

# MINUTES

## RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

**December 4, 2012**

The Randolph County Planning Board met at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Randolph County Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **Chairman Reid Pell** called to order the Randolph County Planning Board meeting at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Hal Johnson**, Planning Director, called roll of the members: **Reid Pell**, Chairman, present; **Wayne Joyce**, Vice Chairman, present; **Chris McLeod**, present; **Phil Ridge**, present; **Jim Rains**, absent; **Kemp Davis**, present; and **Larry Brown**, absent. County Attorney **Ben Morgan** was also present.
3. **McLeod** made the motion, seconded by **Joyce**, to approve the Minutes of the November 13, 2012 Randolph County Planning Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Johnson** described this meeting as a working session to discuss issues that may come to the Board early next year. Johnson said that two of the issues are dependent upon the action taken by two elected Boards, County Commissioners and Asheboro City Council. Johnson said that the first issue is the Special Use Permit for a regional landfill. Johnson said that if the Commissioners authorize the County Manager to seek the Special Use Permit for a regional landfill, the meeting will be held on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Johnson said if the Board wanted to visit a regional landfill before that meeting, we will be setting that up some time in January. It would probably be a regional landfill site in Wake County.

Johnson said the second issue will be a matter involving the City of Asheboro's Zoning Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Johnson said that a city's ETJ is an area that is regulated by the city. This authority was granted by the State several years ago to allow cities to control the type of growth in areas that may be annexed by that city in the future into areas not zoned by the counties. Johnson said Asheboro's last major ETJ expansion was done in 1987 just a few months before the County put in countywide zoning. Johnson said now the legislature has made it more difficult for cities to force annexation on communities which has made some municipalities rethink ETJ areas that they may never be able to annex. Johnson provided the Board with a memo from the City of Asheboro that answers many questions effected citizens may have. Johnson reviewed

these issues with the Board. Johnson said in these areas property owners are regulated by a Board in which they are not included in the electoral process. Johnson said that this is contrary to our democratic principles. Johnson said he expects Asheboro will withdraw their zoning and the County will have 60 days to place zoning in these areas. Johnson told the Board that the City and County Planning Staffs had a joint meeting to inform interested citizens. Johnson said only 3 people attended this meeting. Johnson if the City withdraws their jurisdiction, the County will use comparable zoning districts. Johnson said that in some cases the County may not have a comparable district. Johnson gave the example of those city residential districts that allow 15,000 sq. ft. building lots. Johnson said that it is not possible to locate a septic tank system on such a small lot. The County requires a minimum 40,000 sq. ft. per residential building lot in most areas. Johnson said existing City zoning permits that showed a vested right would be honored by the County. Johnson said RE areas would be used in those areas zoned for site-built residential development. Johnson discussed the existing County Junk Vehicle regulations and Solid Waste regulations and said they would also be enforced in these new areas. Johnson said we expect approximately 12,000 acres would be released to the County. Johnson said this would require notifying 4205 people of the required hearings. Johnson said due to the large number of notifications, it would be necessary to hold the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., so that only mass notification would be required.

4. **Review Proposed Asheboro ETJ areas and discuss appropriate Randolph County zoning.**

**Johnson** said the major difference would be the way we process major subdivisions. Johnson said that the County requires this type of development to go through the rezoning process and the City handles subdivisions through just a review process. Johnson said that this release of jurisdiction has never been done before on such a large scale in North Carolina. Johnson said we will work out problems as they occur and we do not want to take away the rights of an individual that has been granted the right by the City. Johnson said that current land uses will be allowed to continue to operate. Johnson said that the City has been very cooperative in providing information to the County about property uses in these areas. Johnson reminded the Board that the County doesn't regulate agricultural uses of property (with the exception of large swine operations). Johnson said he was not sure how the City handled that issue. Johnson said that our meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> will be a public meeting and we hope to have a neighborhood information meeting prior to this date. Johnson said that we will have maps of the proposed zoning districts and allow individuals to look at their specific property during that meeting.

5. **Review possible changes in County Growth Management Plan to accommodate release of Asheboro ETJ.**

**Johnson** said there would need to be minor adjustments made to the Growth Management Plan to reflect the withdrawal of Asheboro ETJ. Johnson said those areas formally in the ETJ would be changed from Municipal Growth to County Primary Growth areas. Johnson also said that the County Primary Growth area should be extended to reflect the area adjacent to the proposed Regional Landfill.

