

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Minutes

April 6, 2017

Agricultural Building Auditorium, 6pm

Agriculture Building, 65 East St., Pittsboro NC



Committee Members Present

Jim Elza
Kalyan Ghosh
Andy Bailey
John Kessler
Roy Girolami
Linda Harris
Sharron Garbutt
Tandy Jones
James Crawford
Esta Cohen
Caroline Siverson
Mike Petruska
Terry Schmidt

Staff Present

Dylan Paul
Cara Coppola
Jason Sullivan

1. Welcome and Introductions (10 min)

• Comments from the Chair

i. Chairman Jim Elza opened the meeting at 6:03. He began the meeting discussing the issue regarding the Compact Community (C.C.) portion of the Draft Land Use map from the prior meeting. He wanted to emphasize that the southern portion of the map needs to be congruent with the current Compact Communities Ordinance. Jason showed the CCO map compared to the C.C. portion of the draft land use map. It was noted that the map shows a 0.5 mile increase on the east side of the 15-501 of the C.C. The rationale for that was due to the possibility of utility expansion. There was a general discussion about septic in the area, how it could be expanded, etc. Sharon Garbutt asked if it was a “good idea” to continue using package plants in 15-501. Jason said that tonight’s meeting would discuss utilities.

• Approval of March 16, 2017 Minutes

i. Terry Schmidt was at that meeting. Minutes approved as amended.

2. SC Comments by Topic Exercise continued from March 16th meeting (50 min)

• Parks & Recreation

i. Sharon asked if we should encourage or require for a CUP/major subdivision/Compact Community a parks or recreation plan with facilities, dependent on size. John Kessler asked about the

metric for access to parks. Jason noted that the consultants had maps with distances to park, but that that data would need to be updated. John Kessler then continued about access to parks for those who are disabled. He wanted to see it as a goal. Jim Elza noted that he would like to see more natural trails, but paved trails could be good for the disabled. Esta Cohen agreed, and suggested that a mix of natural and paving could be used to accommodate both. Andy Bailey talked ADA concerns. Parking lot paving is not a priority, except for ADA requirements, said Jim Elza. He also asked about how much push there is for an indoor recreation facility. Jason noted that basketball courts are the priority for the parks department. The schools have a mutual use agreement for the courts, but more courts are needed. Jim Elza talked about the using “multi use facilities” (having schools use libraries, etc.) Sharon Garbutt noted that she feels like developers get off too easy. Higher standards and demands should be set for developers. Jim Elza noted that S.E. Chatham wants a community park in Moncure. Kalyan Ghosh asked if a recommendation could be added to actually add new parks. There was a general consensus for asking developers to build parks for their residents and county residents.

- **Health**

i. Jim Elza opened the conversation with tick control. He noted that chickens could be used on trails control ticks. Esta Cohen noted that education should be emphasized for tick disease prevention. John Kessler said it’s a multi-prong approach. Mike Petruska said the Health goals and recommendations seem a little sparse. Why only obesity and mental health? John Kessler noted that 6 specific recommendations should be included. The consultant has received these recommendations. Mike Petruska then asked if we could include something about clean air and water. John Kessler said some of that was included in the recommendations, but that the state regulates a lot of clean air and water things, so there’s only so much that can be added to the recommendations. Education about health and healthy living is key, James Elza says. John Kessler emphasized that the county health officials are largely bared by the state from requiring things like mandatory lead and asbestos testing before the sale of a house. Jim Elza asked that Parks/Rec and Health recommendations should be linked somehow. John Kessler noted that many of the Parks recommendations fall under topics like “reducing obesity”. Kalyan again asked why “obesity” is emphasized; John Kessler said it was on the top 3 issues the community said was important for health. Sharon Garbutt said we should add something about maternal care. John Kessler agreed. He said metrics exist that are not organized and should be used to measure particular health goals. There was general consensus about removing the phrase “forest bathing”. There was conversation about reducing obesity in general.

- **Housing**

i. There was general consensus to reword and make “incentivize affordable housing”. Jim Elza noted that the status quo of subdivisions in Chatham County are not working long term; incentives must be provided to ensure more affordable housing (i.e. smaller lots). James Crawford was asked by Andy Bailey about how much the County was willing to incentivize smaller lots (i.e. conservation subdivisions). James Crawford noted that builders really need to be forced into providing affordable housing. Prior examples of this, unfortunately, have failed, so the County must actually force developers to build sufficient affordable houses. More “regular” houses are needed. Adaptive re-use was noted as a

possibility. The state makes that difficult via fire regulations. However, it should still be listed in the recommendations. James Elza said accessory dwelling units should be emphasized. James Crawford noted that water and sewer are an issue in the towns, which makes accessory dwelling units difficult. John Kessler noted that his recommendations include how people can get from the houses to a medical facility (people should be linked to health facilities with transportation). Sharon Garbutt asked about housing for the extremely poor, not clear to her where in the plan it fits in. James Crawford talked about expanding Section 8 in Chatham County, as well as emergency and transitional housing. General consensus on adding “emergency and transitional housing” to the recommendations. Tandy Jones asked about how many new residences were being built in Chatham County. Jason Sullivan said over 600 permits were issued last year. There was a general consensus to make a “Big Idea” goal tied to a percentage rather than an absolute number of affordable homes. The consultant will work on a percentage.

