



Planning, Development & Inspections

A Division of Community Services
P.O. Box 550 • Raleigh, NC 27602
www.wake.gov

MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING BOARD - November 1, 2023

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. Mr. Thomas Wells (Chair)
2. Ms. Brenna Booker-Rouse (Vice-Chair)
3. Mr. David Adams
4. Mr. Amos Clark
5. Mr. Asa Fleming
6. Mr. Bill Jenkins
7. Mr. Daniel Kadis
8. Dr. Kamal Kolappa
9. Mr. Ted Van Dyk

MEMBERS ABSENT:

1. Mr. Jason Barron

COUNTY STAFF:

1. Mr. Frank Cope
2. Mr. Steven Finn
3. Mr. Josh McClellan
4. Mr. Timothy Maloney
5. Mr. Akul Nishawala
6. Ms. Liz Oliver
7. Ms. Sharon Peterson
8. Ms. Beth Simmons
9. Ms. Caroline Simpson

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

1. Mr. Kenneth Murphy, Deputy County Attorney

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1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Mr. Wells called the Planning Board meeting to order at 1:31 pm.
 2. **Petitions and Amendments:** None.
 3. **Approval of September 6, 2023, Minutes:** Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the September 6, 2023, minutes as presented. Dr. Kolappa seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

4. Planning Board Retreat Briefing and Board Priorities

Mr. Wells began by thanking the Board members who attended the Retreat and informed those that could not that the event was productive. He noted that included were presentations from Commissioner Matt Calabria, Jason Horton of Wake County Strategic Initiatives, Adrienne Cole of the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, and Chris Lukasina of CAMPO. He also noted that Mr. Adams included a farmland presentation during his time at the Retreat. Mr. Wells felt that the presentations were helpful in updating the Board to the state of the County, and he solicited ideas with respect to Planning Board priorities moving forward.

Mr. Kadis concurred that there were excellent topics discussed and there was additional room for extended discussion. He did ask for clarification on how the Board should prioritize items and Mr. Wells clarified that it was not his intention for the Board to make priorities that superseded their existing agenda, but what trends or projects within Wake County should they focus to learn more about. He noted that increased collaborations with municipalities was a topic of discussion he had not previously considered. Mr. Wells noted that Mr. Van Dyk's advocacy for the tree canopy and reforestation project was an example of areas where the Planning Board could help influence development within the County. With several potential points of focus, Mr. Wells indicated his hope was that the Board could narrow to one or two priorities as a starting point.

Mr. Van Dyk noted that the tree reforestation project had taken several years to reach a proposed January start date, therefore this ongoing goal should remain a priority. Mr. Van Dyk mentioned that Commissioner Calabria had requested that the Planning Board, when possible, research and provide as much information on specific issues as possible to bring forward action items. Mr. Clark asked if the Commissioners had provided any input into issues that should be prioritized, and Mr. Wells noted that a list of goals for 2023 was provided at the Retreat and is available for members to review.

Mr. Fleming weighed in with a suggestion that the Board might consider prioritizing in an area where they felt they might have the most impact. Mr. Maloney recommended that the Board members consider either goals from the Commissioners or stated goals from PLANWake and determine where impact would be attainable. Mr. Jenkins recommended that, once the Planning Board determined an area of tangible impact, a temporary committee be created devoted to that topic. He noted that it would ensure forward progress and allow them to work both on their priorities and the ongoing monthly agenda items of regular meetings. Ms. Booker-Rouse agreed that the Commissioner's Goals were a good template to draw from, as anything the Planning Board approached in an advisory capacity should align with the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Kadis inquired if a subcommittee could include members that were not on the Planning Board, and Mr. Maloney responded that members of staff or other experts in the field would be able to join. He noted that, in addition to Planning Staff, members of Soil and Water would be experts in farmland preservation, or that Wake County's Affordable Housing Department might be able to assist if the Board chose that as a priority, if their efforts did not duplicate any existing projects. Mr. Adams suggested that municipal partners might also be considered as members within the subcommittees. He noted that if members of municipal planning boards were to join, they might add a valuable regional perspective.

