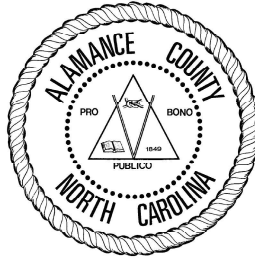


Board Chair:
Rodney Cheek

Planning Director:
Matthew Hoagland



Alamance County Development Center
Conference Room
1946 Martin Street
Burlington, NC 27215
September 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM

ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD AGENDA

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/@alamancecoplanning9852>

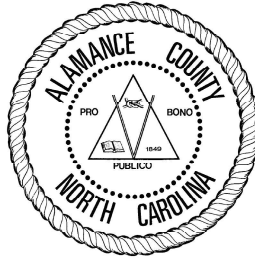
- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**
 - A. August 13, 2026 Regular Meeting
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS***
- V. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES**
- VI. OLD BUSINESS**
- VII. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Rural Preservation Subcommittee Final Recommendation
- VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION**
- IX. ADJOURNMENT**

(Public Comments Procedures)

- 1. Those wishing to make public comments should sign-in prior to the meeting.*
- 2. In order to be fair and ensure that all citizens wishing to speak may be heard, the Chair may place time limits on public comments.*
- 3. Any further discussion by the public on a given agenda item is subject to the discretion of the Chair of the Planning Board..*

Board Chair:
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Alamance County Development Center
Conference Room
1946 Martin Street
Burlington, NC 27215
August 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM

ALAMANCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

August Meeting Minutes

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/@alamancecoplanning9852>

Members Present: Amie Perkins, Lee Kimrey, Rodney Cheek, Lee Isley, Henry Chandler, Ernest Bare, Commissioner Sam Powell
Members Absent: Mac Jordan, Stephen Dodson, Tom King

Staff Present: *Planning Director:* Matthew Hoagland, *Assistant County Manager:* Brian Baker, *Assistant County Attorney:* Michelle Horn, *Assistant County Attorney:* Kwama Opata, *Planner 1:* Keyshawn Haith

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cheek called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

A. July 9, 2026 Regular Meeting

A motion to approve July 9, 2026 Regular Meeting minutes was made by Henry Chandler and seconded by Amie Perkins. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS*

David Hill expressed concerns about multiple high-density housing developments planned near Saxapahaw. He noted that two proposed projects (Morrow Mill and Hunter's Ridge) could total between 540 to 650 homes, with an additional Ventura project for roughly 250 homes expected but not yet submitted. He stated that combined, these developments could reach around 1,400–1,500 homes within three-quarters of a mile of Saxapahaw. Hill highlighted the potential population increase, estimating nearly 6,000 new residents and approximately 3,000 additional vehicles in the area, which he compared to the current Saxapahaw population of about 1,500. He emphasized the scale of growth and its potential impacts on the community.

Peter Childers raised concerns about a nearby proposed development of approximately 450 homes and its potential impact on local water resources. He stated that the current review process relies heavily on state-level evaluation of developer-submitted engineering reports, which focus primarily on water quality and require only a 24-hour flow test. He argued that this is insufficient for understanding long-term water availability, noting that the aquifer's size and capacity remain unknown. He suggested requiring developers to conduct aquifer mapping as part of the county's zoning or UDO standards. He also expressed concern about cumulative impacts from multiple developments in the area, including water usage, road capacity,

and infrastructure strain. He encouraged the board to consider mixed-use or higher-density housing options to reduce land footprint, preserve more open space, support aquifer recharge, and potentially create more affordable housing opportunities.

Caleb King, a Pittsboro resident who attends school in Saxapahaw, expressed concerns about the trend toward smaller lot sizes and reduced green-space requirements in new subdivisions. He emphasized that these development patterns primarily benefit companies while leaving citizens with negative impacts such as increased traffic, higher water usage during drought conditions, and overall loss of green space. King stated his support for larger lot sizes, mandatory minimum green-space requirements, and zoning regulations to help protect community character and environmental resources.

Henry Vines expressed concern that the county is now dealing with development issues that could have been prevented had a previously proposed ordinance, requiring two-acre minimum lot sizes, been adopted. He noted that such a requirement would have significantly reduced the number of homes in current large developments. Viners encouraged the board to revisit and advance that ordinance, suggesting adjustments if the five-acre minimum is the primary obstacle. He also addressed data processing centers, recommending that the board draft an ordinance limiting these facilities to 100-acre sites with a 100-foot natural buffer. His proposal included allowances for up to four entrances and emphasized that such buffering could help mitigate environmental and sound impacts. Viners stated that a moratorium is unnecessary if the county sets clear standards and sends strong recommendations to the commissioners. He added that while mega data centers can have high impacts, many are largely self-sufficient regarding power, and establishing appropriate guidelines would help manage future development.

