WAKE COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

Planning, Development & Inspections

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MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING BOARD - JULY 20, 2022

LOCATION: Wake County Justice Center, 301 S. Salisbury St., Room 2700, Raleigh, NC

MEMBERS PRESENT:
1. Mr. Asa Fleming (Chair)
2. Mr. David Adams
3. Mr. Bill Jenkins
4. Mr. Danny Kadis
5. Dr. Kamal Kolappa
6. Mr. Ted Van Dyk

MEMBERS ABSENT:
1. Mr. Jason Barron
2. Ms. Brenna Booker-Rouse
3. Mr. Amos Clark
4. Mr. Tom Wells (Vice Chair)

COUNTY STAFF:
1. Ms. Jenny Coats
2. Mr. Steven Finn
3. Mr. Tim Gardiner
4. Mr. Keith Lankford
5. Mr. Tim Maloney
6. Mr. David Parks
7. Ms. Sharon Peterson
8. Ms. Beth Simmons

COUNTY ATTORNEY:
1. Mr. Kenneth Murphy, Deputy County Attorney

GUESTS:
1. Ms. Shelby Powell, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

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1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Mr. Fleming called the Planning Board meeting to order at 1:33 pm.

2. **Petitions and Amendments:** None.

3. **Approval of June 6, 2022, Minutes**: Minutes were approved with an amendment to page five as presented unanimously.

4. **North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Southeast Area Study – Presented by Tim Gardiner**

Mr. Gardiner opened his presentation with a brief introduction to the areas being addressed in the CAMPO studies – the Southwest Area, the Northwest Area, and the Southeast Area which was the subject of discussion at this meeting. The three areas are updated in yearly intervals and as they pertain to county growth it has been recommended that Planning Board members be nominated to serve on CAMPO committees. The Southeast Area covers I-87 South to the east of 401. Mr. Gardiner introduced Shelby Powell to continue the presentation.

Ms. Powell began by explaining that the mission of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is to manage transportation planning for Wake County as well as the surrounding portions of Granville, Johnston, Franklin, and Harnett counties. CAMPO performs area studies to inform the long-range transportation plan, a federally required planning document that guides transportation investments from states and federal funding sources.

The Southeast Area Study Update is an update to the original 2017 Southeast Area Study (SEAS) that looked at land use and multimodal transportation needs in parts of Wake and Johnston Counties, and the municipalities of Archer Lodge, Benson, Clayton, Four Oaks, Garner, Kenly, Micro, Raleigh, Selma, Smithfield, and Wilson's Mills, and was conducted in coordination with NCDOT and the Upper Coastal Plain RPO. This update expanded the boundary (including the addition of Pine Level) and will produce recommendations across all modes as well as refresh policies and priorities that may have evolved since the original study.

Recommendations from the SEAS update will inform the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which is a region-wide long-range transportation plan updated every 4 years. The study officially began in February of 2022 and is scheduled to be completed by June 2023.

Ms. Powell indicated that CAMPO has partnered with the Upper Coastal Rural Planning Organization (which covers Johnston County) and the NCDOT. The study is guided by two committees: the Stakeholder Oversight Team and the Core Technical Team which includes Tim Gardiner. Ms. Powell outlined the goals of public engagement and the CAMPO website that includes a calendar of events for outreach as well as a survey for the public. Updates will be provided to the Planning Board as analysis continues and Ms. Powell closed her presentation by asking if the members had any questions.

Mr. Van Dyk asked for clarification about the primary goal of the study and if it was transportation focused. Ms. Powell responded that while it is focused on transportation, land use over time was an important factor. She also noted that community engagement would help drive any other factors, but their authority is limited to transportation for this study.

There were no further questions from the Board.

5. Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA 02-22 – Multi-Use Districts – Presented by Terry Nolan & David Parks

Mr. Parks introduced Comprehensive Plan Amendment 02-22 as a request to updated sections related to activity centers and to rename the areas as Multi-Use Districts (MDUs).

Mr. Parks explained that in county land use plan, activity centers identify the most appropriate location for commercial development to help serve the daily needs of the surrounding area. The current activity centers are identified in various planning documents associated with the Wake County Land Use Plan adopted and amended during the period spanning 1997 – 2020. Activity centers are used by the County to guide decisions on rezoning requests and development permits.

During the process to develop the Comprehensive Plan (PLANWake) the Planning Board and staff discussed the purpose and effectiveness of activity centers and it was decided to keep them as a planning tool to identify areas where non-residential development should occur. The adopted 2021 Comprehensive Plan includes a brief description of how activity centers would function within the development framework. The plan also acknowledged that more analysis was needed to refine policies and guidelines.

