owner/developer when they desire to develop their property. Johnson said that these proposed Overlay Districts would provide a wider variety of options when developing major

residential subdivisions in Randolph County. Johnson stated that Residential Development is the most difficult issue we deal with and that current zoning allows for only conventional subdivision development. Johnson described the process that major subdivisions go through during public hearing and explained that this leads to a lot of confusion and frustration for the Boards, developers, and the neighbors. Johnson explained that the overlay zoning districts would allow for options necessary to provide flexibility in rural zoning. Johnson said the primary purpose of large lot design is to enhance groundwater recharge ability. Johnson described the Rural Residential and Conservation Overlay Districts being proposed. Rural Residential Overlay Districts would allow for large lot developments and Johnson explained the requirements that would apply to these developments:

**minimum lot sizes of 4 acres

**lot depth to width ratio requirements

Johnson said that the proposed zoning amendments would also allow for a 3rd option of a Rural Conservation Overlay District. Johnson said to encourage a developer to use this option the proposal would offer density bonuses.

5. **Johnson** described the Development Impact Analysis amendment that would be required of each development being planned. Johnson said that there are specific details that need to be looked at we developing large subdivisions in the County:

**housing characteristics

**water

**traffic analysis

**impact on public education, etc.

Johnson said that this form tries to list out what impact the development would have on a community.

6. **Johnson** described the proposed amendment requiring a Neighborhood Information Meeting for each proposed residential development. Johnson said that many times there are misunderstandings and this would be an informal walk-in time where the developer and adjoining property owners could ask questions and interact with staff to become informed about the request at hand. Johnson said he felt this would be significant to help identify major issues before it comes to public hearing. Johnson explained that the Boards would know that this opportunity has been given to the community to work with the staff.

7. Specialized Commercial/Rural Industrial Overlay Districts:

1. Industrial Overlay District - Johnson said this would provide an option when significant economic development projects come into the County.
2. Rural Business Overlay - Johnson said this district would provide a service to the rural community and provide flexibility.
3. Commercial Environmental Overlay - Johnson said that no changes have been made to the Zoo

Zoning but only changes the process to allow these requests to come to the Board of Commissioners.

8. Scenic Corridor Overlay District:

Johnson said that there are no areas being proposed for a scenic corridor overlay at this time but this would put the mechanisms into our Ordinance to address a scenic corridor.

9. Forest Harvested Properties:

This policy only requires a buffer area when properties are being clear cut for a major residential subdivision. This does not apply to those properties not planned for development such as those properties where forestry programs are in place.

10. Private Roads:

Currently in the County the minimum lot size provided access by private road is 5 acres. The County has not placed requirements on the length of these roads. What the County has learned since 1974 is that long private roads, maintained by the property owners, have been used when subdividing property and this type of maintenance just doesn't work. This would not eliminate private roads it would just reduce the length and regulate the number of lots that the road services (no more than 6 lots).

11. **Johnson** gave a summary of the Growth Management Plan. The Growth Management Plan recognizes 5 areas of growth: Municipal Growth Areas, Primary Growth Areas; Secondary Growth Areas; Rural Conservation Areas; and Zoo Growth Areas.

Municipal Growth Areas

Primary Growth Areas

Secondary Growth Areas

Rural Conservation Areas

Zoo Growth Areas

Johnson gave a summary of the existing land uses in Randolph County and described how many acres are in each Zoning District currently:

Environmental First (E-1)	6,312 acres
Highway Commercial (HC)	475 acres
Heavy Industrial (HI)	444 acres
Light Industrial (LI)	1,712 acres
Office Institutional	4 acres
Residential Agricultural (RA)	402,445 acres
Residential Exclusive (RE)	1,527 acres
Residential Restricted (RR)	18,653 acres
Residential Mixed (RM)	5,881 acres

Municipal 67,645 acres

Johnson discussed the number of acres that would fall within each Proposed Growth Area:

Primary Growth Area	38,629 acres
Secondary Growth Area	160,630 acres
Rural Conservation Growth Area	226,474 acres
Zoological Growth Area	6,407 acres
Municipal Growth Area	72,956 acres

12. Accomplishments for this Plan:

Johnson explained the accomplishments that this Plan would make in Randolph County.