6. **Discuss possible new County Commercial Zoning District designed to better accommodate urban economic development.**

**Johnson** said that when this area is released to the County, this will be the most urbanized area regulated by the County. Johnson said that the County provides conditional zoning currently and described it as a good process to use in a rural environment. Johnson said that he would like to propose that we strength the Community Shopping (CS) zoning district to allow a property owner an opportunity to request a district that would allow for more flexible commercial development in an urban area while still providing a level of protection to residential properties. Johnson said that this district could be given buffer requirements and exclude some things that would be permitted in the Highway Commercial (HC) zoning district. CS would allow several types of retail businesses. This would provide the property owner more flexibility. It would be a general use zoning with buffer requirements. Johnson said we will have a formal recommendation coming to this Board at that time.

7. **Discuss establishment of special Economic Enhancement Corridors bordering I-73/74; Hwy 421; and US Hwys 49/64 and related Outdoor Advertising Standards.**

**Johnson** said this will be a urbanized area and we are looking at an economic decline. Johnson said that we have some major interstates running through the county with approximately 40 million cars traveling on these roads every year. Johnson said that the economic difficulties are unique to every county. Johnson said that currently we only allow billboard advertising signs in commercial and industrial zoning districts. Johnson said that in most areas properties are zoning with Conditional zoning and these signs are only permit if they are included in the plans during the rezoning process. Johnson added that there are miles and miles of interstate roads in this County that will never be zoned commercial or industrial. Johnson said that these areas will never have an opportunity to have advertising signs. Johnson said he would like to begin a process to address this issue better than in the past. Johnson said we want to propose Economic Enhancement Corridors (EEC) along these roads to provide a special use permit process that would allow LED billboard advertising signs along these highways. Johnson said there would be several issues to work out such as sign sizes, spacing, heights, zoning, etc. Johnson

said that these EECs would be designed to allow a professional outdoor advertising companies to promote businesses in our communities. By using LED signs, this would reduce the number of billboards needed and allow advertisers to promote more than one business per sign. The County could require these advertisers to form a partnership with our Emergency Services to provide important messaging in the area, such as tornadoes, amber alerts, etc. This system could provide important emergency information to the traveling public.

**Joyce** asked if there was a 600 ft. setback required by NCDOT. **Johnson** said that Jay Dale, Deputy Zoning Administrator, and Eric Martin, Code Enforcement Officer, had done some research on these issues and asked Dale to respond. **Dale** answered that 660 ft. is controlled by DOT and a permit must be obtained. Dale said the County is allowed to have more restrictive requirements. **Johnson** said that we may want to look at these areas as overlay zoning districts. **Davis** asked if this would be private contracts with property owners, and **Johnson** answered yes this would be an option for property owners. **Davis** asked if DOT would regulate how many signs could be within an area. **Johnson** answered yes and said that some counties have spacing of 2,000 ft. between signs.

**Joyce** said that if only LED billboard signs are allowed, the cost of LED billboard signs could possibly eliminate the ability for “mom and pop” type business from being able to use billboard advertisements. **McLeod** said that if you’re not careful you would regulate it to nothing. **Joyce** said that a 12x24 would be \$85,000+ with \$500 per month operating expenses. **Joyce** said that a “mom and pop” business could not afford such an expense. **Joyce** said that a business like “Uptown Charlie’s” may not be able to afford a LED sign but could afford a standard billboard sign.

**Davis** said that he recently took a trip West Virginia and saw some standard billboard signs that looked terrible. **Davis** said that he wanted to make sure that we didn’t make our corridors look trashy. **Johnson** said that the LED digital signs would eliminate the trashy signs.

**Johnson** asked the Board if they felt this was an issue the staff should look at and bring a recommendation to the Board. Members agreed this was needed. **Pell** said that he liked the idea of having the ability for public emergency information. **Ridge** asked how you could restrict what is placed on the sign.

**Dale** presented the Board with pictures of different types of billboard signage. Dale said that some cities require monopole type construction. Dale said that embellishments cannot be regulated within the sign size requirements. Dale showed the Board pictures of a digital LED billboard sign. Dale said that the advertisement minimum change would be 8 seconds (regulated by DOT). Dale showed the board pictures of older type signs. Dale showed the Board some older signs that have been left and not maintained. **Johnson** said we would want to ensure that the regulations would enhance the area and not allow signs

to fall into disrepair.

**Johnson** said that the staff will work on these issues and bring them back to the Board in February.

**Johnson** announced that election of officers would be at the January meeting.

8. The Board established that February 7 and February 19 (2013) would be special meeting dates for the Planning Board.
9. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m. There were 2 citizens present for this meeting.

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**NORTH CAROLINA  
RANDOLPH COUNTY**

*HAL JOHNSON*

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**Planning Director**

*JILL WOOD*

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**Date**

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**Clerk/Secretary**