3. Break (5 min)

4. SC Comments by Topic Exercise Part II (50 min)

- **Utilities**

i. Jim Elza noted the importance of water in new subdivision and the conflict with farmers. Sewer access drives density, he says. Reclaimed water can be used for farming, except for organic farming. John Kessler said the county should require low water requirements for developers, and should innovate in their own buildings with regards to wastewater. LEED requirements are already in the recommendations, but need to be revised. Again, greywater systems, however, are problematic because the state proscribes them. James Crawford noted that the county will get wastewater treatment for the Moncure Megasite from Sanford. Kalyan Ghosh asked if we have enough water in the county to meet current demands. Jason said that he’s not in the Utility Department, but yes, there’s sufficient water for now. Interconnectivity of water systems is key, says James Crawford. Lots of water and wastewater maintenance needed. Part of the permitting process could mandate reuse, says Mike Petruska. Jason said there’s state monitoring of wastewater from industrial sites tied to municipalities. Kalyan Ghosh said the county should plan to build sewer. Caroline Siverson said one way to control growth is to not provide sewer. Municipalities should experience the population growth, so not providing sewer can help with that. Terry Schmidt says package plants might fail in 25 years, so we should prepare for that. James Crawford expressed skepticism at that, because the state already regulates them. Esta Cohen asked who is responsible for maintaining septic systems in a subdivision. James Crawford said if there’s an HOA, it’s them. If there’s no HOA, then it’s the individual owner who’s responsible (unless there’s a package plant). There was a general discussion about long term sewage use in the county. James Crawford said expanding sewer in 15-501 is impossible, given state regulations. OWASA expansion is possible, but again, lack of sewer can prohibit growth. Esta Cohen stated that subdivisions could be regulated so not every house use wells.

- **Economic Development**

i. Linda Harris read a prepared statement supporting the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Recommendations: “I wanted to start out by saying that Chatham County Economic Development supports every organization that is represented here in this group. We support affordable housing, parks, transportation, clean air, natural resources, agriculture, and public health. We support you because these are the things that our current citizens and the citizens of the future and the business of the future, want and desire. Our goal is to recruit business that supports these ideas as well as helping us increase our tax base with new jobs that will help accomplish all of our goals and to reduce dependence on residential property taxes. One of our top goals is to support higher learning through our community college which is teaching trade skills. Just last week we visited three companies in Goldston and Siler City. They all indicated how important it is for them to recruit skilled personnel. It is essential to us to have this asset to help with keeping and bringing new business to Chatham County. Our goal is to maintain our current business and workforce, recruit small-scale retail, home based business, rural business, larger business for the county mega-sites and businesses we haven’t dreamed of yet. As we have reviewed the Economic related goals that Jason has presented to us, we have found them to be workable.”

Kyle Touchstone joined the group and supported the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Recommendations. Infrastructure is key to industrial growth, he says. Retail and job leakage prevention is also important. Jobs for people of all skill levels are important. The Big Idea of 10,000 jobs by 2040 is great, but he hopes to surpass it. Retail leakage costs the county \$9 million a year. He emphasized how clean energy companies would come to Chatham because the county values “clean” values. Mike Petruska asked, how can the County ensure that clean companies come to Chatham? Kyle Touchstone said state and county regulations provide the “check and balance” against obnoxious usages. County Wide Zoning and new heavy industrial CUP regulations can help limit the impact of heavy industry. Mike Petruska stated that he’s still worried about pollutants from the Megasite. Kyle Touchstone said that while automation is taking away some jobs, machine maintenance jobs pay very well. Offering amenities to workers is also very important to compete with the Triangle. Sharon Garbutt said grandfathered businesses should be limited. The Zoning Ordinance can limit changing non-conforming uses. John Kessler asked does this plan address retooling workers to work future jobs? The CCCC can retrain workers based on new needs, said James Crawford. There is a consensus to add something about adding training for “future needs” of jobs in the county.

- **Resiliency**

i. Sharon Garbutt would like to have a Tree Ordinance, especially regulating developers. James Crawford said the courts will overrule the county on such an ordinance. Jim Elza said higher density developer will require the removal of trees. Open Space and conservation subdivisions looks appealing, but the details must be worked out in the UDO. Andy Bailey said we “encourage, but not demand” tree preservation. Terry Schmidt said that the plan should emphasize education about self-sufficiency when it comes to emergency management. Jim Elza said that a CERT team can be put into an HOA. Combining emergency shelters are important, he said. He said mobile home parks should be required to have

shelters. Native species guidelines are being updated by the Appearance Commission. Rain gardens should be added to the recommendations. John Kessler said that the Health Department should be added to the "Improve Emergency Response".

Jim Elza adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm

Next Meeting: April 20, 2017, Location: Holmes Meeting Room at Chatham Community Library