

**Board Chair:**  
Rodney Cheek

**Planning Director:**  
Matthew Hoagland



Commissioners' Meeting Room  
124 W Elm Street  
Graham, NC 27253  
May 9, 2024 at 7:00 PM

# ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Virtual-

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

## **Members Present**

Rodney Cheek  
Vaughn Willoughby  
Anthony Pierce  
Henry Vines  
Stephen Dodson  
Bill Poe

## **Members Absent**

Amie Perkins  
Lee Isley  
Ernest Bare  
John Paisley

## **Staff Present**

Matthew Hoagland,  
*Planning Director*  
Ian Shannon, *Planner II*  
Janet Moreno, *Planning  
Technician*  
Rik Stevens, *County  
Attorney*  
Michelle Horn, *Assistant  
County Attorney*  
Rob Snow, *Environmental  
Health Program Specialist*  
Ryan Langley,  
*Environmental Health  
Program Specialist*

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Called to order at 7:00PM.

## **II. ROLL CALL**

Staff handled roll through in-person roster.

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

1. April 11, 2024 Regular Meeting

Motion to accept: Vaughn Willoughby  
Second: Anthony Pierce  
Vote: Unanimous

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

**Jeff Throneburg:** Jeff introduced himself to the board as a general contractor and the president of the Homebuilder's Association. He said that he had looked back at the previous meetings and said that not all of the numbers the board had been putting out were accurate. He told the board that changes should be made to benefit the youth, the future generations of the county. Jeff brought up a question about homes being built off of 62 and mentioned that

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Nathan Sawyer was developing those. Jeff told the board that he had purchased 2 lots to develop, and brought a 4-page itemized spreadsheet to show the board how much consideration and budget went into his development process. He told the board that an acre of land where he was developing was \$46,000. The well would cost between \$10,000 and \$14,000 and the septic would be between \$9,000 to \$11,000. He totaled this to \$71,000 in the dirt without any of the costs for the house or even clearing the lot. He told the board that adding that to the cost of the house would total \$365,326. At a current 30-year rate of 7.52% with a 5% down payment of \$18,616.30 that comes to a monthly payment of \$2,383. He told the board that all of this was before insurance, taxes, and PMI which takes that monthly payment to \$2,798. He then told the board that when looking at a 2-acre lot with a median price of \$72,000. The increase in overall cost brings that monthly payment to \$3,200. Jeff told the board that the average 32-year-old man takes home \$4,350 a month after taxes. He encouraged the board to reach out to homebuilders and everyone else in order to take more into consideration.

**Chris Foust:** Chris introduced himself as a former tobacco and dairy farmer who had transitioned into land development due to a lack of money in tobacco. He told the board that times are changing and that if the county wanted jobs then the land needed to be developed. He told the board that they moved out of the cities because the numbers for land development don't work out anymore. He said that he and his wife bought Salem Woods already developed and asked the board to look at Logan's Ridge as an example of affordable homes that look nice. He told the board that they have developed some 2-acre lots but a 2-acre minimum is too much. He said that a 1-acre minimum would be more reasonable but 2 acres would be unsustainable. He mentioned that some people may not want the growth but he believed the county does need more housing. Chris told the board that the growth is going to come no matter what and that they should encourage the residential growth within the county for housing.

### V. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES

Stephen Dodson told the board and the public that his intent was to look at this from the background of growing up in the rural lifestyle and trying to raise a family here in the county. He said that he had been going through the struggle of buying land and building a home so he was using that background to look out for the county. Anthony Pierce mentioned that regardless of what they recommend it likely won't ultimately fix this problem but it will be a start to it.

Henry Vines stated that he has lived in the county his whole life in the county. He said that the board was at a crossroads with what they wanted to do. He said that the county could look like Guilford or Orange County or it could protect rural life. He said that in regards to the concerns for affordability that there basically was none and everyone paid what they had to pay. He told the board that if nothing was done to deter the number of houses coming then the county would lose the rural feeling and that a 2-acre minimum would deter everything.

