



**CHATHAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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Diana Hales, Vice Chair  
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Jim Crawford  
Franklin Gomez Flores

**COUNTY MANAGER**

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**Ordinance of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF  
CHATHAM COUNTY**

**For Multiple Revisions to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance for  
Compliance with 160D Statutory Updates**

**WHEREAS**, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners has considered a request by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to amend the Zoning Ordinance as described in the attachment, and finds that the amendments are consistent with the comprehensive plan of Chatham County, Plan Chatham, as described in the Consistency Statement Resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board finds the amendments set forth in the attachment are pursuant to the provisions of the zoning ordinance, and would be suitable for the furtherance of the administration of the ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has considered the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and finds them reasonable, and that the public interest is furthered.

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Board of Commissioners of Chatham County as follows:

1. All revisions to the Zoning Ordinance set forth in the attachments are approved.
2. This ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption.

Adopted this 15<sup>th</sup> day of February 2021

Mike Dasher, Chair  
Chatham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Lindsay K. Ray, Clerk to the Board  
Chatham County Board of Commissioners



**SIGN I**

## SECTION 5 CONDITIONAL ZONING DISTRICTS

### 5.5 Conditions

Specific conditions may be proposed by the petitioner or the local government or its agencies, but only those conditions mutually approved by the local government and the petitioner may be incorporated into the zoning regulations. Conditions and site-specific standards imposed in a conditional district shall be limited to those that address the conformance of the development and use of the site to local government ordinances, plans adopted pursuant to G.S. 160D-5-1, or the impacts reasonably expected to be generated by the development or use of the site.

In approving a reclassification of property to a conditional zoning district, the Planning Department and Planning Board may recommend, and the Board of Commissioners request, that reasonable and appropriate conditions be attached to approval of the rezoning. Property may be placed in a conditional zoning district only in response to a petition by the owners of all the property to be included. Specific conditions applicable to the district may be proposed by the petitioner or the county, but only those conditions approved by the county and consented to by the petitioner in writing may be incorporated into the zoning regulations or permit requirements.

#### 5.7 A. Community Meeting

Notice of the meeting shall be provided to owners of abutting property, as listed with the Chatham County Tax Department. Properties are abutting even if separated by a street, railroad, public or private right of way, or other transportation corridor.

#### D. Joint Public Hearing by Board of Commissioners and Planning Board

A notice of the public hearing shall be prominently posted on the site proposed for the Conditional Zoning District or on an adjacent public street or highway right-of-way during the same time period specified for mailed notices of the hearing.

#### 5.9 Alterations to Approval

The standard for approving or denying such a requested change shall be that the change does not significantly alter the site plan or its conditions and that the change does not have a significant impact upon abutting properties. Any modifications in conditional district standards that do not involve a change in uses permitted or the density of the overall development permitted may be reviewed and approved administratively.

## SECTION 6 OFFICIAL MAPS ADOPTED - DISTRICT BOUNDARIES ESTABLISHED

### 6.2 Incorporation by Reference

This ordinance, pursuant to G.S. 160D-105, shall reference or incorporate by reference flood insurance rate maps, watershed boundary maps, or the maps officially adopted or promulgated by state and federal agencies. For these maps, a regulation text or zoning map may reference the most recent officially adopted versions of such maps. When zoning district boundaries are based on these maps, the regulation may provide that the zoning district boundaries are automatically amended to remain consistent with changes in the officially promulgated state and federal maps provided a copy of the currently effective version of any incorporated map shall be maintained for public inspection as provided in Section 6.1.

## SECTION 7 DEFINITIONS

**Administrative Decision-** Decisions made in the implementation, administration or enforcement of development regulations that involve the determination of facts and the application of objective standards set forth in this ordinance.

**Building** - Any structure having a roof supported by walls or columns constructed, used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

**Conditional Use Permit-** See definition for Special Use Permit.

**Development-** The planning for or carrying out of a building activity, the making of a material change in the use or appearance of any structure or property, or the dividing of land into two or more parcels. When appropriate to the context, “development” refers to the planning for or the act of developing or to the result of development. Reference to a specific operation is not intended to mean that the operation activity, when part of other operations or activates/, is not development. Reference to particular operations is not intended to limit the generality of this item.

**Dwelling-** Any building, structure, manufactured home, or mobile home, or part thereof, used and occupied for human habitation or intended to be so used, and includes any outhouses and appurtenances belonging thereto or usually enjoyed therewith, except that it does not include any manufactured home, mobile home, or recreational vehicle if used solely for a seasonal vacation purpose.

