



## Chatham County Planning Board Agenda Notes

**Date: June 1, 2021**

**Agenda Item: VIII-1**

**Attachment #: 11**

- Subdivision**
         
  **Conditional Use Permit**
         
  **Rezoning Request**  
 **Other:**

<b>Subject:</b>	Request by Zachary Fuller, PE on behalf of Swain Land & Timber, LLC for subdivision <b>First Plat</b> review and approval of <b>McBane Park Conservation Subdivision</b> , consisting of 149 lots on 161.97 acres, located off Old Graham Road, SR-1516, parcel #85448.
<b>Action Requested:</b>	See Recommendation
<b>Attachments:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Major Subdivision Application and checklist</li> <li>2. Vicinity map</li> <li>3. Comments from Chatham County Historical Association</li> <li>4. Notification to Chatham County Schools</li> <li>5. EIA report and EIA Addendum may be viewed on website <a href="https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs/planning/rezonings-subdivision-cases/2021-items/mcbane-park-conservation-subdivision-first-plat">https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs/planning/rezonings-subdivision-cases/2021-items/mcbane-park-conservation-subdivision-first-plat</a></li> <li>6. Copy of Community Meeting Report Form dated December 3, 2020</li> <li>7. Road name approval from Chatham County Emergency Operations Office</li> <li>8. Riparian Buffer Report, dated May 7, 2021</li> <li>9. US Army Corp. of Engineers Notification of Jurisdictional Determination dated July 14, 2020</li> <li>10. Fragmentation and On-Site Inventory Map approved May 11, 2021</li> <li>11. First Plat titled 'McBane Park', prepared by WithersRavenel dated April 16, 2021</li> </ol>

<b>Introduction &amp; Background:</b>	
<b>Zoning:</b>	R-1
<b>Water System:</b>	Public Water (Aqua)
<b>Sewer System:</b>	Public Wastewater (Aqua)

**Subject to 100 year flood:** No special flood hazard area within the development.

**General Information:** The subdivision process is a four (4) step process: Concept Plan, First Plat, Construction Plan, and Final Plat. The applicant has completed the community meeting and the Concept Plan review. This is a conservation subdivision and lot sizes and setbacks vary, but the method of calculate net density is outlined in the Subdivision Regulation, Section 5.2 C (4) (a) "During a First Plat review, the first Planning Board meeting shall include a Public Hearing to receive comment on the proposed subdivision." Item (b) states "Following the Public Hearing, the Planning Board shall review the proposal, staff recommendation and public comments and indicate their recommendation for approval, disapproval or approval subject to modifications. If the Board recommends disapproval or approval subject to modifications, the necessary reasons or modifications will be specified in the minutes of the meeting"

The Planning Board has two (2) meetings in which to act on the proposal.

**Discussion & Analysis:**

The request is for First Plat review and recommendation of McBane Park, consisting of 149 lots on 161.97 acres, located off Old Graham Road, S.R. 1516. A vicinity map showing the property location, attachment # 2, is included in the agenda packet. As stated above, the Planning Board has two (2) meeting to act on the proposal.

Section 7.7 of the Subdivision Regulations, Conservation Subdivision – Alternative Standards for Development states in part "As an alternative to conventional layouts, Chatham County encourages the preservation of large, contiguous blocks of land.....When a project voluntarily preserves Conservation Space in accordance with this Section, a project can increase the number of units that would be allowed on the overall property by ten (10) percent. Calculations of the density bonus shall be based on the applicable underlying land use regulations(s) dictating allowable development density." Section 7.7 J. states in part "conservation subdivisions proposed for the purposes of sustaining existing on-site bona fide agricultural operations are entitled to a five (5) percent increase in permitted density (this in addition to the ten (10) percent density bonus)...." Please read the entire Section 7.7, Items A – N for a complete understanding of Conservation Subdivisions. Also, please refer to the Chatham County Conservation Subdivision Guidelines for Conservation Space Selection which is available on the Planning Department webpage under Ordinances and Regulations. A conservation subdivision requires that a minimum of 40% of the project area be retained as Conservation Space. A minimum of 80% of such Conservation Space shall be Natural Space and a maximum of 20% of the Conservation Space may be Open Space.

**Density Calculations:** The land required to be protected within a Conservation Subdivision under other regulatory provisions, i.e. riparian buffers and floodplain, is 12.46 acres. This amount (12.46 acres) was deducted from the total acreage of 161.97 acres to arrive at the net land available consisting of 149.51 acres. Based on the net land area the lot yield would be 137 lots and with the 10% density bonus would increase to 150 lots. The proposed project is 149 lots.