Mr. Van Dyk expressed concerns about the efficiency of the Planning Board to be involved in the affordable housing issue, noting that they had no control over sewer and water, and Ms. Booker-Rouse agreed that it would be best not to overlap with existing projects. Mr. Kadis mentioned that he also served on the board of DHIC, the largest affordable housing project in Wake County, and offered to meet as an individual intermediary between DHIC and the County's Affordable Housing Unit, citing

the Board's desire to assist and gather information that would help both parties. Mr. Maloney noted that, with some discussion, it might be possible for Mr. Kadis to meet with Wake County Affordable Housing to see how the Board could assist them in their goals. Mr. Wells asked Mr. Maloney to include him in any potential discussions between the Planning Board and Affordable Housing.

Mr. Wells asked the Board Members what the next steps should be in setting priorities – he noted that Mr. Kadis expressed an interest in spearheading an effort on affordable housing, and that farmland preservation appeared to be a point of agreement. Between that and the reforestation project, Mr. Wells suggested the Board not overburden themselves. Mr. Maloney noted that it would be helpful to consider the UDO as their toolbox. He pointed out that, in the past, efforts to update the UDO with respect to open space and tree preservation had some success, but were limited. He suggested that, as members appointed by the Board of Commissioners, it would be beneficial to hold discussions – socially or officially – with them regarding their priorities. Mr. Maloney pointed to the conversations held between Mr. Wells, Mr. Fleming, and Commissioner Calabria about the Open Space UDO amendment as an example. He felt it might be helpful to ensure that the goals of the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners were aligned prior to taking action.

Mr. Adams offered to act as a liaison, like Mr. Kadis, to farmland preservation organizations, to see what the Planning Board could do to help them meet their priorities. Ms. Peterson added that discussions had begun with the Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Board, to that effect. Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Clark also expressed an interest in assisting Mr. Adams in his initiative. Mr. Jenkins inquired if a staff member with particular knowledge of the UDO would be available to members to give them a better understanding of effective places to start. Mr. Maloney responded he was the person best suited to assist them with those questions.

Mr. Wells asked if there were any other outside members of the community that Staff had scheduled to provide an update to the Board, and Mr. Maloney noted that Yolanda Winstead from DHIC was on the December agenda. He was open to welcoming any other representatives the Board requested. Mr. Kadis suggested the Triangle Land Conservancy as a good choice to address farmland preservation.

Mr. Wells thanked the Board Members for their input and indicated he looked forward to implementing priorities moving forward.

5. Tree Canopy Update

Mr. Maloney informed the Board that since the Tree Canopy Study was released in September, it sparked a conversation within the County about their role in the community. He noted that the study had been presented to the town councils of Knightdale, Holly Springs, Apex, and Morrisville, as well as the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Maloney reported positive reactions from the municipalities, and that the Town Council of Apex took the information presented and inquired as to what could be added to their ordinance to address the data. Wake County planning staff is available to present the Tree Canopy Study information to any municipality that was interested and will be meeting with the Hillsborough Street Community Organization to give an overview of the study along with a demonstration of the TreeKeeper Canopy tool.

Moving on to the Reforestation Plan, Mr. Maloney explained that CAMPO had not yet initiated their draft resolution to allot 1% of federal funds for highway projects. Once they had done so, the NCDOT would be able to direct the funding towards reforestation. Mr. Maloney explained that current expectations were that funding would be in place for reforestation at the completion of I-40 South and

I-440 Turnpike projects. Staff had also approached NCDOT with a request to identify all areas available for reforestation, regardless of funding.

Mr. Maloney closed his update by noting that the Reforestation Pilot Project was in the preparatory stages, with plans to plant in January. He explained that the consultant had the plans in place and that when planting began, Wake County Communications would be onsite to provide photos and video for promotion of the project.

Mr. Van Dyk thanked Mr. Maloney for his summary and noted that he would like to add goals for 2024 in the Planning Board agenda and, if possible, to see the NCDOT plans for the Reforestation Pilot Project. He also informed the Board that Mary Black, the District A Council Member for the City of Raleigh, had inquired about meeting with the Board involving the tree canopy on Six Forks Road. Mr. Van Dyk had recommended that Ms. Black reach out to Staff for a demonstration of the Tree Canopy software. Mr. Adams commented that he had seen an increase in the term “tree canopy” in public comments, particularly related to developments in the Holly Springs area.