**Dwelling Unit** - A single unit, or a portion of a multi-family dwelling, providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

**Map Repository** - The location of the official flood hazard data to be applied for floodplain management. It is a central location in which flood data is stored and managed; in North Carolina, FEMA has recognized that the application of digital flood hazard data products carry the same authority as hard copy products. Therefore, the NCEM’s Floodplain Mapping Program websites house current and historical flood hazard data. For effective flood hazard data the NC FRIS website (<http://FRIS.NC.GOV/FRIS>) is the map repository, and for historical flood hazard data the FloodNC website (<http://FLOODNC.GOV/NCFLOOD>) is the map repository.

**Public Facilities-** Any improvement created and/or maintained by a public entity, including, but not limited to, transportation, sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, educational, parks and recreational, and health systems and facilities.

**Quasi-Judicial Decision-** A decision involving the finding of facts regarding a specific application of a development regulation and that requires the exercise of discretion when applying the standards of the regulation. The term includes, but is not limited to, decisions involving variances, special use permits, certificates of appropriateness, and appeals of administrative determinations.

**Special Use Permit-** A permit issued to authorize development or land uses in a particular zoning district upon presentation of competent, material, and substantial evidence establishing compliance with one or more general standards, set forth in Section 17 of this ordinance, requiring that judgement and discretion be exercised as well as compliance with specific standards. This definition includes permits previously referred to as “conditional use permits” or “special exceptions.”

**Sleeping Unit-** A room or space in which people sleep, which can also include permanent provisions for living, eating, and either sanitation or kitchen facilities but not both. Such rooms and spaces that are also part of a dwelling unit are not sleeping units.

## **SECTION 8 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **8.10 Conflicts of Interest**

**Administrative Staff.** No staff member shall make a final decision on an administrative decision required by G.S. 160D-109 if the outcome of that decision would have a direct, substantial, and readily identifiable financial

impact of the staff member or the if the applicant or other person subject to that decision is a person with whom the staff member has close familial, business, or other associational relationship.

**10.13 Table 1: Zoning Table of Permitted Uses**

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**SECTION 12 LANDSCAPING AND BUFFERING STANDARDS**

**Table 2: Landscape Buffer Requirements\***

<i>Proposed land use class</i>	For adjacent property development					Land use across an adjacent street				
	<i>Com</i>	<i>O&amp;I</i>	<i>Ind-L</i>	<i>Ind-H</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>O-I</i>	<i>Ind-L</i>	<i>Ind-H</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Commercial (NB, CB, RB)</i>	n/a	n/a	B 20'	B 20'	A 20'	C 20'	B 20'	C 20'	C 20'	B 20'
O&I: Office & Institutional	n/a	n/a	B 20'	B 20'	A 30'	B 20'	B 20'	B 20'	B 20'	B 20'
Ind-L: Light Industrial	B 40'	A 40'	n/a	n/a	A 50'	A 20'	A 20'	C 20'	C 20'	A 40'
Ind-H: Heavy Industrial	B 60'	A 60'	n/a	n/a	A 80'	A 40'	A 40'	C 20'	C 20'	A 60'

**SECTION 17 ~~CONDITIONAL~~ SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

**17.4 Changes or Amendments**

Minor modifications to special use permits that do not involve a change in uses permitted or the density of overall development may be reviewed and approved administratively.

**17.10 Quasi-Judicial Procedure**

A. Process Required. - Boards shall follow quasi-judicial procedures in determining appeals of administrative decisions, special use permits, and certificates of appropriateness, variances, or any other quasi-judicial decision.

B. Notice of Hearing. - Notice of evidentiary hearings conducted pursuant to this Chapter shall be mailed to the person or entity whose appeal, application, or request is the subject of the hearing; to the owner of the property that is the subject of the hearing if the owner did not initiate the hearing; to the owners of all parcels of land abutting the parcel of land that is the subject of the hearing; and to any other persons entitled to receive notice as provided by the local development regulation. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the local government may rely on the county tax listing to determine owners of property entitled to mailed notice. The notice must be deposited in the mail at least 10 days, but not more than 25 days, prior to the date of the hearing. Within that same time period, the local government shall also prominently post a notice of the hearing on the site that is the subject of the hearing or on an adjacent street or highway right-of-way. The board may continue an evidentiary hearing that has been convened without further advertisement. If an evidentiary hearing is set for a given date and a quorum of the board is not then present, the hearing shall be continued until the next regular board meeting without further advertisement.