**Conservation Space:** Of the total project area of 161.97 acres, 64.79 acres is required to be in Conservation Space and the site plan indicates that 64.79 acres will be set aside. See the site plan for the breakdown and location of the Conservation Space. The developer allowed NC Natural Heritage Program to visit the proposed project prior to designing the subdivision layout. The area set aside for Conservation Space meets the requirement that 40% of the project area be retained as Conservation Space.

**Natural Space:** 80% of the Conservation Space is required to be Natural Space. The Conservation Space Guidelines states “Natural space is unimproved land in its naturally occurring state, or preserved to regenerate to its naturally occurring state, unaltered by human activity, and preserved to maintain or improve the natural, scenic, ecological, cultural, hydrological, or geological values of an area.” The site plan indicates this requirement will be met.

**Open Space:** A maximum of 20% of the Conservation Space may be Open Space, of the 64.79 acres designated as Conservation Space and the site plan indicates this will be met. The ‘Guidelines’ state “Open space, as defined in the Subdivision Ordinance, allows amenities such as recreational uses and some non-intrusive common uses (e.g. when land application is not the preferred means of wastewater disposal, community septic systems are allowed in Open Space areas). Open space should be located as close to proposed development as practicable, taking into account considerations such as public safety and soil suitability.” See Section 7.7 (D), Items 1 – 7 for allowed uses in Open Space related to Conservation Subdivisions. All land disturbing activities associated with the Conservation Subdivision are subject to the full provisions of the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance, regardless of the designated use or status of a given area.

**Roadways:** The roads are to be built with a 60-foot-wide travelway with a 20-foot-wide public right-of-way, will be approximately 2 miles in length, and are to be state maintained.

An existing easement located near Lot 1 will be abandoned and relocated between Lots 37 and 38.

**Historical:** Bev Wiggins with Chatham County Historical Association stated a cultural resources review was completed in 2006 and noted: “Based on the proximity of these sites to the project boundary, an archaeological reconnaissance survey to determine whether there are any archaeologically significant sites located within the project boundary may be helpful.” CCHA would like to see the reconnaissance survey completed before the area is disturbed. The request is not a regulatory of the subdivision regulations. North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources letter dated August 18, 2020 stated “We have conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed.” There is an old hunting cabin located on the property, the developer plans to remove the cabin.

**Schools:** Notification of the proposed development was provided to the Chatham County School System.

**Environmental Impact Assessment:** Due to the number of lots, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required to be submitted and peer reviewed. The EIA, dated February 18, 2021 and updated, May 10, 2021 was prepared WithersRavenel and peer reviewed by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. (JMT). Per the EIA, Exhibit 27 noted that Carolina Darter, Carolina Ladle Crayfish, Septima's Clubtail, Cape Fear Shiner Buttercup Phacelia, Dry Mesic Basic Oak Hickory Forest, Dry Oak Hickory Forest, Mixed Moisture Hardpan Forest, and Upland Depression Swamp Forest has been documented in a one-mile radius of the site. The Carolina Darter was observed on the project site.

The developer engaged the NC Natural Heritage Program to visit the site and provide a survey report. Justin Robinson, Special Projects Botanist, and Judy Ratcliffe, Zoologist, visited the site in early 2020 and provided a report dated March 9, 2020 (the report is included as Exhibit 23 in the EIA). The report included that "it is recommended that the two rare to uncommon natural communities found within this project area (Upland Pool and Mixed Moisture Hardpan Forest) be conserved and periodically monitored for changes. Although no rare plants were observed in this survey, soils found in the project area are associated with rare plants and salamanders in adjacent counties." The report also "recommends setting aside a 200 ft riparian buffer zone along Dry Creek to support the aquatic community and habitat condition of Dry Creek and the Haw River downstream." The conservation subdivision layout follows the recommendation to protect the Upland pool and Mixed Moisture Hardpan Forest by including those areas in the Natural Space portion of the Conservation Space and the NCNPH has designated it as the Terrells Hardpan Natural Area. The developer has also provided an additional variable width buffer along Dry Creek, but not a continuous 200' riparian buffer.