Mr. Maloney added that there had been discussion in the Growth and Sustainability Committee during September regarding a need for County funding in future tree planting initiatives and welcomed board discussion and feedback. He also mentioned that Columbia County, Georgia, had reached out to Wake County staff after hearing about the Tree Canopy Study, and hoped that their efforts would become a model for other jurisdictions moving forward, including coverage from ESRI, a GIS data tool provider’s monthly publication.

6. Committee Reports

There were no updates from the Planning Board Committees.

7. Planning, Development, and Inspections Report

Mr. Maloney informed the Board that a December 6th meeting was on the schedule with two items on the agenda: a presentation from Yolanda Winstead from DHIC and an update on the County’s One Water Plan. He also explained that Terry Nolan was currently working on an analysis of commercial uses in the unincorporated areas, with the anticipation of bringing updates before the Board over the course of 2024. Mr. Maloney indicated that he expected the Land Use and Code and Operations Committees would meet to discuss these proposals over the next year.

Mr. Maloney also noted that the Board of Commissioners adopted the Tobacco and Vape changes to the UDO, along with the changes to Minor and Minor-Limited Subdivisions during previous meetings.

Ms. Peterson updated the Board on the Lower Neuse Area Plan, explaining that staff had drafted a future use land map to complement the existing conditions map. She noted that staff met with each of the towns involved in the Land Use Plan, except for Knightdale, who they planned to meet with on November 2nd. Among the topics for discussion with Knightdale included interchanges for the I-540 expansion, comparable multi-use districts, and potential areas for ETJ expansion. Ms. Peterson noted that the Lower Neuse area contained several Open Space parcels recently acquired by the County, and that discussions with Triangle Land Conservancy might mirror priorities about farmland preservation discussed earlier by the Board.

Ms. Peterson also reported that staff had contacted property owners within the Lower Neuse Area Plan that had been designated Priority Historic Resources about the possibility of working with the

Wake County Historic Preservation Commission for local designation. She anticipated that further updates would include a presentation of the draft plan before the Land Use Committee in January and to the full Board in February. Based on feedback from board members, Ms. Peterson expressed a hope to bring the Lower Neuse Area Plan before the Board of Commissioners in March or April of 2024.

Mr. Finn notified the Board that relative to previous updates to zoning and code enforcement, four appeals had reached the Board of Adjustment with two scheduled for their November meeting. He noted the unprecedented nature of numerous appeals, explaining that the appeals have centered around staff interpretation of the UDO. Mr. Finn expressed confidence in the County's position during the appeal process but noted that it reflected on the complexity and volume of code enforcement programs.

Mr. Finn also noted that FOIA requests remain high throughout the department and that the email account for development review and current planning remained active throughout the fall. He explained that Mr. Maloney had met with him to discuss ways to educate the public and make changes to instructions on the Wake.gov website regarding preparation of site plan instructions. Based on customer feedback, Mr. Finn noted that he felt a site plan tutorial video addition was a good idea.

8. Chairman's Report

Mr. Wells thanked the members for attending the Retreat and for their discussion at today's meeting.

9. Adjournment

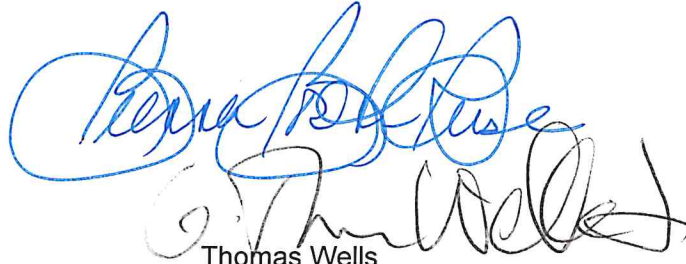
The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

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REGULAR MEETING
WAKE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
November 1, 2023

Chair Thomas Wells declared the regular meeting
of the Wake County Planning Board for
Wednesday, November 1, 2023, adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Thomas Wells
Wake County Planning Board