C. Administrative Materials. - The administrator or staff to the board shall transmit to the board all applications, reports, and written materials relevant to the matter being considered. The administrative materials may be distributed to the members of the board prior to the hearing if at the same time they are distributed to the board

a copy is also provided to the appellant or applicant and to the landowner if that person is not the appellant or applicant. The administrative materials shall become a part of the hearing record. The administrative materials may be provided in written or electronic form. Objections to inclusion or exclusion of administrative materials may be made before or during the hearing. Rulings on unresolved objections shall be made by the board at the hearing.

D. Presentation of Evidence. - The applicant, the local government, and any person who would have standing to appeal the decision under G.S. 160D-1402(c) shall have the right to participate as a party at the evidentiary hearing. Other witnesses may present competent, material, and substantial evidence that is not repetitive as allowed by the board.

Objections regarding jurisdictional and evidentiary issues, including, but not limited to, the timeliness of an appeal or the standing of a party, may be made to the board. The board chair shall rule on any objections, and the chair's rulings may be appealed to the full board. These rulings are also subject to judicial review pursuant to G.S. 160D-1402. Objections based on jurisdictional issues may be raised for the first time on judicial review.

E. Appearance of Official New Issues. - The official who made the decision or the person currently occupying that position, if the decision maker is no longer employed by the local government, shall be present at the evidentiary hearing as a witness. The appellant shall not be limited at the hearing to matters stated in a notice of appeal. If any party or the local government would be unduly prejudiced by the presentation of matters not presented in the notice of appeal, the board shall continue the hearing.

F. Oaths. - The chair of the board or any member acting as chair and the clerk to the board are authorized to administer oaths to witnesses in any matter coming before the board. Any person who, while under oath during a proceeding before the board determining a quasi-judicial matter, willfully swears falsely is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

G. Subpoenas. - The board making a quasi-judicial decision under this Chapter through the chair or, in the chair's absence, anyone acting as chair may subpoena witnesses and compel the production of evidence. To request issuance of a subpoena, the applicant, the local government, and any person with standing under G.S. 160D-1402(c) may make a written request to the chair explaining why it is necessary for certain witnesses or evidence to be compelled. The chair shall issue requested subpoenas he or she determines to be relevant, reasonable in nature and scope, and not oppressive. The chair shall rule on any motion to quash or modify a subpoena. Decisions regarding subpoenas made by the chair may be immediately appealed to the full board. If a person fails or refuses to obey a subpoena issued pursuant to this subsection, the board or the party seeking the subpoena may apply to the General Court of Justice for an order requiring that its subpoena be obeyed, and the court shall have jurisdiction to issue these orders after notice to all proper parties.

H. Appeals in Nature of Certiorari. - When hearing an appeal pursuant to G.S. 160D-947(e) or any other appeal in the nature of certiorari, the hearing shall be based on the record below, and the scope of review shall be as provided in G.S. 160D-1402(j).

I. Voting. - The concurring vote of four-fifths of the board shall be necessary to grant a variance. A majority of the members shall be required to decide any other quasi-judicial matter or to determine an appeal made in the nature of certiorari. For the purposes of this subsection, vacant positions on the board and members who are disqualified from voting on a quasi-judicial matter under G.S. 160D-109(d) shall not be considered members of the board for calculation of the requisite majority if there are no qualified alternates available to take the place of such members.

J. Decisions. - The board shall determine contested facts and make its decision within a reasonable time. When hearing an appeal, the board may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the decision appealed from and shall make any order, requirement, decision, or determination that ought to be made. The board shall have all the powers of the official who made the decision. Every quasi-judicial decision shall be based upon competent, material, and substantial evidence in the record. Each quasi-judicial decision shall be reduced to writing, reflect the board's determination of contested facts and their application to the applicable standards, and be approved by the board and signed by the chair or other duly authorized member of the board. A quasi-judicial decision is effective upon filing the written decision with the clerk to the board or such other office or official as the development regulation specifies. The decision of the board shall be delivered within a reasonable time by personal delivery, electronic mail, or first-class mail to the applicant, landowner, and any person who has submitted a written request for a copy prior to the date the decision becomes effective. The person required

to provide notice shall certify to the local government that proper notice has been made, and the certificate shall be deemed conclusive in the absence of fraud.