In the Conservation Subdivision Guidelines for Conservation Space Selection two maps are required to be submitted, a Fragmentation Map and an On-site Inventory Map. The Fragmentation map illustrates the project site and all land within one mile of its boundaries and is designed to assist the applicant in deciding where Conservation Space should generally be located to create connections with existing Natural Space or allow future Natural Space connections on adjacent properties. The Onsite Inventory Map is used as the "primary decision-making tool for the applicant in selecting specific areas to include in Conservation Space, and the County in issuing approvals. Data required to generate this map should be available on the Chatham County GIS and from on-site investigations. This can include information on existing landcover, proposed natural space preservation locations and acreages, topography, locations of streams, wetland, floodplains, and required buffers, adjacent natural areas, and cultural and historic resources. Watershed Protection Department staff has reviewed the maps and determined they are adequate to meet the submittal requirements.

**Ownership / Management of Conservation Space:** Section 7.7 (F) of the Subdivision Regulations requires that the applicant identify the current and intended future owners(s) of the Conservation Space and who will be responsible for maintaining the area / facilities. Per the Draft Conservation Management Plan the Natural Space and the Open Space will be maintained by the McBane Conservation Subdivision Homeowners Association. Section 7.7

(G) requires that a management plan for the Conservation Space be submitted to and approved by the County. A copy of the draft plan has been provided by the applicant. Per Section (G) "Upon initial approval of the management plan by the County, changes to the plan shall be allowed only when approved by the County Board of Commissioners." Section (H) requires that the Conservation Space shall be protected in perpetuity by a binding legal document that is recorded with the deed upon review and approval by the County. The applicant has provided a draft copy of the deed which will convey the Conservation Space to the third party (homeowners association) and has included a draft copy of the Declarations of Covenants and Restrictions. Prior to final plat recordation, the county attorney shall review and approve the form of the Management Plan, the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions, and the deed for the Conservation Space.

**Trails:** Trails are proposed to be rustic and located within the natural space of the project.

**Community Meeting:** A community meeting was held December 3, 2020 at Northwest District Park and virtually. Approximately eighteen people attended the meeting. Some concerns were drainage into Dry Creek, will the developer conserve more land along Dry Creek, will the lots be mass graded, will there be street lighting, would dry stormwater ponds be considered, property owner has numerous erosion control violations on adjacent property so how are we ensured the violations will not happen on the project, and can screening be added at the end of the cul-de-sac to limit car lighting to existing home. The applicant's response included that the stormwater ponds will treat runoff and provide detention pursuant to the county stormwater requirements. The proposed project will have minimal light pollution. The violations were isolated and an unfortunate incident that happened over the summer. They will investigate shrub screening and the existing buffer vegetation should eliminate the light pollution.

**Technical Review Committee:** The TRC met virtually on May 12, 2021 to review the First Plat submittal. The applicant Zachary Fuller and developer Hadley Swain Kirkland were present. Items discussed included some Native American artifacts may be present on the proposed project, the Dark family owned the property longer than the McBane's and would the developer consider using the Dark's name, NCNHP recommends a 200' wide buffer on Dry Creek and Watershed Protection agrees, trails need to cross perpendicular and a trail management plan will be needed, whether a water point will be located inside the subdivision, will there be fire hydrants, and if any of the crossings on the trails use a culvert a permit will be needed from the Army Corp of Engineers.

**Septic:** NC Aqua

**Water:** NC Aqua

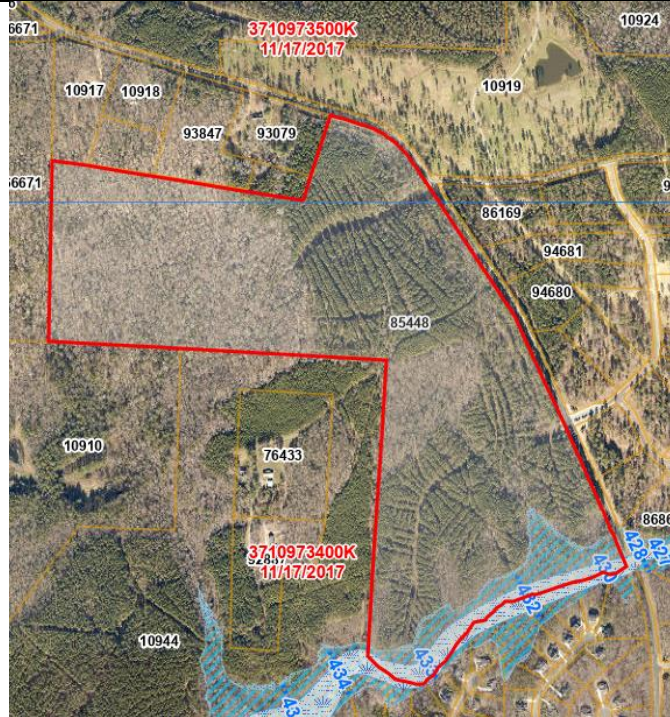
**Road Name:** The road names Loxley Drive, McBane Park Drive, Wynwood Drive, Southwood Lane, Barclay Lane, Stanton Ct., Galax Ct., Bradfield Ct., and Baywood Ct. have been approved by Chatham County Emergency Operations Office as acceptable for submittal to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

