

MINUTES

RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

April 19, 2001

There was a special meeting held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 19, 2001, of the Randolph County Planning Board in the Commissioner's Meeting Room, Randolph County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **Maxton McDowell, Chairman**, called to Order the Randolph County Planning Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Hal Johnson, Planning Director.
2. **Hal Johnson** called roll of the members: Maxton McDowell, Chairman, present; Bill Dorsett, Vice Chairman, present; Lynden Craven, present; Al Morton, present; Phil Ridge, present; Larry Brown, present; Mark Brower, absent.
3. **Johnson** stated this was a follow up meeting from the joint session held between the Planning Board and Board of County Commissioners. Johnson stated that the Commissioners are interested in having a joint public hearing between both the Planning Board and the County Commissioners for final approval of the Plan. Johnson presented a brief summary of the draft Growth Management Plan and the proposed Zoning Amendments. Johnson stated that one of the concerns expressed from the last joint meeting was concerning the 4 acre lot size proposed.

Johnson explained that the plan provides four different subdivision options:

- * Rural residential overlay district
- * Conservation Overlay District
- * Conventional Subdivision
- * Rural Conservation Areas

Johnson discussed the appropriate lot size for large lot subdivision. Johnson stated that the way he obtained the 4 acre option for large lot subdivisions was from geographical studies and environmental studies, when you are placing major subdivision you need between 4-6 acres to ensure appropriate groundwater recharge area.

Johnson stated another concern from the previous meeting was the reduction in length of private roads to 1,320 feet serving no more than six lots with a minimum lot size of 5 acres. It had been discussed at the previous hearing by a Board member that this option may increase the cost of development. Johnson stated that one of the issues to consider is what the cost to the property owner is to try and maintain a dirt/gravel road over the years as the "private" road begins to deteriorate.

McDowell stated he was asked about the increased cost. He is not convinced that this is a legitimate argument. He stated the lots would be sold by what the market would bear and how the economy is at the time of development. McDowell said he doesn't feel you can use a "blanket" statement that if you can't subdivide in small acreage and sale a large number of tracts that the cost to buyers will automatically increase. This is an easy statement to make but there is no evidence out there to prove it.

Brown stated that the public needs to understand that the proposed 1,320 private roads doesn't apply to private driveways.

Johnson discussed the Neighborhood Information Meetings and stated that there has been a great deal of support for these meetings. This would educate the property owners as well as give citizens a chance to speak with the developers of the proposed development. This would be another opportunity for the Planning Staff to interact with the public and the developers and gather their specific concerns.

McDowell expressed concern regarding the 40 foot no-cut buffer zones.

Craven stated that the lumber companies are of course going to clear cut the land. He stated that then the property owner who wanted to develop that clear cut land could go in and replace the buffer.

Morton stated that he had been reviewing other buffer plans for subdivisions (siting the City of Asheboro as an example). He feels even if developers leave a 40 foot no-cut buffer that there will still be "holes" in the buffer. Morton stated that there should be some type of site plan, developed with assistance from the planning staff, to work up a type of coverage to be planted inside the 40 foot no-cut buffer.

Craven said he felt when the timber companies come in and do a clear cutting of property that they should replant as they remove. This would be a greater expense to the timber companies, but in the long run would be a help to the County and property owners.

Morton feels like we need to design specific strict buffer options. Morton asked Randle Brim, Deputy Zoning Administrator, how much more work this would place on the Planning Staff. Randle Brim said that he agreed with Morton that a more structured buffer system, coupled with a proposed requirement for informal pre-hearing meetings between developers, county planning staffers and adjoining property owners, should simplify the process. Brim stated that by dealing with the developer up front, and by being able to instruct them in the beginning of the rezoning process of what will be the buffer requirements, that he feels it will be easier to work with developers.

Morton stated that he feels that developers should have to get a registered architect to draw up the buffer plan and then submit this to the Planning Staff. This would relieve the work on the Planning Staff and place the burden on the developer.

Johnson stated that this would involve any land being brought for a major subdivision. He stated that no matter when this land was clear cut it would be required to create and maintain a buffer. Johnson stated that cleared farmland that was now going to be developed may not fall into this buffer regulation.

Morton said that allowing farmland that has been cleared for years not to plant buffers is not fair to the developers.

Brown stated that he felt there should be a number of years set as to how long the land has been clear cut that would decide whether it needed to be replaced or not.