Laura Streitfield voiced strong support for establishing a two-acre minimum lot size, noting that this standard aligns with the county's 2020 Land Development Plan, which recommended two- to five-acre lots. She emphasized that the document was developed through extensive planning staff work, board deliberation, and community input, and she urged the board not to consider anything smaller than two acres, particularly in rural and agricultural areas. She observed that many attendees appeared supportive of rural-preservation efforts and thanked the board for forming a Rural Preservation Subcommittee. Streitfield argued that claims about needing to "balance" rural preservation with housing development were misplaced, given that the lack of zoning has already heavily favored development over rural protection. She encouraged the board to act promptly, warning that several major developments are still in preliminary stages but could advance quickly if ordinances are delayed. Streitfield also advocated for updating the UDO, establishing a transparent public review process for subdivisions, and ensuring that residents receive notice of proposed projects. She stated that proactive zoning would prevent citizens from being surprised by large developments and would give the planning department the tools needed for thoughtful, infrastructure-supported growth. Overall, she urged the board to follow the adopted 2020 planning document, move forward with the Rural Preservation Ordinances, and avoid unnecessary delays.

An unnamed speaker, a longtime Saxapahaw resident with a background in farming, emphasized the importance of protecting farmland and the Haw River. They stated that once farmland is subdivided, it cannot realistically be restored or reassembled, making its loss permanent. The speaker urged the board to consider this irreversible impact when evaluating development policies and to move forward in a way that preserves agricultural land.

An unnamed, retired environmental scientist expressed concerns about groundwater sustainability in Alamance County. They noted that roughly 20% of county residents rely on private wells and that these systems are increasingly at risk due to concentrated large-scale development. The speaker explained that groundwater levels depend on the balance between rainfall recharge and well withdrawals, and that development, especially increased impervious surfaces, reduces recharge capacity. They emphasized that larger lot sizes help preserve natural recharge areas by limiting impervious surfaces from houses and driveways. The speaker also encouraged preserving existing forests, which provide the best groundwater recharge, while noting that grass areas tend to promote runoff. For developments dependent on groundwater, they recommended incorporating water infiltration or recharge ponds as an essential feature. Overall, the speaker urged the board to consider groundwater protection, through lot size, forest preservation, and recharge basins, when evaluating future development plans, stressing that excessive withdrawals threaten local drinking-water wells, farms, and small businesses.

Aiden McDuffey, a student at the Hawbridge School and resident of Mebane, expressed support for minimum lot sizes but cautioned that imposing them alone could unintentionally encourage developers to clear-cut large areas in order to place the same number of houses on bigger lots. He explained that clustered subdivisions, as seen in some current developments, can better preserve trees and green space that help with groundwater recharge. He recommended pairing minimum lot sizes with minimum green-space requirements to ensure both land preservation and smart growth. He also advocated for considering mixed-use development as a strategy to reduce car dependency, decrease traffic, and maintain natural areas. Overall, he stressed the need for thoughtful, balanced development, acknowledging that development is inevitable but should be designed in a way that avoids loopholes and protects natural resources.

IV. BOARD/COMMISSIONER RESPONSES

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Subcommittee Recommendations Discussion (continued)

The Planning Board engaged in an extended open discussion with citizens regarding the Rural Preservation Subcommittee's ongoing work toward developing a zoning framework and updating the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The board presented the latest draft concepts, including a preliminary zoning map with proposed district categories: Agricultural, Rural Residential, Suburban Transition, and Village Center. Each district reflects a graduated scale of density intended to align development intensity with available infrastructure, environmental capacity, and rural character.

The board explained that the Agricultural and Rural Residential districts would carry the highest minimum lot-size requirements, recognizing their limited access to water and sewer infrastructure, reliance on private wells and septic systems, and importance for farmland preservation. Lot sizes would decrease in areas closer to established communities and mill villages, where public water, sewer, and essential services can better support denser development. Members emphasized the importance of avoiding sudden density jumps between adjacent parcels, instead creating a gradual, predictable transition in lot size and development form. Subcommittee representatives reiterated their recommendation to remove "community water" or "community well" terminology from the ordinance due to its ambiguity and susceptibility to

misinterpretation. Instead, the proposed approach relies on standardized minimum lot sizes, such as approximately 70,000 square feet in agricultural zones, regardless of whether water or septic systems are located on-site or off-site. This simplifies regulation and reduces opportunities for loopholes. The committee further proposed eliminating cluster subdivision options in agricultural, rural residential, and suburban transition districts while retaining clustering opportunities near village centers, where infrastructure can support more compact growth.