K. Judicial Review. - Every quasi-judicial decision shall be subject to review by the superior court by proceedings in the nature of certiorari pursuant to G.S. 160D-1402. Appeals shall be filed within the times specified in G.S. 160D-1405(d). (2019-111, s. 2.4.)

## **SECTION 18 BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

### **18.4 Appeal Procedure**

3. Any other person with standing to appeal shall have 30 days from receipt from any source of actual or constructive notice of the decision within which to file an appeal. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, notice pursuant to 160D-403(b) given by first class mail shall be deemed received on the third business day following deposit of notice for mailing with the United States Postal Service.

## **SECTION 19 AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE**

### **19.4 Procedure for Submission and Consideration of Applications for Text Amendment or General Use Zoning Map Amendment**

#### **B. Citizen-Initiated Amendments**

No amendment to zoning regulations or a zoning map that down-zones property shall be initiated nor shall it be enforceable without the written consent of all property owners whose property is the subject of the down-zoning amendment, unless the down-zoning amendment is initiated by the county. For purposes of this section, "down-zoning" means a zoning ordinance that affects an area of land in one of the following ways:

(1) By decreasing the development density of the land to be less dense than was allowed under its previous usage.

(2) By reducing the permitted uses of the land that are specified in a zoning ordinance or land development regulation to fewer uses than were allowed under its previous usage.

### **19.9 Board of Commissioners Receives Recommendation of Planning Board**

Prior to adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment, the Board of Commissioners shall adopt a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan, is reasonable, and in the public interest. The requirement for a plan consistency statement may also be met by a clear indication in the minutes of the board that at the time of action on the amendment the board was aware of and considered the planning board's recommendations and any relevant portions of the comprehensive plan. Should the Board of Commissioners adopt a zoning amendment after finding that such an action is not consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan, the Board of Commissioners must also issue a declaration that the adopted comprehensive plan in question is also amended the zoning amendment shall have the effect of also amending any future land use map in the comprehensive plan, and no additional request or application for a plan amendment shall be required. The statement must include an explanation of "the change in conditions the governing board took into account in amending the zoning ordinance to meet the development needs of the community." A plan amendment and a zoning amendment may be considered concurrently. When adopting or rejecting any petition for a zoning text or map amendment, a brief statement explaining the reasonableness of the proposed rezoning shall be approved by the board. The statement of reasonableness may consider, among other factors: (i) the size, physical conditions, and other attributes of any areas proposed to be rezoned; (ii) the benefits and detriments to the landowners, the neighbors, and the surrounding community; (iii) the relationship between the current actual and permissible development and the development under the proposed amendment; (iv) why the action taken is in the public interest; and (v) any changed conditions warranting the amendment.

### **19.12 Vested Rights and Permit Choice**

#### **A. Permit Choice**

If a land development regulation is amended between the time a development permit application was submitted and a development permit decision is made or if a land development regulation is amended after a development permit decision has been challenged and found to be wrongfully denied or illegal, G.S. 143-755 applies.

## **B. Vested Rights**

Amendments in land development regulations are not applicable or enforceable without the written consent of the owner with regard to any of the following:

- (1) Buildings or uses of buildings or land for which a development permit application has been submitted and subsequently issued in accordance with G.S. 143-755.
- (2) Subdivisions of land for which a development permit application authorizing the subdivision has been submitted and subsequently issued in accordance with G.S. 143-755.
- (3) A site-specific vesting plan pursuant to G.S. 160D-108.1.
- (4) A multi-phased development pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.
- (5) A vested right established by the terms of a development agreement pursuant to 160D-403.

The establishment of a vested right under any subdivision of this subsection does not preclude vesting under one or more other subdivisions of this subsection or vesting by application of common law principles. A vested right, once established as provided for in this section or by common law, precludes any action by a local government that would change, alter, impair, prevent, diminish, or otherwise delay the development or use of the property allowed by the applicable land development regulation or regulations, except where a change in State or federal law mandating local government enforcement occurs after the development application is submitted that has a fundamental and retroactive effect on the development or use.

