



Chatham County Comprehensive Plan Steering Meeting

Meeting Notes

October 20th, 2016

Attendees:

Jim Elza, Chair

Andy Bailey, Vice Chair

Del Turner, BOC At-large

Esta Cohen, Ag Advisory Alternate

Tandy Jones, Ag Advisory Board

George Lucier, Planning Board Alternate

Amanda Robertson, Climate Change Committee

Sharon Garbutt, BOC At-large

Linda Harris, Chatham Economic Development

Tandy Jones, Ag Advisory Board

George Pauly, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Terry Schmidt, Environmental Review Advisory

Sherri Steuwer, Environmental Review Advisory Committee

James Crawford, Affordable Housing alternate

John Kessler, Board of Health Alternate

Diana Hales, Affordable Housing substitute

Staff:

Jason Sullivan, Planning Department

Dylan Paul, Planning Department

Angela Birchett, Planning Department

Cara Coppola, Planning Department

Jake Petrosky, LandDesign

Meg Nealon, VHB

Greg Payne, Economic Leadership

Attendance: 16 SC members + 3 consultants + 4 county staff

Meeting opened at 6:02 pm by Jim Elza. No comments from the Chair.

Approval of September Minutes: Corrections - Andy Bailey was not present at last meeting and Terry Schmidt wanted to see Tandy's corrections sent that afternoon before they were approved. Committee did not approve the minutes. Moved to next month for approval.

Review of Schedule: November is when public meetings will be reviewed for January. Amanda Robertson asked how Jake thinks the meeting will go. Jake said he likes the idea of an Open House format or short presentation maybe on a loop every 10-15 minutes.

Finalize Draft Goals: Comments were provided by the online survey. Objectives and metrics to clarify what we were talking about with the goals:

1) Preserve rural character

Terry Schmidt asked why "historical resources" were correlated to rural character and what are the metrics for them? Jake Petrosky said that online engagement question and county fair input led to the inclusion. Cultural resources, such as farmsteads and architecture (cultural tourism, for example) are baked into rural character umbrella. George Pauly stated that the plan should have objectives for an east and west interpretation of rural character. George Lucier said that he agreed, but wants to keep "rural" in the goal name. He also said "protecting open space and natural resources is important". Jim Elza said that cultural and historic building need to be preserved because it represents "place". General discussion about Tokenism – ways to design a development that give an ode to a place. Context – Forrest and farmland. Del Turner had a problem with the word "character", wants to replace it with "identity", because it represents "touch of the past and a glimpse of the future". Terry Schmidt agreed with Jim Elza, but wants to see preserving historical buildings reflected in the metrics. Meg Nealon mentioned that the definition or factor or lifestyle: Activities listed. Inventory of ag needs to be seen and understood as part of the landscape. Amanda Robertson said goals need to be very clear so as we look plan after the plan is adopted, we can know if we've accomplished. George Lucier noted that people keep saying we shouldn't be like Cary; we should open regulations where it's easy to have chickens, not restrict ag, etc. George Pauly said that failing to tear down a barn in a residential subdivision is not really "rural character". Sherri Steuwer wished we could emphasize natural areas in every aspect of development, even in areas that have high growth (even compact areas should have some aspect of rural character). Jake Petrosky agreed with Sherri Steuwer, wants compact communities to be unique in Chatham ("different than Orange or Wake County"). To sum up wants needed for Goal 1: Specify metrics and goals.

2) Preserve, protect, and enable agriculture

Tandy Jones said that forestry should be a critically important goal and be part of the title goal; it's very important economically, and most people moving here don't know much about it. George Pauly noted that some farmers were economically forced into forestry; he wishes there was a way owners could preserve the forests, without having them be cut down (only other means of conservation is conservation easement). Tandy Jones agreed, but he thinks that's up to the state to make any changes to present use value. He emphasize that forestry is part of

agriculture and people need to know that. Jake Petrosky said that Ag includes forestry and asked if forestry should be into Ag goals. Tandy Jones agreed. Jake Petrosky noted that we can add horticulture into narrative.

3) Promote a compact growth pattern by developing in and near existing towns, communities, and in designated, well planned, walkable mixed use centers

Del Turner said ETJs don't contribute to the cities tax base. Andy Bailey worried about the term "compact"; may mean different things to different people throughout county. George thought that maybe say "more dense development". Jake noted that terms like "managed" "directed" "well planned" growth were written by public in community meetings. Jim Elza included that we have to make agreements with municipalities in order for plan to work. Jim Crawford noted that a comma should be added after walkable. Everyone agreed.

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

George Pauly said that megasites should support goal, not BE a goal. Jake Petrosky said we can discuss whether Megasites should be goal/policy/objective later.

5) Conserve natural resources and provide recreational opportunities

Esta Cohen said that water should be preserved as an underground resources and also used air quality as an example. Terry Schmidt said that environmental features are objectives. Consider splitting the two because they are separate. General consensus. Esta Cohen added that water is critically important and will become more important. John Kessler wondered why can't rec stuff fit under "equitable access", and also maybe adding "community facility" to goal #8? George Pauly stated that equitable access isn't much as a problem, should be more of its own goal. It should be added, though, he said. George Lucier added that recreation is very important because it hits so many things: eco-tourism, health, etc. Jake said that he would like to stay at 10 goals.

6) Provide infrastructure to support desired development and support economic and environmental objectives

General Agreement. Sherri Steuwer was pleased to see metric of wells vs public water, but wants to see metric on wastewater distinction; need to monitor wastewater data. Esta Cohen worried about future wells going dry/contaminated. How are we preparing for this? What can we do to make developers deal with this problem? Meg noted that that's a big issue; she said that this is where we can deal with this by laying the groundwork to make sure we can prepare. Terry asked if is there a metric we can use to measure dry wells and failing septic systems? Public Health, maybe? I was also asked If we allow for package plants and deep wells, how do we control growth?

7) Become more resilient by mitigating and response to emerging threats

Amanda Robertson wanted to add the word “adapting” to goal. Terry Schmidt said that we should be careful about using the term “education”. Could cause static from the Western half of county. Consensus on “inform, provide information, etc.”

8) Provide equitable access to high-quality education, housing, and community options for all

Del Turner: Why was education and housing combined?

9) Foster a healthy community

General consensus

Draft goals approved by committee.

Intermediate Findings Presentations:

Preliminary Recommendation informed by mapping suitability analysis. Jake Petrosky and Meg Nealon give a PowerPoint presentation about intermediate findings. This presentation is available from Planning Staff.

Committee’s Homework: to think about what was presented and give input next time.

Next Meeting: November 17th

Chairman Elza adjourned meeting at 8:30.