Significant conversation focused on groundwater sustainability and the technical limitations of well and septic placement. Residents and planning staff acknowledged that soil conditions across the county vary substantially, and not all parcels can support a home, well, septic field, and septic repair area within the minimum square footage. Board members noted that while a 30,000-square-foot minimum may work in some isolated cases, many parcels require substantially more land to meet environmental health standards. The draft zoning framework therefore seeks to establish lot sizes that realistically account for soil variability and long-term groundwater demand.

Citizens raised concerns about the cumulative impact of multiple large developments drawing from shared aquifers, noting that no engineer or developer can fully guarantee long-term groundwater yield. Attendees shared examples of nearby communities forced into unexpected municipal water connections at significant cost after wells failed. Board members emphasized that the proposed zoning approach is intended to protect well-dependent communities from similar risks.

Traffic and infrastructure concerns were also discussed at length. Citizens referenced NCDOT estimates suggesting that the proposed subdivisions could generate thousands of daily vehicle trips on rural roads such as Morrow Mill Road and Saxapahaw–Bethlehem Road. Several attendees pointed out aging infrastructure, including a bridge on Morrow Mill Road, which may be unable to accommodate increased traffic volumes. Participants further noted that while developers may be required to fund some improvements, counties often inherit responsibility for substantial long-term costs. Planning staff affirmed that stronger zoning regulations and an improved comprehensive plan would help the county identify long-term transportation needs, prioritize future road upgrades, and better coordinate with NCDOT.

The board also reviewed proposed road-frontage requirements—100 feet in agricultural districts, 80 feet in rural residential districts, and 60 feet in suburban transition districts—to strengthen public safety, access management, and long-term subdivision patterns. Several residents shared personal experiences with flag lots passed down through families, expressing concern about how new frontage standards may affect similar future transfers. Board members acknowledged these concerns and noted that the proposed frontage standards remain under review, with potential modifications based on continued public input.

Clear-cutting and tree preservation generated substantial discussion. Citizens emphasized the importance of forest cover for water recharge, erosion control, rural character, and local rainfall patterns. The board described draft subdivision language aimed at discouraging clear-cutting during development. The draft would limit tree removal to areas required for infrastructure installation and encourage preservation of established vegetation. Subdivision approvals could be delayed for properties improperly cleared unless conducted under a state-protected forestry management plan. Several attendees supported this approach,

noting that many homebuyers prefer wooded lots and that large-scale clearing diminishes subdivision desirability.

The discussion turned to the Planning Board's authority relative to the Board of Commissioners. A citizen asked directly how much power the Planning Board has and whether months or years of work could be undone if the commissioners did not adopt the final recommendations. Board members acknowledged that while they conduct research, draft ordinances, and lead community engagement, the Board of Commissioners must approve any zoning regulations. They encouraged citizens to regularly attend commissioner meetings and express support for zoning and rural-preservation initiatives.

Multiple attendees voiced urgent concerns that prolonged outreach periods could allow developers to submit additional large projects before zoning is enacted. They warned that developers are aware of the potential adoption timeline and may accelerate proposals to be grandfathered under current rules. Some citizens requested that the Planning Board formally ask the commissioners to enact a temporary moratorium on large subdivisions or data centers as a stop-gap measure. Board members responded that only the Board of Commissioners can enact a moratorium and that legal guidance from the county attorney would be necessary to determine whether such an action is permissible. They encouraged residents to bring such requests directly to the commissioners. Residents discussed whether earlier action, even if imperfect, might prevent overwhelming development pressures. Some feared that waiting until November could reduce community control over pending projects. The board clarified that commissioners have requested extensive public outreach to ensure the proposal reflects countywide input and is not rushed. Based on current schedules, the board expects the zoning proposal to reach commissioners toward the end of the year, given the need for additional community meetings, revisions, and language adjustments.

Toward the end of the discussion, the board elaborated on the rationale behind earlier drafts proposing two-acre minimum lot sizes. Members noted that much of Alamance County already requires two-acre minimums under existing watershed regulations, making the original proposal less restrictive than it may appear. While the board initially favored adopting a countywide two-acre minimum for simplicity, community feedback prompted development of the graduated lot-size framework now under consideration. Board members expressed that the current proposal provides a more workable balance and avoids abrupt density transitions between neighboring parcels.