Johnson discussed that with farmland, the land is as it was and that the timber has never been removed. Foresters have purposely removed the trees from the property and should be required to replace a buffer.

Brown stated that he feels the situations should be taken on a case by case basis.

Ridge stated that he feels there would be some cases of farmland that would require a buffer and that he agrees there should be a way to establish this on a case by case basis.

Johnson stated that the Planning Department already has buffer requirements in place. He stated that the Board is asking the Planning Staff to come up with specific standards with different types of buffers that can be used with specific situations to strengthen the current regulations.

Craven stated that a classic case of farmland being used for a subdivision is Hayfield Acres down Hwy 42. The subdivision was developed in a hayfield and there would be no way to maintain a 40 foot no-cut buffer on this property when there was no buffer there to begin with.

Dorsett feels it needs to be written into the Ordinance that a 40 foot no-cut buffer *CAN* be required.

Johnson said that the staff would work on this and come up with some specific buffer requirements. Johnson stated that buffer issues are brought up regularly at the Public Hearings and that when the Planning Staff developed the proposed buffer requirements that they would provide them to the Planning Board. Johnson said that the Neighborhood Information Meetings will give the planning staff a chance to see what type of buffers the adjoining property owners would like to have between their properties and new proposed development.

Johnson addressed again the concern of private roads. The current 5 acre requirement on private roads has been in existence since 1973. He doesn't feel that anyone could have envisioned years ago the amount of private roads that the county would end up with.

Dorsett stated that he liked the requirement that the new private road has to be attached to a state maintained road and not a private road. This will avoid the situation of lots of "short" private roads connecting to each other ending up with miles of private roads. **Johnson** said this doesn't apply to driveways and doesn't apply to private paved roads, such as the roads in Tot Hill Farm Subdivision.

Craven said that the proposed length of the private roads and a minimum of six lots would do away with a great deal of problems in the county.

Dorsett stated that he would like to have some clarification on the Scenic Corridors.

Johnson stated that the Scenic Corridor provision does not designate any specific corridors, it places provisions in the Ordinance that these corridors could be requested in the future. The request can be initiated by the County, citizens or a community. This doesn't mean the corridor would automatically be established but would put the process into motion for a study to be done by the staff to create a Scenic Corridor Plan that would be presented to the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners. This would process would be along the same line as a request for a property rezoning.

Dorsett asked if there were industrial properties within this proposed scenic corridor district would the scenic corridor keep the existing business from expanding and/or making changes. **Johnson** stated this would not affect any expansion.

Ridge discussed the Rural Areas and questioned whether or not a conventional subdivision could still be done in these areas.

Johnson stressed again that these regulations are only for major subdivisions and would not affect any minor subdivisions of three lots or less. **Ridge** said that minor subdivisions in themselves still have an impact on the state roads. He feels over a period of time that minor subdivision could affect the county development in the future, if there were a large number of three lot minor subdivisions in an area with mobile homes this would affect the neighborhood as much as a mobile home subdivision. He feels it would be better if these mobile homes were in a major subdivision instead of a minor subdivision, at least this way there would be deed restrictions placed on the homes and properties.

Johnson stated that the 80% of the County is zoned Residential Agricultural and you can put single wide mobile homes on these properties. The only way the County can zone against mobile home housing is when it involves a mobile home park or a mobile home subdivision. The county zoning has in the past and will in the future support affordable housing. Johnson stated that a lot of citizens don't necessarily oppose the type of housing that is presented for rezoning, but it is the density that causes much of the opposition.

Craven stated that the problems the Planning Board deals with are:

- * density
- * traffic problems
- * police protection
- * school overcrowding.

Johnson said if the Board feels comfortable with the proposed Growth Management Plan and the Zoning Amendments that the Board can make a motion to forward them to the County Commissioners, with the proposed changes in the buffer requirements.

Brown made the motion to forward the proposed Growth Management Plan and the Zoning Amendments to the Board of County Commissioners for approval, with the revisions in the buffer requirements, seconded by **Craven**. The motion passed unanimously.

Johnson stated that he would like to have a formal training session with the Planning Board members. Johnson said he would bring someone in from the Institute of Government to assist with this session.

Craven made the motion to adjourn, seconded by **Brown**. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**

Planning Director

Date

Deputy Clerk