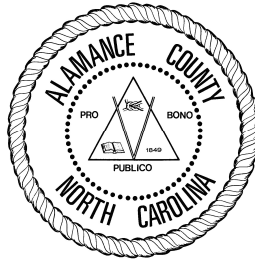


Board Chair:
Rodney Cheek

Planning Director:
Matthew Hoagland



Commissioners' Meeting Room
124 W Elm Street
Graham, NC 27253
May 14, 2026 at 6:30 PM

ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

May Meeting Minutes

Livestream: <https://tinyurl.com/22kb3exe>

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rodney Cheek called the May 14, 2026 meeting of the Alamance County Planning Board to order at 6:30 p.m

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Rodney Cheek,
Lee Isley, Lee Kimrey,
Tom King, Amie Perkins
Absent: Mac Jordan,
Henry Chandler, Smoky
Bare, Stephen Dodson

Staff Present: Matthew
Hoagland: *Planning
Director*, Keyshawn Haith:
Planner 1, Michelle Horn:
Assistant County Attorney,
Kwame Oyata: *Assistant*

County Attorney, Rob
Snow: *Environmental
Health Soil Scientist*, Brian
Baker, *Assistant County
Manager*

III. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

A. April 9, 2026 Regular Meeting

Staff noted that Rob Snow should be added as present. Lee Isley made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Amie Perkins. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS*

David Mays addressed the Board regarding a previously discussed property and permitting concern near the Saxapahaw/Bethlehem Church Road area. Mr. Mays stated that County staff, including Planning staff, had visited the site and reviewed the matter. He discussed concerns related to an ongoing issue involving a neighboring property, including questions about enforcement, permit oversight, and timelines for resolution. Mr. Mays also suggested that the County consider policies restricting additional permits for individuals with unresolved violations. Mr. Mayes additionally expressed concerns regarding continued residential growth and development activity in the area, including the potential impact of large-scale housing developments on traffic, infrastructure, schools, wildlife, and watershed resources. He stated concerns about the pace and scale of growth occurring in the County and thanked the Board for its time.

Laura Freeman addressed the Board regarding concerns over several proposed residential developments in the Saxapahaw area and the cumulative impact of rapid growth. Ms. Freeman stated that her primary concern was groundwater availability and whether existing water resources could adequately support the scale of development being proposed. She referenced discussions with scientists, hydrologists, and neighboring property owners regarding well-capacity and groundwater conditions. Ms. Freeman expressed concerns that current subdivision regulations may not fully account for multiple large-scale developments occurring simultaneously within the same area. She encouraged the Board and County officials to closely evaluate infrastructure and water supply impacts associated with future growth and suggested consideration of a temporary pause or moratorium on certain high-density or well-dependent subdivisions until additional review could occur.

Warren Schoenfeld spoke regarding property he owns along Austin Quarter Road and echoed concerns previously raised about the scale of proposed residential development and potential impacts on groundwater resources in the area. Mr. Schoenfeld discussed the history of his property ownership and concerns regarding the long-term availability of well water for existing residents. Mr. Schoenfeld also raised questions regarding potential road improvements along Austin Quarter Road after being contacted about a possible easement request related to future development access. He asked for clarification regarding which governmental entity would oversee road improvement decisions and development-related roadway changes.

V. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES

During Board discussion, members requested additional explanation regarding the Technical Review Committee (TRC) process and how large-scale subdivision developments are reviewed by the County. Planning Director Matthew Hoagland explained that the TRC process serves as a coordinated review process for development proposals in the unincorporated areas of the County. He stated that the process includes participation from multiple departments and agencies, including Planning, Environmental Health, Fire Marshal staff, Building Inspections, GIS, NCDOT, and other agencies as needed depending on the project. Mr. Hoagland further explained that major subdivisions are subject to various technical and infrastructure review requirements, including roadway access standards, right-of-way considerations, and coordination with NCDOT for public road improvements. He noted that large subdivision proposals must proceed through numerous technical review steps before final approvals can occur.