**Water Features:** Alyssa Ricci, submitted the Riparian Buffer Review Application along with a riparian buffer map, to Drew Blake, Senior Watershed Specialist for review. Mr. James Lastinger of the US Army Corps of Engineers completed an on-site determination on July 14, 2020 to verify wetlands. Mr. Blake and Ms. Ricci visited the site August 17, 2020 and May 3, 2021, the second site visit was to review the remaining portion of the project. Mr. Blake confirmation letter dated May 7, 2021 stated six (6) ephemeral streams, three (3) intermittent streams, and five (5) wetlands were identified. The six (6) ephemeral streams require a 30-ft buffer, the three (3) intermittent streams require 50-ft buffers, and the five (5) wetlands require 50-ft buffers from all sides landward.

**Phasing:** The applicant has provided a phasing schedule stating that Construction Plan submittal for Phase 1 within 2 years of First Plat approval and Final Plat submittal for Phase 7 (final phase) by March 31, 2032.

**Stormwater and Erosion Control:** Four stormwater devices are proposed. As part of the stormwater permitting process additional information will be provided to the Watershed Protection Department. A Stormwater Permit and Sedimentation & Erosion Control Permit will be obtained from the Chatham County Watershed Protection Department prior to Construction Plan submittal. No land disturbing activity can commence on the property prior to obtaining Construction Plan approval.

**Site Visit:** Site visits were scheduled for May 20, 2021 for Planning Department staff, Watershed Protection Department staff and various Board members to attend. Zachary Fuller and Hadley Swain Kirkland were present to walk the property with staff and Board members and discuss the project. Areas viewed included wetlands, perennial streams, upland pool, intermittent streams, ephemeral streams, and proposed conservation spaces. Pictures of the site visit can be viewed on the Planning Department webpage at [www.chathamnc.org/planning](http://www.chathamnc.org/planning), Rezoning and Subdivision Cases, 2021. Questions raised during the site visit include whether the buffer along Old Graham Road would be undisturbed or timbered and graded, removing or relocating lots adjacent to Dry Creek to expand the riparian buffer, preserving isolated stands of mature trees within the development footprint as pocket parks by adjusting lot sizes, and providing informational signs and plant identifiers along the trails in the Natural Space to emphasize the uniqueness of the Terrells Hardpan Natural Area.



**How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan:**

Plan Chatham was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in November 2017 and is a comprehensive plan that provides strategic direction to address the most pressing needs in the county. These properties are in an area of the county identified as Rural on the Future Land Use and Conservation Plan Map. The description for rural includes single family on large lots or in a conservation subdivision, agriculture, home-based & small-scale businesses, greenway trails, farm buildings, and pastures. Conservation subdivisions are encouraged to protect nature resources while not disrupting agricultural practices. The developer also contacted the NC Natural Heritage Program to review their database for any rare species, important natural communities, natural areas, or conservation/managed areas within the project boundary and some rare species were identified in their records. It should be noted that Plan Chatham is not intended to be used as a regulatory tool but is a policy document. When reviewing subdivision applications, the boards can use the plan as a tool to identify future regulatory changes.

**Recommendation:**

The Planning Department recommends granting approval of the road names Loxley Drive, McBane Park Drive, Wynwood Drive, Southwood Lane, Barclay Lane, Stanton Ct., Galax Ct., Bradfield Ct., and Baywood Ct. and granting approval of subdivision First Plat for **McBane Park** with the following conditions:

1. Approval of the First Plat shall be valid for a period of twelve (12) months following the date of approval by the Board of Commissioners.
2. The following development schedule shall apply: Construction Plan submittal for Phase 1 within 2 years of First Plat approval and Final Plat submittal for Phase 7 (final phase) by March 31, 2032.
3. Prior to final plat recordation, the county attorney shall review and approve the form

of the Management Plan, the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions, and the deed for the Conservation Space.