The board thanked attendees for their extensive participation, insight, and constructive feedback. Members encouraged the subcommittee to incorporate the new input into ongoing revisions and return with an updated proposal at a future meeting. The board also expressed interest in hosting additional outreach sessions and community forums to continue the collaborative process.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Amie Perkins and seconded by Smokey Bare. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Alamance County Planning Department

Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director
Alamance County Development Center
1946 Martin Street, Burlington, NC 27217
Phone: (336) 570-4053 | Email: MHoagland@AlamanceCountyNC.gov

Alamance County Planning Board Meeting September 10, 2026

Rural Preservation Subcommittee Final Recommendations:

6.9.12.1 AREA OF LOTS

Minimum lot area for residential lots with on-site facilities shall be determined by the result of soil analysis and investigations, and other appropriate criteria test, but in no case shall a lot with on-site systems be smaller than specified below:

Watershed Critical Area (WCA) *

Minimum Lot Size: 2 Acres

Balance of Watershed (BOW) *

Minimum Lot Size: 1 acre (unless otherwise required by land use district).

Non-Watershed Areas (NWA) *

Facility Provided	Minimum Lot Size
Septic System & Well	30,000 sq. ft.
Community/Public Water & Septic System	20,000 sq. ft.
Community/Public Sewer & Well	10,000 sq. ft.
Community/Public Water & Sewer	8,000 sq. ft.

(6.9.12.1 Continued)

Minimum Lot Size

Ag District (AG)	Rural Residential (RR)	Rural Community (RC)	Suburban Transition (ST)	Mill Village (MV)	Employment Centers (EC)
2 acres.	65,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.
				8,000 sq. ft. PUD	

6.9.12.3. CONFIGURATION OF LOTS 1. Street Frontage. Every lot shall front or abut on a public or private street or road, and shall have a minimum of sixty (60) feet of road frontage or be served by an Exclusive Access Easement as follows:

Agriculture District (AG) – 100 feet
Rural Residential (RR) – 80 feet
Rural Community (RC) – 60 feet
Suburban Transition (ST) – 60 feet
Mill Village (MV) – 60 feet
Employment Centers (EC) – 100 feet

5.5.2 Lot Size, Dimension, Area, and Configuration

Agriculture Districts (AG)

Minimum Lot Size: **2 acres**

- ~~Residential Major Subdivision: 5 acres~~
- ~~Residential Family Subdivisions: 1 acre~~
- ~~Residential Cluster Subdivisions: 8000 square feet~~
- ~~Residential Density Subdivisions: 5 acre min. average~~
- ~~Non-residential Subdivision: 2 acres~~

Rural Community Districts (RC)

Minimum Lot Size: **30,000**

~~Residential or Mixed Use Cluster: 8,000~~ **1 acre**

Rural Residential (RR)

Minimum Lot Size: ~~2 acres~~ **65,000 square feet.**

~~Minimum Cluster Subdivisions: 8,000~~

~~Residential Density Subdivisions: 2-acre average~~

Suburban Transition (ST)

Minimum Lot Size: 30,000 square feet

Mill Village (MV)

Minimum Lot Size (based on facility type)

Individual Well and Septic System:	30,000 square feet
Community/Public Well and Septic System:	20,000 square feet
Individual Well and Community/Public Sewer:	10,000 square feet
Community/Public Water and Sewer:	8,000 square feet

Principal Use Table							
<u>Use Type</u>	<u>AG</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>ST</u>	<u>EC</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>MV</u>	<u>Additional Regulations</u>
Residential Uses, Household Living							
<u>Dwelling, Single-Family Detached</u>	P	P	P	X	P	P	
<u>Dwelling, Cluster Subdivisions</u>	PA X	PA X	PA X	X	PA X	PA	<u>Article 6, Part 9</u> ?????
<u>Dwelling, Duplex</u>	P	P	P	X	PA	PA	<u>Pedestrian connections</u>
<u>Dwelling, Triplex or Fourplex</u>	X	X	P	X	PA	PA	<u>Ped. connections; Section 5.6</u>
<u>Dwelling, Multifamily (5 Units+)</u>	X	X	P	X	PA	PA	<u>Ped. connections; Section 5.6</u>
<u>Dwelling, Manufactured (Single Home)</u>	P	P	P	X	P	X	
<u>Dwelling, Manufactured Home Park (3+)</u>	X	PA X	PA P	X	X	X	<u>Article 6, Part 7</u> ?????