Additional discussion followed between Board members, members of the public, and Planning Director Matthew Hoagland regarding the County's subdivision review and permitting processes. Topics included Technical Review Committee procedures, subdivision approvals, road standards, building permit closeout procedures, and environmental review requirements associated with large-scale residential developments. Mr. Hoagland explained that subdivision approvals in the unincorporated areas are administrative decisions based upon compliance with the County's Unified Development Ordinance and other applicable state and local regulations. Discussion included the distinction between objective ordinance standards and broader policy concerns related to growth, traffic, and rural character. Board members and members of the public also discussed groundwater availability, well regulations, septic feasibility, and environmental permitting requirements associated with major subdivision developments. Staff explained that technical

review of groundwater capacity and well yield requirements involve Environmental Health and state agencies, including the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. Staff further noted that subdivision proposals must meet applicable technical standards and regulatory requirements before approvals may proceed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Second review of UDO Article 6.5 HIDO draft amendments

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland presented revised draft amendments to Article 6.5 of the Unified Development Ordinance related to Heavy Industrial Development regulations. Mr. Hoagland explained that the revisions reflected changes and discussion from the Board's previous meeting.

Mr. Hoagland reviewed proposed amendments to Sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.4, including revisions clarifying roadway access requirements, accommodations for secondary emergency access entrances, Class II buffering standards, public hearing notification procedures, Intent-to-Construct permit approvals, and permit duration requirements. Staff also reviewed proposed language clarifying what would constitute a "substantial impact" requiring an additional public hearing. Mr. Hoagland additionally reviewed proposed definition amendments involving inert debris landfills, renewable energy facilities, resource extraction uses, data centers, and landfill classifications.

- CLASS I

Inert Debris Landfill (p.15): Added language to include "asphalt, cured concrete, brick, concrete block, gravel, or rock... not containing chemical adhesives, sealants, or lead-based paints.

Renewable Energy Facility (p.15&16): Found state definition in NCGS 62-133.8.

- CLASS II

Resource Extraction (p.16): Removed the term "gaseous substances" and simply replaced with "other gasses."

Data Center (p.16): *(No change from previous meeting. May need to discuss this definition as well as alternate below which came from 2025's House Bill 1002 which did not become law).*

§ 62-159.3. Prohibit cost recovery for data centers. *(a) For the purposes of this section, the term "commercial data center" means a facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected facilities in this State that is used by an entity or other business enterprise to operate, manage, or maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of hardware and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing, retrieving, or transmitting data and has a peak demand of 100 megawatts or greater.*

- CLASS III

Landfill (p.18): Amended to clarify that these types of landfills "do not accept" wastes listed under the Inert Debris Landfill category

Board discussions regarding gate security language, roadway access standards, secondary emergency access roads, lighting provisions, and the duration requirements for Intent-to-Construct permits. Members discussed potential revisions related to self-locking and self-latching gate language, ensuring secondary access roads remain limited to emergency purposes, and balancing

permit expiration timelines with the realities of engineering, financing, and permitting processes associated with large-scale industrial projects. Additional discussion occurred regarding vested rights, definitions of “substantial construction activity,” and flexibility for staff review of projects demonstrating continued progress toward development approvals. Staff also provided additional explanation regarding the Technical Review Committee process and coordination with outside agencies and regulatory requirements.

Additional Board discussion occurred regarding proposed definition revisions within Article 6.5, particularly the distinction between inert debris landfills and other landfill classifications. Board members discussed concerns that revised language stating certain landfill types “do not accept” materials classified as inert debris could unintentionally prohibit otherwise common landfill operations involving brush, yard waste, mulch processing, or similar ancillary activities. Discussion also focused on how landfill operations are categorized and permitted within the County, including distinctions between sanitary landfills, construction and demolition debris facilities, inert debris operations, and accessory activities occurring on larger landfill properties. Board members discussed whether ordinance language should more clearly distinguish principal landfill operations from accessory or ancillary uses occurring on the same property