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He said that some people would like to see 5 acres but that would be excessive. Henry said that he was looking out for small builders since they did not have as many opportunities as larger developers. He told the board that an increase to 2 acres would not be much since 2/3 of the county is already at 2 acres.

Bill Poe talked about Morrisville and Cary compared to Alamance. He said that the numbers are not affordable but one way to make things more affordable was to have smaller lots. He told the board that that is already possible with community wells and city services but the county is already not affordable at the 30,000 sq ft minimum. Bill brought up some of the numbers Environmental Health had presented months ago and that most lots were larger than an acre. He talked about being a small builder back in Florida and losing out to larger developers and how that is happening in Alamance as well. He said that the growth is coming but increasing lot size minimums would not make a difference because of affordability.

### **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Consideration of Clarifying UDO Article 4 Amendments

Matthew had no additional changes but encouraged the board to let him know of any they had.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Consideration of UDO Article 6.9 Subdivision Ordinance Amendments

Matthew started by saying that Article 6 was separated into 14 parts but it was clear that 6.9 would be the main focus so that was what the Planning Board was looking at tonight. He told the board that this was more of an overall re-write with new organization to look at the changes the board was discussing. He went over a summary of each section and then asked the board if there were any recommendations.

Stephen pointed out a number of grammatical edits throughout the proposed amendments and also asked about the referenced transportation plan. Matthew clarified that it was an outdated reference but a reference could be made to the BGMPO comprehensive plan instead. Stephen asked about a better way to categorize the subdivision types and if "hybrid subdivision" was really the best term to use. He also asked about some requirements for offsite septic areas. Rob Snow clarified some of the state standards on utility easement widths.

Stephen also asked about the clear-cutting section of the amendments, and Matthew said that the intent of that section was to encourage developers to only clear what was necessary. He also clarified that the proposed 35% ratio from the cluster subdivision requirements came as part of Vaughn's suggestion. When asked about the Planning Board's potential authority to review subdivisions Matthew said that some administrative approval procedures might be

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able to be granted, similar to how the board reviews some cell towers or HIDO projects right now.

Anthony asked about the proposed vegetative buffer requirement and what would be required if no buffer was in place. As it was written the buffer requirement was to mainly preserve present natural features but it could be expanded to require planting. There were also some questions on denials and revisions. Matthew clarified that if the Planning Board denied a plan and it was not revised in 6 months then it would be outright denied. Henry brought up the fact that the appeal process would still be in place as well. Henry also suggested that the vegetative buffer should not include any roads or rights of way and should be just vegetation.

There were some questions on the building setbacks for cluster subdivisions and if those would meet Fire Code. Matthew said that he could check with the Fire Marshals on that. There were also some questions on community septic areas. Rob told the board that there are a lot of state standards that go into permitting for those so a separate ordinance. He also said there were some allowed used for community septic space as open space.

Rodney asked if there were any provisions for family land subdivisions. Matthew said that there were none currently but that was something that he could look into adding options for that. He also said that some language was needed to differentiate between major and minor subdivisions. Vaughn suggested including family subdivisions as their own category. There were some questions brought up about private road standards and the turnarounds required by code. Matthew told the board he would get some further clarification and incorporate the board's suggestions into the amendments for them to consider next month.

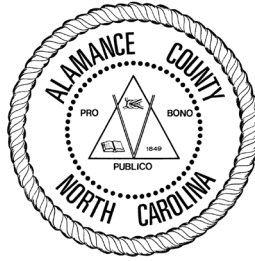
### **VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION**

Matthew told the board that the UNC School of Government was holding some Planning Board trainings online. Staff had originally looked at the 16<sup>th</sup> but that was filled so they were looking at the second one on the 30<sup>th</sup>. He told the board that that second session was also filled up but they had been put on a waiting list. He asked the board to let him know if anyone was interested in possibly attending.

Matthew also said that he was planning on having the board look over changes to Section 6.9 during their next session and asked if they wanted to consider any additional sections. He told the board that he would let them know if there was ever too much at any time but he could try and have Sections 6.1 and 6.2 ready as well.

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### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to Adjourn: Anthony Pierce  
Second: Stephen Dodson  
Vote: Unanimous

Adjourned at 8:40pm.