1. Recognize that all individual growth management decisions are part of a larger interconnecting framework of building sustainable and quality growth within Randolph County.
2. Discourage high density development in areas where significant urban infrastructure are not anticipated.
3. Encourage rural lot designs in those areas where urban infrastructure is not anticipated that will enhance groundwater recharge ability while preserving open space.
4. Recognize that growth management policies should afford flexibility to County boards and agencies that will enable them to adapt to the practical requirements often necessary for rural development.
5. Performance zoning criteria, such as open space or heritage asset preservation, should establish a presumption in favor of development project approval during the rezoning process.

13. **Johnson** gave a summary of the Growth Management Plan. The Plan is broken down into the following subsections:

1. Review of Existing County Growth Situations
2. County Growth Demographics
3. Finances & County Debt Position
4. The Cost of Growth (Positive & Negative)
5. Review of Current Randolph County Growth Patterns
6. Review of Rural Conservation and Relation to Growth Management
7. Is Large Lot Zoning the Answer to Rural Conservation in Randolph County?
8. Agri-Business Preservation through Voluntary Agricultural Districts
9. Voluntary Conservation Strategies for Private Land Owner Options
10. Open Space Residential Subdivision Design (what it is and will it work in Randolph County)
11. Rural lot Subdivisions to Enhance Groundwater Recharge Areas
12. Open Space Subdivision Design and Heritage Asset Preservation
13. Mixed Use Developments to Promote Better Livability in Rural Communities
14. Interconnection of County Development Decisions and Policies
15. Public Facilities Impact Analysis

16. Review of Current Randolph County Development Programs
17. Scenic Roads and Corridor Protection Policies
18. Heritage Asset Management
19. Growth Management Areas
20. The Growth Management Plan contains specific growth policies and maps to reflect interconnected development objectives in all areas of Randolph County.

Johnson discussed the types of policies that are being proposed in the Growth Management Plan for specific types of growth. Johnson explained that these policies don't have the weight of law but would be used as guidelines in making zoning change request decisions. Johnson said that several of these policies came from the Task Forces during the Strategic Planning Process.

14. **Frye** asked if the resolution would be passed after public hearing and **Johnson** answered yes.

Davis asked whose responsibility would be to maintain the Open Space in the Rural Conservation Developments. **Johnson** said that this would be that of a Homeowner's Association. **Brown** said that this is not an uncommon process. **Brower** asked who would receive the Tax Bill and Johnson said this would probably be proportioned to the Homeowners Association. **Dorsett** talked about an area in Virginia where this Open Space process has taken place and said this is a beautiful area.

Brower asked about the length of the private road being proposed.

Dorsett asked if someone clear-cut the property and then sold the property to someone else would they be responsible for planting the buffers. **Johnson** answered yes. **Morton** said that in many cases the planted buffers are nicer than the natural buffers. **Frye** agreed and talked about a natural buffer that was required on a request where the ice took down several of the trees.

Frye said that the intent of the Development Impact Statement is to give more information to the Boards when making a decision. The Development Impact Statement would not create new requirements. **Frye** explained that there are some issues that cannot be used when making rezoning decisions. **Johnson** described the latitude that the rezoning process does give in making development decisions (unlike those requirements during the Special Use Permitting Process through a quasi-judicial process). **Davis** asked Johnson to investigate if the County has any authority in development decisions when those developments effect our school systems. **Davis** said that he felt if the City approves these developments they should absorb the students created into their school system. **Holmes** said that all the schools are ours anyway. **Kemp** said that one thing that needs to be done is when the city comes into the County and asks for new ETJ then we should ask them to take care of these type of issues.

Johnson said that in 1988 we were the first County in the State to require major subdivision to go through the rezoning process. Now most counties with Zoning regulations have this same requirement.

Brower asked about the requirements that would be included in the Rural Residential Overlay.