## **C. Duration of Vesting.**

Upon issuance of a development permit, the statutory vesting granted by subsection (B) of this section for a development project is effective upon filing of the application in accordance with G.S. 143-755, for so long as the permit remains valid pursuant to law. Unless otherwise specified by this section or other statute, local development permits expire one year after issuance unless work authorized by the permit has substantially commenced. A local land development regulation may provide for a longer permit expiration period. For the purposes of this section, a permit is issued either in the ordinary course of business of the applicable governmental agency or by the applicable governmental agency as a court directive. Except where a longer vesting period is provided by statute or land development regulation, the statutory vesting granted by this section, once established, expires for an uncompleted development project if development work is intentionally and voluntarily discontinued for a period of not less than 24 consecutive months, and the statutory vesting period granted by this section for a nonconforming use of property expires if the use is intentionally and voluntarily discontinued for a period of not less than 24 consecutive months. The 24-month discontinuance period is automatically tolled during the pendency of any board of adjustment proceeding or civil action in a State or federal trial or appellate court regarding the validity of a development permit, the use of the property, or the existence of the statutory vesting period granted by this section. The 24-month discontinuance period is also tolled during the pendency of any litigation involving the development project or property that is the subject of the vesting.

## **D. Multiple Permits for Development Project**

Subject to subsection (C) of this section, where multiple local development permits are required to complete a development project, the development permit applicant may choose the version of each of the local land development regulations applicable to the project upon submittal of the application for the initial development permit. This provision is applicable only for those subsequent development permit applications filed within 18 months of the date following the approval of an initial permit. For purposes of the vesting protections of this subsection, an erosion and sedimentation control permit or a sign permit is not an initial development permit.

## **E. Multi-Phased Development**

A multi-phased development is vested for the entire development with the land development regulations then in place at the time a site plan approval is granted for the initial phase of the multi-phased development. A right which has been vested as provided for in this subsection remains vested for a period of seven years from the time a site plan approval is granted for the initial phase of the multi-phased development

## **F. Continuing Review**

Following issuance of a development permit, a local government may make subsequent inspections and reviews to ensure compliance with applicable land development regulations in effect at the time of the original application.

## **G. Process to Claim Vested Right**

A person claiming a statutory or common law vested right may submit information to substantiate that claim to the zoning administrator or other officer designated by a land development regulation, who shall make an initial determination as to the existence of the vested right. The decision of the zoning administrator or officer may be appealed under G.S. 160D-405. On appeal, the existence of a vested right shall be reviewed de novo. In lieu of seeking such a determination or pursuing an appeal under G.S. 160D-405, a person claiming a vested right may bring an original civil action as provided by G.S. 160D-1403.1.

## **H. Miscellaneous Provisions**

The vested rights granted by this section run with the land except for the use of land for outdoor advertising governed by G.S. 136-131.1 and G.S. 136-131.2 in which case the rights granted by this section run with the owner of a permit issued by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Nothing in this section precludes judicial determination, based on common law principles or other statutory provisions, that a vested right exists in a particular case or that a compensable taking has occurred. Except as expressly provided in 160D-108, nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the existing common law.

## **19.13 Vested Rights and Site Specific Vesting Plans**

### **A. Site-Specific Vesting Plan –**

Consists of a plan submitted to a local government in which the applicant requests vesting pursuant to this section, describing with reasonable certainty on the plan the type and intensity of use for a specific parcel or parcels of property. The plan may be in the form of, but not be limited to, any of the following plans or approvals: a planned unit development plan, a subdivision plat, a preliminary or general development plan, a special use permit, a conditional district zoning plan, or any other land-use approval designation as may be utilized by a local government. Unless otherwise expressly provided by the local government, the plan shall include the approximate boundaries of the site; significant topographical and other natural features affecting development of the site; the approximate location on the site of the proposed buildings, structures, and other improvements; the approximate dimensions, including height, of the proposed buildings and other structures; and the approximate location of all existing and proposed infrastructure on the site, including water, sewer, roads, and pedestrian walkways. What constitutes a site-specific vesting plan under this section that would trigger a vested right shall be finally determined by the local government pursuant to a development regulation, and the document that triggers the vesting shall be so identified at the time of its approval. A variance does not constitute a site-specific vesting plan, and approval of a site-specific vesting plan with the condition that a variance be obtained does not confer a vested right unless and until the necessary variance is obtained. If a sketch plan or other document fails to describe with reasonable certainty the type and intensity of use for a specified parcel or parcels of property, it may not constitute a site-specific vesting plan.