B. Second review of UDO Article 8 Appendix draft amendments

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland presented proposed amendments to Appendix O and Appendix M of Article 8 of the Unified Development Ordinance. Mr. Hoagland explained that Appendix O had been reorganized for clarity and expanded with additional detail, including the addition of surveyor seal and stamp requirements within the title block requirements for preliminary and final plats. Staff also reviewed formatting revisions and additional language related to construction plan requirements within Appendix M, including stormwater control measures and other ordinance-related information requirements. Board members discussed several technical revisions to the appendices, including clarifying that easement information should be reflected on both preliminary and final plats and adding revision date requirements to title blocks for construction plans to assist with version tracking and review. Additional discussion occurred regarding whether roadway widths should also be reflected on final plats. Staff explained that roadway widths are shown on construction plans, while final plats are intended to provide more precise survey measurements and recorded dimensions. Board members discussed ensuring the language and formatting within the appendices clearly reflected those distinctions.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of UDO Article 6.9 Subdivision draft amendments

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland presented proposed revisions to Article 6.9 of the Unified Development Ordinance related to subdivision regulations. Mr. Hoagland explained that many of the proposed revisions had previously been reviewed by the Planning Board during earlier ordinance discussions and stated that the draft format replaced entire ordinance sections rather than line-by-line edits for ease of review.

Mr. Hoagland reviewed the proposed ordinance revisions as follows:

- Section 6.9.1 Purpose and Goal: replaces the former exceptions section with language outlining the purpose and goals of the subdivision ordinance and the County's intent in adopting the regulations.
- Section 6.9.2 Application of Regulations defines what constitutes a subdivision and establishes legal parameters related to property subdivision and recording requirements.
- Section 6.9.3 Exceptions to Applicability: retain the existing exemption language consistent with NCGS 160D-802(a).
- Section 6.9.4 Plat Approval Not to Constitute Other Approvals: clarify that approval of a subdivision plat does not automatically guarantee building permit approval or acceptance of roads into the NCDOT system.
- Section 6.9.5 Subdivision Variance and Appeals: establish variance and appeals procedures consistent with state law and Board of Adjustment procedures.
- Section 6.9.6 Aggregation: provide additional language related to subdivision phasing and timing parameters.
- Section 6.9.7 Violation of Subdivision Regulations: establish consequences for subdivision violations, including the transfer of land prior to survey work being completed by a licensed North Carolina surveyor.
- Section 6.9.8 General Requirements: reorganize and expand regulations related to platting requirements, subdivision naming, lot numbering, Environmental Health evaluations, historic sites, natural areas, and compliance with other regulations.
- Section 6.9.9 Environmental Protection Measures: clarify regulations involving marginal land, flood hazard area notations, sediment and erosion control measures, stormwater maintenance, stream buffers, and watershed buffer areas.
- Section 6.9.10 Coordination and Continuation of Public and Private Roads: establish more detailed standards regarding public and private roads, including classifications for unbuilt private roads, Class I private roads, and Class II private roads; gravel width and depth requirements; fire truck proof roll requirements; private road maintenance standards; nonconforming private road limitations; and circumstances requiring roadway upgrades.
- Section 6.9.11 Design Standards for Lots: would revise lot design standards by reorganizing lot size tables, clarifying minimum lot sizes for private road lots, establishing standards for multifamily developments and principal dwellings, reducing minimum road frontage from 60 feet to 50 feet, and creating a new minimum width requirement of 100 feet at the building site.
- Section 6.9.12 Types of Subdivisions: more clearly distinguish between major and minor subdivisions, define conventional and cluster subdivisions, establish limitations on the number of lots created from existing state-maintained roads, and establish timing provisions intended to prevent phased subdivision circumvention.
- Section 6.9.13 Cluster Subdivisions: establish a 30 percent open space requirement while allowing reduced setback standards.
- Section 6.9.14 Unconventional Residential Developments: would establish a framework for regulating accessory dwelling units, secondary residences, and short-term rentals.
- Section 6.9.15 Approval Procedures: consolidate subdivision approval procedures into a single section of the ordinance

Board discussion focused on several proposed subdivision regulations, including lot frontage requirements, subdivision classifications, private road standards, cluster subdivision provisions,

family subdivision provisions, and limitations on lot creation from existing state-maintained roads. Members discussed the intent of requiring new internal roads for larger subdivisions, balancing traffic safety concerns with property owners' ability to create lots along existing roads, and the distinction between the legal definition of a subdivision and the public's common understanding of residential subdivision developments. Board members also reviewed proposed private road maintenance provisions and suggested revisions to improve the organization of language related to the potential conversion of private roads to public roads. Additional discussion occurred regarding references to state terminology, formatting corrections, and removal of outdated references carried over from previous ordinance drafts. Members further discussed whether a separate family subdivision provision should be retained to accommodate property owners wishing to divide land for immediate family members.

