*DRAFT* **ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT**

**NOTE: Attach current list of members and identify officers.**

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| **Name of Committee**:  | Environmental Review Advisory Committee |
| **Date of Presentation:** | November 7, 2022 |
| **Time Period Covered:** | July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 |
| **Name of Chairperson:** | Elaine Chiosso |
| **# of Meetings Held During Period** (including any special meeting or community input) | 9 |
| **MISSION & GOALS** **– Summarize concisely the committee’s mission (charge), key goals, objectives and measures below. You also may attach as a separate document, but limit to no more than one page single-spaced.** |
| The mission of the Environmental Review Advisory Committee (ERAC) is to:* Advise the Board of Commissioners on environmental policy and related county ordinances, including the watershed ordinance.
* Conduct special projects, as assigned, to protect the environment.
* Assist County staff with review of required state and federal environmental permits for projects in the county.
* Partner with towns in the county and other interested governmental agencies on mutual concerns related to the environment.

The Environmental Review Advisory Committee also serves as the Watershed Review Board which is empowered to make decisions primarily on two matters: 1. Appeals of decisions of land use ordinances by administrative officials, and 2. Variance requests to vary or modify the regulations or provisions of an ordinance due to practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships in the way of carrying out the ordinance.The Watershed Review Board also makes recommendations to the County Commissioners on amendments to the Watershed Protection Ordinance. |
| **ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES – Summarize concisely below the committee’s major accomplishments and activities of the past year. This should include reports, research, projects, public input, etc. Be sure to identify how they relate to specific goals, objectives or measures. You also may attach as a separate document but limit to no more than one page single-spaced.**  |
| **ERAC Accomplishments*** In August of 2021 we finalized discussion of initial changes to be made to the **C**onservation Subdivision Ordinance and Guidelines, and ERAC’s role in Environmental Impact Assessments. ERAC members present unanimously voted to approve and to send our recommendations on to staff and the Planning Board.
* With the goal of more communication and partnerships between advisory boards and committees, ERAC appointed 2 members to attend Planning Board and Climate Change Advisory Committee meetings.
* In September 2021, ERAC Chris Kennedy, Town Manager, gave a presentation on drinking water issues in the Town of Pittsboro followed by Q & A session, in order for ERAC to get up to date on the current status of the Haw River water, the Town’s planned actions, and how that might impact the County.
* In December, 2021 Tyson Smith, White & Smith and Holly Miller, Tetra Tech gave an introductory presentation of the Unified Development Ordinance. Input was sought from ERAC members as to their priorities for the UDO to be included in the ReCode Chatham. document.In April 2022, ERAC finalized our further recommendations to improve the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and Guidelines, and submitted them to the county, for possible inclusion in the UDO, as well as to the Planning Board.
* In February and March of 2022, ERAC discussed further important changes to the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and Guidelines to be recommended for the Unified Development Ordinance. These revisions would ensure that a conservation subdivision would follow best practices for conservation, environmental protections and connectivity. ERAC also discussed the possibility of Tree Protection rules for Chatham County.
* In May of 2022, three members of ERAC were elected to be part of a new inter-advisory Tree Protection Working Group to come up with recommendations for rules to protect and retain tree canopy coverage as new development increases in Chatham County. This Working Group was approved by the Board of Commissioners for a 6 month period. It ERAC Planning Board, Climate Change Advisory Comm. and Grand Trees of Chatham members.

**Acting as Watershed Review Board****August 2021:** Watershed Review Board convened to consider an application for Carolina Meadows Density Averaging as recommended by staff. ERAC members unanimously voted to approve.**December 2021:** Hunter Glenn with Chatham County Planning presented the Watershed Protection Ordinance text amendments as required by the NC Water Supply Watershed Administrator, per county staff recommendations. ERAC unanimously voted to approve.**June 2022:** Jason Sullivan, acting on behalf of the County Manager to request an amendment to Attachment A of the Watershed Protection Ordinance to allow for emergency service telecommunication towers to be built in a critical watershed area. The tower prompting this amendment change would be built within the county’s Northeast District Park near Jordan Lake. ERAC members had questions concerning environmental impacts of cell tower construction in critical watershed areas, including road access construction, added height (up to 400 ft), and impact on waterfowl near Jordan Lake. Given the public safety benefits ERAC members agreed to the necessity for emergency towers in critical watershed areas, but only for those built on public land. With this added change, ERAC members unanimously voted to approve. |

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| **BARRIERS & CHALLENGES – Identify any barriers or challenges that make it difficult for the committee to achieve goals or objectives. Limit to the space provided below.**  |
| Click here to enter text. |
| **RECOMMENDED CHANGES: Please list any recommendations to the Board of Commissioners related to the changes in the advisory committee’s membership, mission, goals, objectives or other related issues.**  |
| Click here to enter text. |
| **OTHER INFORMATION: Provide any other information or observations that the Board of Commissioners should know about. Provide in the space below.** |
| Click here to enter text. |