### **B. Establishment of Vested Right –**

A vested right is established with respect to any property upon the valid approval, or conditional approval, of a site-specific vesting plan as provided in this section. Such a vested right confers upon the landowner the right to undertake and complete the development and use of the property under the terms and conditions of the site-specific vesting plan, including any amendments thereto.

### **C. Approval and Amendment of Plans –**

If a site-specific vesting plan is based on an approval required by a local development regulation, the local government shall provide whatever notice and hearing is required for that underlying approval. A duration of the underlying approval that is less than two years does not affect the duration of the site-specific vesting plan established under this section. If the site-specific vesting plan is not based on such an approval, a legislative hearing with notice as required by G.S. 160D-602 shall be held. A local government may approve a site-specific vesting plan upon any terms and conditions that may reasonably be necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Conditional approval results in a vested right, although failure to abide by the terms and conditions of the approval will result in a forfeiture of vested rights. A local government shall not require a landowner to waive the landowner's vested rights as a condition of developmental approval. A site-specific vesting plan is deemed approved upon the effective date of the local government's decision approving the plan or another date determined by the governing board upon approval. An approved site-specific vesting plan and



its conditions may be amended with the approval of the owner and the local government as follows: any substantial modification must be reviewed and approved in the same manner as the original approval; minor modifications may be approved by staff, if such are defined and authorized by local regulation.

**D. Continuing Review –**

Following approval or conditional approval of a site-specific vesting plan, a local government may make subsequent reviews and require subsequent approvals by the local government to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the original approval, provided that these reviews and approvals are not inconsistent with the original approval. The local government may, pursuant to G.S. 160D-403(f), revoke the original approval for failure to comply with applicable terms and conditions of the original approval or the applicable local development regulations.

**E. Duration and Termination of Vested Right –**

(1) A vested right for a site-specific vesting plan remains vested for a period of two years. This vesting shall not be extended by any amendments or modifications to a site-specific vesting plan unless expressly provided by the local government.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, a local government may provide for rights to be vested for a period exceeding two years but not exceeding five years where warranted in light of all relevant circumstances, including, but not limited to, the size and phasing of development, the level of investment, the need for the development, economic cycles, and market conditions or other considerations. These determinations are in the sound discretion of the local government and shall be made following the process specified for the particular form of a site-specific vesting plan involved in accordance with subsection (a) of this section.

(3) Upon issuance of a building permit, the provisions of G.S. 160D-1111 and G.S. 160D-1115 apply, except that a permit does not expire and shall not be revoked because of the running of time while a vested right under this section is outstanding.

(4) A right vested as provided in this section terminates at the end of the applicable vesting period with respect to buildings and uses for which no valid building permit applications have been filed.

**F. Subsequent Changes Prohibited; Exceptions–**

(1) A vested right, once established as provided for in this section, precludes any zoning action by a local government which would change, alter, impair, prevent, diminish, or otherwise delay the development or use of the property as set forth in an approved site-specific vesting plan, except under one or more of the following conditions:

a. With the written consent of the affected landowner.

b. Upon findings, by ordinance after notice and an evidentiary hearing, that natural or man-made hazards on or in the immediate vicinity of the property, if uncorrected, would pose a serious threat to the public health, safety, and welfare if the project were to proceed as contemplated in the site-specific vesting plan.

c. To the extent that the affected landowner receives compensation for all costs, expenses, and other losses incurred by the landowner, including, but not limited to, all fees paid in consideration of financing, and all architectural, planning, marketing, legal, and other consulting fees incurred after approval by the local government, together with interest as provided under G.S. 160D-106. Compensation shall not include any diminution in the value of the property which is caused by the action.

d. Upon findings, by ordinance after notice and an evidentiary hearing, that the landowner or the landowner's representative intentionally supplied inaccurate information or made material misrepresentations that made a difference in the approval by the local government of the site-specific vesting plan or the phased development plan.

e. Upon the enactment or promulgation of a State or federal law or regulation that precludes development as contemplated in the site-specific vesting plan or the phased development plan, in which case the local government may modify the affected provisions, upon a finding that the change in State or federal law has a fundamental effect on the plan, by ordinance after notice and an evidentiary hearing.

(2) The establishment of a vested right under this section does not preclude the application of overlay zoning or other development regulations which impose additional requirements but do not affect the allowable type or

intensity of use, or ordinances or regulations which are general in nature and are applicable to all property subject to development regulation by a local government, including, but not limited to, building, fire, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical codes. Otherwise applicable new regulations become effective with respect to property which is subject to a site-specific vesting plan upon the expiration or termination of the vesting rights period provided for in this section.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, the establishment of a vested right does not preclude, change, or impair the authority of a local government to adopt and enforce development regulations governing nonconforming situations or uses.

