

**Board Chair:**  
Rodney Cheek

**Planning Director:**  
Matthew Hoagland



Commissioners' Meeting Room  
124 W Elm Street  
Graham, NC 27253  
April 10, 2025 at 7:00 PM

# **ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

Virtual-

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

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Called to order at 7:00pm

## **II. ROLL CALL**

Here: Rodney, Henry Vines, Lee Isley, Tom King, Henry Chandler, Ernest Bare, Amie Perkins

Staff: Matthew, Me, Brian, Michelle

Missing: Stephen Dodson, Mac Jordan, John Paisley

## **III. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

1. March 13, 2025 Regular Meeting

Motion: ernest  
Second: henry vines  
Vote: unanimous

## **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS\***

Philip Morgan: Not many prepared comments, looking at changes for mh parks. Limiting affordable housing by removing them from ag districts. Think lot sizes are still much. Issues when people want to sell land later or give to familiar.

## **V. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES**

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Draft Table of Land Uses Review
2. Draft Table of Land Uses Definitions

Matthew talks to the board about the elon expansion, would not impact county's plans too much. Added a definition for custom home occupations with the 1/3 designation. Businesses should have ada compliance if open to public. Added a provision home based businesses to residential and suburban. Removed mh parks from ag. Kept ag uses in table even though they are exempt from zoning. Keep listing for taxes. Given special use label for clubs/banquet halls. Average lot

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size for airport facilities and special use permit. Smallest local airport is 83 acres, used 40 acres to keep in line with heavy industrial. New definition for food services, moved sexual businesses from ag, added recycling but may need more details on landscaping.

Amie: question on temporary fairgrounds with the 96 hours. 96 hours open or overall?

Mathew: no distinction between permanent and temporary before. Looking at pop up events or weekend festivals with this.

Amie: these usually rent for longer

Matthew: if it is a fair then fairgrounds, if a smaller weekend event then under the temporary.

Definitions would be the place to make more of a distinction.

Henry Vines: existing ordinance?

Brian: haven't had a fair in rural area in a long time.

Matthew: would need definition, possibly alter the hours.

Amie: 96 "open" hours?

Henry Vines: used to have permanent fairground

Rodney: did county have other functions? Concert, car show, tractor pull.

Amie: distinction would be permanent buildings there used for fairs and events.

Matthew: will look at distinction and if there are any state reqs. Can certainly extend the time if these events are longer. Could also name something other than fairgrounds.

Definitions added: ag food operation, ½ mile added to family care home, added clarifications for home based business and added customary home occupation.

Tom: asks about the Technical Review Committee process, if there would be a threshold.

Matthew: difference between an in-home business with no traffic and something with public coming to the property.

Tom: thinking about what the trc will do. Site plan?

Matthew: trc is planning, inspections, environmental health, DOT, addressing.

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Amie: how would you enforce business trips?

Tom: on a complaint basis. Could use something like an appointment book to verify.

Henry Vines: anything on here that limits the environmental impact? What basis is there here for that?

Matthew: typically in those situations it is a commercial property. Would go through trc. Do not know if inspections would even allow an outdoor paint booth like that.

Henry: there would still be pollutants. Other industries too that could pollute. Like air conditioning company with freon.

Brian: air impact is monitored by the state, not county. If noxious to neighbors then private lawsuit. Realize it is sensitive in residential areas but not for the county to enforce.

Henry: how would you handle a complaint then?

Matthew: send it to deq.

Amie: question on storing cars.

Matthew: we already have auto graveyard ordinance.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. Draft Rural Preservation Ordinance Review**

Matthew goes through with a summary of each section.

Lee asks for clarification on all the lot sizes.

Matthew says there has been some flexibility added to help with families carving out a few lots. Options for cluster, residential density subdivision (not every lot is 5 acres but average is 5 acres some larger some smaller), and non-residential units. Looking at this in ag district.

Henry Chandler: brings back question on cluster in ag district again, believes it does not belong as option in ag district. Do not see how this could be accomplished in rural environment w/o public services.