Johnson said that this is an overlay for large lot subdivisions. **Brower** questioned how a developer would be able to afford to pave a road and sell the lots. **Morton** expressed concern that this would possibly cause problems down the road. **Brower** said that he didn't feel the 1340 ft. private road restrictions was something that would really work in rural Randolph County. **Davis** discussed the problems that allowing these long private roads cause for the people that live on these roads. **Brown** said that Randolph County is second in the State for dirt roads. **Dorsett** said that he felt that there did need to be a requirement on the length of road allowed to be private. **Frye** said when we put in Countywide Zoning, we went to several places over a year and a half to different areas of the County (held Public Hearings prior to adopting Countywide Zoning). **Frye** said he realized that Johnson had held meetings to inform the community and he wanted to know how far the Board needed to go to act on this proposal. **Johnson** said he felt one or two public hearings would be sufficient. **Kemp** said that this will change the way things are handled and if it meets the criteria then it should be approved. **Kemp** said now its more like a "lets make a deal" process and this plan would allow for a process where developers and landowners would know they would have a good shot at getting their request's approved. **Holmes** said that he felt the Neighborhood information Meeting was a good proposal and he felt this would be very beneficial to the community. **Frye** agreed and said this would be a process to iron out some things before it gets to the Board. **Johnson** said if there is performance criteria to meet then the community will realize that something will eventually be developed on the proposed site. **Davis** asked if we are changing the criteria that would give us an obligation to approve all request and **Johnson** said no. **Davis** said he felt the community would always need to be taken into consideration when decisions are made.

Frye asked who the Technical Review Committee would be made up of and **Johnson** said that this would be appointed by the Planning Director.

Holmes asked Johnson to update the census data in the proposed plan. **Johnson** said he would see that the new census data was in the proposed plan.

Frye commended Johnson's approach on this process. **McDowell** commended Johnson on the proposed plan and the information included in the plan. **Kemp** said that we learned a lot from the last proposed document process.

Holmes said that he felt people needed to know that this Rural Conservation Area doesn't mean there will be no growth in those areas.

Dorsett said that one concern he had was the number of Special Use Permits that come to the Board that should be rezoning cases. **Johnson** said that we are trying to take care of this issue with the Rural Business Overlay District. **Holmes** said that the County Planning Board could request that a Special Use Permit Request become a rezoning request.

McDowell said the Planning Board had a meeting last week and the Board approved a motion for the Board of Commissioners to consider a moratoria on major residential development. **Kemp** asked if this

was to become effective immediately. **Morton** said that was not clear and he felt that it should be made effective at a later date. **Kemp** said that the Board could make a decision on this moratoria request in May to become effective in June. **Morton** expressed concern that this should not be a long time (a year) because this would have too major of an impact on the development in the County. **Frye** agreed. **Holmes** said this is true but it should be long enough to effectively address the issues. **McDowell** said this could be on a case by case bases. **Brower** said then this would be operating on two different standards. **Frye** asked about lengths of other moratorias that have been enacted and **Johnson** said between 60-90 days. **Brower** asked when could a hashing out session be held. **Kemp** asked if this should be done at public hearing or between yourselves (the Planning Board). **Brower** said he was not personally comfortable to say but this should be a vote among this Board. **Dorsett** said that normally the Planning Board hashes it out before this time. **Frye** asked if the Planning Board is comfortable enough to hand the Commissioners the Document. Craven, Dorsett, and Brown voted to hand over the document and Ridge, Brower, Morton, and McDowell voted to delay sending the document to the Commissioners until the Planning Board could again review the proposals at a working session.

Morton said he commended the Planning Staff and in theory he was very pleased with the document and there were just a few things he would like to talk over with the Planning Board and Staff.

McDowell said he felt this document is needed and he felt the Planning Board needed time to go over this document and then hand it over to the Commissioners. **Kemp** said he felt there is no rush. **Morton** said he felt this wouldn't take long, this would be fast. **McDowell** said he felt there should be a joint public hearing. **Holmes** and other commissioners seemed to like this idea. **Kemp** commended the Planning Board on the job they do and said he appreciated their work. **Kemp** said he felt this Board and the Tax E & R Board are two of the most important Boards in the County. **Kemp** asked the Planning Board to look at this document and said they would do the same and when they (the Planning Board) are comfortable with the document then they (the Commissioners) would receive it. **Davis** said that they would consider the moratoria on the May agenda but it would not apply to those items on the current Agenda. **Kemp** agreed and said that it would probably apply in July if acted upon.

15. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m. There were 14 citizens present for this meeting.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**