#### **G. Miscellaneous Provisions –**

(1) A vested right obtained under this section is not a personal right, but attaches to and runs with the applicable property. After approval of a site-specific vesting plan, all successors to the original landowner are entitled to exercise these rights.

(2) Nothing in this section precludes judicial determination, based on common law principles or other statutory provisions, that a vested right exists in a particular case or that a compensable taking has occurred. Except as expressly provided in this section, nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the existing common law.

(3) In the event a local government fails to adopt a development regulation setting forth what constitutes a site-specific vesting plan triggering a vested right, a landowner may establish a vested right with respect to property upon the approval of a zoning permit, or otherwise may seek appropriate relief from the Superior Court Division of the General Court of Justice.

## **SECTION 20 ENFORCEMENT**

### **20.1 Zoning Administrator**

The notice of violation shall be delivered to the holder of the development approval and/or the current landowner of the property involved, if the landowner is not the holder of the development approval, by personal delivery, electronic delivery, or first-class mail and may be provided by similar means to the occupant of the property or the person undertaking the work or activity. The notice of violation may be posted on the property. He/she shall order discontinuance of illegal use of land, buildings, or structures; removal of illegal buildings or structures or addition, alterations, or structural changes thereto; discontinuance of any illegal work being done; or shall take any other action authorized by this Ordinance to insure compliance with or to prevent violations of its provisions. Administrative staff may inspect work undertaken pursuant to a development approval to assure that the work is being done in accordance with applicable State and local laws and of the terms of the approval. In exercising this power, staff are authorized to enter any premises within the jurisdiction of the local government at all reasonable hours for the purposes of inspection or other enforcement action, upon presentation of proper credentials; provided, however, that the appropriate consent has been given for inspection of areas not open to the public or that an appropriate inspection warrant has been secured.

## **SECTION 21 PENALTY FOR VIOLATION**

When staff determines work or activity has been undertaken in violation of a development regulation adopted pursuant to this Chapter or other local development regulation or any State law delegated to the local government for enforcement purposes in lieu of the State or in violation of the terms of a development approval, a written notice of violation may be issued.

Upon determination of a violation of any section of this Ordinance, the penalty for which is a civil penalty, Chatham County may cause a warning citation (aka Notice of Violation) to be issued to the violator setting out the nature of the violation, the section violated, the date of the violation, an order to immediately cease the violation, or if the violation is in the nature of an infraction for which an order or abatement would be appropriate in a civil proceeding, a reasonable period of time is stated in which the violation must be abated. The notice of violation shall be delivered to the holder of the development approval and to the landowner of the

property involved, if the landowner is not the holder of the development approval, by personal delivery, electronic delivery, or first-class mail and may be provided by similar means to the occupant of the property or the person undertaking the work or activity. The notice of violation may be posted on the property. The warning citation shall specify that a second citation shall incur a civil penalty, together with costs, and attorney fees if applicable.

The person providing the notice of violation shall certify to the local government that the notice was provided, and the certificate shall be deemed conclusive in the absence of fraud. Except as provided by G.S. 160D-1123 or G.S. 160D-1206 or otherwise provided by law, a notice of violation may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment within 30, an appeal may be made as described in Section 18.5 Appeal Procedures, pursuant to G.S. 160D-405.

**Revocation of Development Approvals.** - In addition to initiation of enforcement actions under G.S. 160D-404, development approvals may be revoked by the local government issuing the development approval by notifying the holder in writing stating the reason for the revocation. The local government shall follow the same development review and approval process required for issuance of the development approval, including any required notice or hearing, in the review and approval of any revocation of that approval. Development approvals shall be revoked for any substantial departure from the approved application, plans, or specifications; for refusal or failure to comply with the requirements of any applicable local development regulation or any State law delegated to the local government for enforcement purposes in lieu of the State; or for false statements or misrepresentations made in securing the approval. Any development approval mistakenly issued in violation of an applicable State or local law may also be revoked. The revocation of a development approval by a staff member may be appealed pursuant to G.S. 160D-405. If an appeal is filed regarding a development regulation adopted by a local government pursuant to this Chapter, the provisions of G.S. 160D-405(e) regarding stays shall be applicable.