Discussion also focused on the proposed cluster subdivision provisions and whether the draft regulations adequately addressed concerns related to growth, infrastructure, groundwater availability, and septic capacity. Members discussed recent development proposals within the County and questioned whether additional standards may be needed to mitigate potential impacts associated with higher-density residential development. Staff explained that the intent of the cluster subdivision provisions was not to increase the overall number of permitted lots, but rather to allow smaller lot sizes while preserving open space within a development. Discussion included the relationship between conventional and cluster subdivisions, the proposed 30 percent open space requirement, density calculations, and existing ordinance provisions allowing reduced lot sizes when served by public, community water, and wastewater systems.

Board members further discussed whether current minimum lot size standards associated with public and community utility systems remain appropriate and whether modifications to those standards could reduce development intensity in rural areas while preserving the benefits of cluster subdivision design. Additional discussion addressed whether cluster subdivision standards should distinguish between developments served by public water and sewer systems and those utilizing community water and wastewater systems. Members discussed minimum lot size requirements, open space preservation, environmental benefits associated with cluster developments, protection of natural areas, buffering adjacent properties and public lands, and the concentration of residential development in rural areas. Staff noted that cluster subdivisions can provide planning, environmental, and conservation benefits when appropriately located and designed, while acknowledging concerns regarding higher-density residential development in certain rural portions of the County and the need to balance development flexibility with preservation of rural character and natural resources.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION

B. By Laws Section 1.2 Regular Meeting Location Change

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland presented a proposed amendment to the Planning Board Bylaws to update the regular meeting location. Mr. Hoagland explained that Section 1.2 would be amended to reflect the relocation of County Planning Department operations from the Alamance County Commissioners Room at 124 W. Elm Street in Graham to the Development Center Meeting Room at 1946 Martin Street in Burlington. The amendment would not alter the meeting schedule or time, which would remain the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland presented a proposed amendment to the Planning Board Bylaws to update the regular meeting location. Mr. Hoagland explained that Section 1.2 would be amended to reflect the relocation of County Planning Department operations from the Alamance County Commissioners Room at 124 W. Elm Street in Graham to the Development Center Meeting Room at 1946 Martin Street in Burlington. The amendment would not alter the meeting schedule or time, which would remain the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Following discussion, Lee Isley made a motion to approve the bylaw amendment updating the regular meeting location. The motion was seconded by Amie Perkins. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Land Use Map / Rural Preservation Ordinance discussion

Planning Director Matthew Hoagland reintroduced discussion regarding a potential Rural Preservation Ordinance and future updates to the County's Land Use Map. Mr. Hoagland informed the Board that staff had met with County Commissioners and that they had heard from members of the development community, business owners, and other stakeholders following recent public interest in the topic. He noted that feedback generally supported continuing the conversation and further evaluating potential approaches to rural preservation and growth management. Staff also discussed concepts including lot size considerations, treatment of nonconforming uses, potential expansion of home occupation allowances, and opportunities to create provisions that would allow existing uses to become conforming under future circumstances.

Board members discussed the purpose and timing of revisiting the Rural Preservation Ordinance and agreed that additional review and discussion would be necessary before any formal recommendations could be developed. Discussion included the relationship between potential rural preservation measures and ongoing Unified Development Ordinance revisions, the importance of obtaining additional public input, and the need to evaluate how future growth and development may impact rural areas of the County. Staff noted that the County would soon begin a strategic planning process that includes public engagement, stakeholder interviews, and discussions regarding economic development, land use, and growth. Board members and staff agreed that information gathered through that process could help inform future discussions regarding rural preservation strategies. The Board expressed interest in continuing the discussion at future meetings and directed staff to bring additional information and recommendations forward for further consideration. Additional discussion focused on the County's continued population growth and the increasing importance of land use planning decisions. Members noted that growth-related issues are likely to become more common in the future and discussed the importance of proactively evaluating potential policy options while balancing the interests of property owners, businesses, agricultural operations, and residents.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion for adjournment was made by Amie Perkins and seconded by Lee Isley. The motion passed unanimously.