Lee: looking at minor subdivisions, minimum for minor is 2 acres. Think that may be too much. It and the 5 acres are too restrictive. Understand cluster subdivision but feel like the other minimums are too much.

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Amie: possible that the 8,000 be different in different areas? 10 or 12,000 in ag, 8,000 in residential? Also think 5 acres is too much.

Henry Vines: back to residential density subdivision. If 10 houses on 50 acres. Each would be different but average has to be 5 acre lot size.

Brian: cluster subdivision in any area is a good way to alleviate the feeling of restrictive lot sizes. Could allow more houses with more preserved space.

Lee: not every property will be available for a cluster, so that 5 acres is too high. Looking at property rights side of it. Seems like there are too many barriers with this. Should be a plan, but balance to that to give owners option.

Amie: major subdivision is 15 or more lots so a sizeable property. On 20 acres, then a minor subdivision at 2 acres.

Lee: hope people do buy property and keep farms and preserve but also important to keep balance for people wanting to sell their property. Don't want too much burden on that process.

Rodney: if family member putting house on family land. If health dept signs off then think they should be allowed to have that 30,000 sqft

Matthew: don't think we can have separate sets of rules for family vs general developers

Henry Vines: option to bring in for reduction of size of lot, can bring before planning board.

Matthew: would be a special use permit, was in the draft of the subdivision ordinance. Think the density option lets that happen without a special use permit and quasi judicial hearing. Same goal in mind.

Brian: think 15 lots is too many, developers could just do 14 at a time. Could drop number to something like 5 for major subdivision.

Henry Vines: when I cut off property, lending institution would not lend if property was at least 2 acres.

Amie: per bank basis.

Rodney: might be better to just allow cluster everywhere else but ag.

Matthew: if you do that and no clusters in ag. No longer have a tool to have that open space buffer between ag and more residential districts. If you are able to condense development then you still have farmable land in the preserved areas. With the 5 acres that land will be cleared, not farmed or preserved.

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Rodney: after a period of time what about putting more homes on the reserved area.

Brian: that open space is protected by the ordinance, usually given to another entity.

Rodney: right person with money and lawyers could find a way to still develop that.

Henry Vines: if it goes into farm as ag protection plan then it is supposed to never be taken out of that program. The law protects that land even with a bunch of money. Development rights have been sold.

Amie: back to cluster. A way in landscape buffers to require larger buffers between different subdivisions?

Matthew: a way to do that, could have those regulations how you want. Goal here is to answer questions, then have board take this home and prepare notes. Think need to have more discussion on the lot sizes and cluster option.

Tom: 5 acre min is for what purpose?

Matthew: rural character.

Tom: do not think 5 acres will do that. Can't farm it well, more land than someone needs. Create a market for 5 acre lots. Did something similar around chapel hill in the 80's with 2 acre lots. Don't want to take care of 2 acres even. Cluster is a good option to nest development back in a preserved area behind tree line.

Brian: also left with a farmable piece of property.

Matthew: currently have a cluster option in watershed but no open space req. might be counterintuitive to say larger lots will preserve ag.

Ernest: we sent acre and a half to commissioners, and they sent it back to us

Brian: that was county wide with no districts to be fair.

Matthew asks the board to generate notes and questions.

Henry Chandler asks about first sentence in 5.5.2. Matthew acknowledges grammar mistake.

Lee: what is the timing here?

Matthew: no hard deadline, but have this to finish. Then looking at subdivision ordinance again. One big factor is budget season. Probably need to wait til after July.

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Brian: don't need to bring anything during budget but maybe something in late July/august. Bringing this to commissioners as a staff recommendation, would like to have board support as a vote.

Matthew: if want to enact as ordinance then have to vote to recommend. If it is just policy proposal then no formal vote or hearing. Can be staff recommendation, options for workshops.

### **VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION**

Matthew announces Ian is taking job with private firm in Roanoke, last day is Friday the 11<sup>th</sup>. Been in hiring process for a while. Someone on short term contract then someone full time in May.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: ernest

Second: lee

Vote: unanimous

Adjourned at 8:16