After PLANWake was adopted, staff developed a work plan for implementing the recommendations. The work plan lists activity center policy guidance as a work item to be completed by July 2022. At their May 2022 meeting, the Planning Board's Land Use Committee suggested renaming activity centers to multi-use districts (MUDs).

A review of municipal plans shows County activity centers/MUDs and municipal plans for non-residential development generally align in terms of location of the district, desired uses, and intensity. This can be attributed to a history of collaborative planning between the County and its municipalities. Many of the activity centers/MUDs are close to municipal corporate limits and/or have public utilities close by and are well positioned to develop at a municipal scale within the 5–10-year timeframe established in PLANWake.

The former land use plan contained design guidelines that applied uniformly to all activity centers/MUDs throughout Wake County's jurisdiction. The design concepts and visuals were more urban in nature, with higher density, mixed use buildings, and sidewalks.

Because development in the County's jurisdiction is constrained by lack of public utilities and NCDOT road design standards, County nonresidential development does not look like the design concepts contained in the former land use plan. Therefore, staff explained that they developed design standard text that encourages green stormwater infrastructure and quality design in a way that is achievable in the county's jurisdiction.

Staff also developed a new two-tiered approach wherein Activity Centers/MUDs follow different protocols based on classification on the PLANWake Development Framework Map. Activity Centers/MUDs in Rural and Community Reserve areas follow County design standards. Activity Centers/MUDs in Walkable Center and Community areas follow a municipal/County collaborative process.

Mr. Parks described additional minor improvements to language in the Comprehensive Plan and that staff improved related processes with municipalities.

- Eliminated guidelines for mid-sized and regional Activity Centers/MUDs and the more "urban" type design expectations that are not feasible in rural jurisdiction.

- Developed guidance for evaluating proposed amendments to activity centers/MUDs and emphasized area plan updates are the most appropriate time to make major changes to activity centers/MUDs.

- Activity Centers/MUDs objectives and general policies from the guidelines in the former land use plan remain valid. Edits to these sections are minor, such as updating the naming conventions. One objective was added: "Foster uses that support rural lands and the rural economy..."

- Updated the Development Framework Map on Page 45 of the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the new naming convention. No changes to Activity Centers/MUDs boundaries are proposed.

Mr. Parks concluded his presentation and stated that staff recommended that the Planning Board adopt the CPA Amendment to update the term Activity Centers to Multi Use Districts and offered to answer questions.

Mr. Kadis asked for specificity of the sizes of these areas. Mr. Parks replied that decisions regarding the sizes of these areas would be handled in small area plans but does not pertain specifically to the amendment. Mr. Maloney added that the discussion he referenced was in a presentation about the Lower Swift Creek Area Plan and a potential size discrepancy of a proposed Activity Center/MUD.

Mr. Van Dyk suggested that while he understood in abstract what the amendment was requesting that more specificity would be required further into the process about what qualified as a Rural Mixed-Use District with respect to the existing description of activity centers.

Mr. Fleming opened the floor to public comment. Hearing none, he closed the public comment period.

Board Discussion

Mr. Maloney asked the Board if they needed any additional information from staff before reaching their decision. Mr. Van Dyk responded that as he understood CPA 02-22, the request was to reclassify terminology. Mr. Maloney affirmed this to be correct and Mr. Van Dyk agreed that additional discussions would be appropriate during small area plan meetings.

With no further discussion, Mr. Fleming asked for the board for a motion on CPA 02-22.

Board Motion – Approval of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment 02-22

Motion was made by Mr. Kadis in the matter of CPA 02-22 that the Wake County Comprehensive Plan (PLANWake) be amended to replace pages 45-47 as presented and that:

- The proposed amendment is consistent with the policies set forth within the Comprehensive Plan, PLANWake.

- The proposed amendment aligns the development of non-residential uses with the land use types and intensities desired in the Development Framework Map.

- The proposed amendment does not create any non-conforming situations.

- The proposed amendment has been reviewed by municipal planning staff. Municipal staff had no edits on the amendment.

- The boundaries of existing Multi-Use Districts are not changed.

Dr. Kolappa seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

6. NC Department of Transportation (DOT) Traffic Data – Presented by Tim Gardiner

Mr. Gardiner showed the Board an example of graphs/data from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and explained that DOT is providing statistical data and calculates vehicle miles on every roadway within Wake County. Because of the difficulty of this task, the DOT can use trend lines year over year to provide activity data. The important consideration to make is that between 2018 and 2021, when a measurable impact on commute trips occurs, is that growth is still occurring. It is likely due to more population, but there is still a significant decrease on commute trips and an increase in numbers for daily traffic. Congestion appears to be decreased and transit vehicles show a decrease, potentially due to attitudes about the pandemic. There is a potential to consider the ways people are shifting how they move around the County.

