

..TITLE

A request to adopt revisions to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance.

..ABSTRACT**Action Requested:**

Vote on a request to adopt revisions to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance.

Introduction & Background:

In 2015 and 2017, the Legislature adopted new legislation narrowing local governments' ability to regulate zoning. In 2017, the Legislature also adopted new legislation which clarified some details on Comprehensive Plan Consistency Statements. The new pieces of legislation became effective October 1, 2015, July 1, 2017, and October 1, 2017, respectively, and have implications for the County's Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to the revisions needed due to changes in state law, Planning staff has also added some minor revisions that largely deal with improving process facilitation and language clarification.

On February 19, 2018, the Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on this item. No member of the public spoke. The Board of Commissioners forwarded the item to the Planning Board, which was reviewed during their March 6, 2018 meeting.

Discussion & Analysis:

The aforementioned legislation passed in 2015 and 2017 have implications for the County's current standards and practices. The main impacts of these legislative changes are listed in the attached table labeled "Table Attachment #1-Legislative Changes". Planning staff has also added some minor revisions that largely deal with improving process facilitation and language clarification. The main impacts of these proposed changes are listed in the attached table labeled "Table Attachment #2-Planning Department Changes".

The Planning Board had a brief discussion about the amendments and noted that the legislative amendments were mandatory and that the staff recommended changes appeared to be non-controversial. There was discussion regarding the amendments for bona fide farms and agritourism and that there could be issues with neighboring property owners with some of the potential uses covered under the broadened statutory language. The Planning Board by votes of 9-0 recommended approval of the consistency statement and adoption of the text amendments.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan:

Goal 4: Diversify the tax base and generate more high-quality, in-county jobs to reduce dependence on residential property taxes, create economic opportunity and reduce out-commuting.

Recommendation:

The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend adoption of a resolution approving the following consistency statement:

It is the opinion of the Board of Commissioners that these amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, as proposed by Planning Staff, are consistent with the goals and objectives of Plan Chatham. Specifically, by preserving, protecting, and enabling agriculture and forestry, as well as helping to diversify the tax base and generate more high-quality, in-county jobs to reduce dependence on residential property taxes.

The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend adoption of an ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the aforementioned requested revisions to the Zoning Ordinance that are included in the attachments.