Mr. Gardiner referenced that during a previous committee meeting, Mr. Van Dyk asked about VMT (vehicle miles traveled) numbers from the State, specifically if they had changed from pre-COVID era to present. Mr. Gardiner explained that VMT also shows numbers were exceeding 2018 figures, and that this data reinforces that RTP traffic is no longer the dominant driver. New numbers reflect day to day traffic, such as running errands or smaller trips with these increases showing both in the data and visibly within anecdotal evidence.

Mr. Fleming asked how the labor shortage might factor into the data. Mr. Gardiner speculated that part of the labor shortage may include people factoring in commutes in choosing employment. Perhaps long commute times are determining where they choose to work. Mr. Van Dyk asked if more specific data might be forthcoming, as changes in commuting would factor heavily into where the Planning Board directs transportation resources within the County. Mr. Kadis remarked that this information would be interesting if overlaid with population numbers and public transit ridership. Dr. Kolappa seconded the question about public transport.

Mr. Gardiner indicated that it correlates with population growth, although it might also be contingent on gasoline prices. Mr. Jenkins asked if this might dovetail with CAMPO information being collected in the area studies. Mr. Gardiner suggested that the Board provide specific information they would like to see and to what areas to provide analysis (peak traffic times on major expressways, etc.). Mr. Van Dyk reiterated his interest in having a better understanding of changes in traffic patterns as habits shift to better serve the transportation needs of the County.

Mr. Fleming asked if there was a way to differentiate data between the decrease in major expressways and the increases on secondary roads in places like Apex or Holly Springs? Mr. Gardiner responded that there was, but with so much available data it would be advisable to consider example projects and work from there. While discussing various options for projects, Mr. Kadis asked if it would be possible to meet with the NCDOT or CAMPO to see the data and how and where the Board could make the most impact in the immediate future?

Mr. Gardiner answered the best plan may be to directly contact DOT and CAMPO. Mr. Maloney concurred and said that they will attempt to put the information together by September, if possible, for a full Planning Board discussion.

7. Committee Reports

Code & Operations Committee Update (David Adams, Chair)

Mr. Adams reported that they received feedback from staff about the amendments to subdivision and tree canopy standards. The current plan is to bring recommendations to the Board of Commissioners during their October work session. The needs of citizens and the desires of Homebuilders Associations with respect to ordinances were going to be a priority. Another meeting was scheduled for August 24th and Mr. Adams encouraged the other board members to join as staff prepares to meet this timeframe.

8. Planning, Development, and Inspections Report

Ms. Peterson updated the staff on the Code Amendment on Voluntary Agricultural districts being adopted by the Board of Commissioners and the introduction of a Conservation Easement Program. The next steps for Soil and Water Conservation District staff would be to hire a Farmland Preservation manager and create a study on the cost of services. Related to this, Ms. Peterson indicated a webinar last Friday projected a significant loss of farmland by 2040 in four North Carolina counties: Johnston County, Union County, Wake, and Iredell.

Ms. Peterson also announced that the Land Use Committee would be meeting on August 3rd to see the current draft of the Lower Swift Creek Area Plan. As there may not be an agenda for the full Board, the committee meeting would be considered for a virtual meeting. Mr. Maloney asked the Board if they would be amenable to a virtual meeting. The Board agreed if no regular meeting was scheduled it would be reasonable to meet virtually.

Mr. Maloney reported that the Comprehensive Plan Amendment will go to the Board of Commissioners on September 6th. The August 3rd meeting will be considered for virtual and that a special date of August 24th for Code and Operations with the recommendation it be held in person with as many available board members as possible.

Mr. Murphy reminded staff to have a link for the public to access to meet statutory requirements. Staff responded that a link would be posted to the website.

Mr. Finn provided the board with end fiscal year 2022 numbers, including a 28% increase requests with 50% zoning related and 50% subdivision. He saw a 21% increase of zoning applications over the last Fiscal Year. 47% of subdivisions are lot by lot compared to 53% cluster.

Mr. Fleming relayed his experiences with the Board of Commissioners regarding two recent Planning Board votes to compliment Mr. Wells, Mr. Maloney, and Mr. Lankford in assisting with their presentations and the boards' recommendations.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

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REGULAR MEETING
WAKE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
July 20, 2022

Chair Asa Fleming declared the regular meeting
of the Wake County Planning Board for
Wednesday, July 20, 2022, adjourned at 2: 47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

G. Thomas Wells, Jr.

~~Asa Fleming~~
Wake County Planning Board

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