

NOTES FROM SMALL GROUPS
COMMUNITY MEETING SUBDIVISION & ZONING REVISIONS
Sept. 30, 2008

Below is a summary of what individual participants provided as reactions to the proposed revisions, based on initial perceptions. The comments do not reflect any agreement or consensus on any points, but is a listing of notes based on participants' comments. A couple of items highlighted with asterisk (*) are clarified at the end with a footnote.

THINGS THEY LIKED

- Board of Commissioners has more power to protect public health, safety, etc.
- Developers holding meetings with the public early
- Overall, it doesn't hurt builders
- Increased level of completion for bonding to 75% is good
- Increased fines and civil penalties for violations of zoning
- Landscaped buffers for subdivisions
- Final plat could be rejected by the BOC
- Clustering homes as an option
- The 4-step process
- Will help developers not waste money if the development is not likely to be approved

THINGS THEY DON'T LIKE

- Don't want RA-5 zoning
- The conservation subdivisions require wastewater options that are approved by the state, but yet they don't let some state-authorized options be used. That should be changed to allow all state options.
- Concerned about control over number of occupants in buildings
- thought that the landscape buffer components on page 52 were removed from the Zoning revisions.
- Jordan Lake should be seen...not buffered.
- Remove language indicating that regulations need to be exceeded, not just met.
- The reduction in accessory building size for home occupations may hurt businesses with large equipment.
- Water supply downstream from developments will reduce water available for farms...want to see irrigation of landscaping banned
- Should include parks and recreation as amenities
- County should pay for zoned property due to lost value
- The process seems too long—especially waiting a year after denial to resubmit
- Overall length of time between first and final plat is too long
- Too much buffering on rivers and intermittent streams already
- Should have requirements for developers to compensate property owners for damage or disruption they create
- Zoning—should address the negative impact on property values if you are next to strip mall
- Going through the Board of Commissioners is a long process and may be rejected at the end. (NOTE: Some discussion here about planning staff impact as well)

QUESTIONS—Need more information or clarification, or related to concerns

- How will the Farmland Preservation Plan now under development be incorporated with these proposals?
- Conservation subdivisions—don't understand the 80/20 open space, how wastewater septic would be handled (i.e. would community septic be in the open space?) and need more on incentives
- How will this affect the major corridors zoning proposal and what is the next step there?
- What is the timeline for subdivisions?
- Why is there an opportunity for subdivision denial for both first and final plats?
- Will any existing businesses be grandfathered...i.e. regarding buffer zones?
- Who owns and pays taxes on open space?
- What is the purpose of vegetative buffers?
- How do the proposed zoning violation fines compare to existing fines as I hope they are higher?
- Could we do more to promote pedestrian connectivity, such as requiring tunnels to connect commercial developments across highways?
- What procedure will subdivisions that already have some approvals now follow? The procedures in the old regulations or new ones?
- Related to above, if the standards change, will subdivisions with some approvals now follow the existing or new standards?
- Can a one-mile road have a dead-end or must the road be shorter?
- Does the Board of Education need to be involved in the Technical Advisory Committee?
- Does the bond amount have to be 75% or only 40% for existing subdivisions?*
- Don't understand the rationale behind 75% bonding?*
- How does the reduction in accessory building size for home occupations impact existing buildings larger than the minimum?
- What areas of the county are not currently zoned?
- Why not let houses be seen? (some clearing might look better)
- What is the purpose of waiting a full year to reapply if denied?
- Why is the agriculture district being created if it is not being applied to the map?
- How do these proposals impacts business/industry along the major highways?
- Can business/industry enlarge their buildings or area of operations?
- Are intermittent streams included in the buffers protected?
- Is the entire process really going to be a year or more for subdivisions?
- Unclear about the process for re-submitting a final plat?
- What is the rationale for excluding the floodplain?
- How would wastewater/septic be handled for larger conservation subdivisions?
- What happens when preliminary plat is rejected for properties with vested rights?
- Why worry about the size of buildings? Isn't that my decision since I own the property?

POINTS THEY WANT TO EMPHASIZE

- Don't forget the economic climate we are in and its impact on us
- Don't let economic situation lead to "unsound" practices
- "Wants" are good, but what about "needs" and "fairness"? The rules are driving up housing prices so that no one can afford a home here.
- "Secure necessary permits" should be in Step 4 after revised final plat to Planning Board. Why pay for permits until it looks like you will have approval? Also, other permits may be needed.

- I am most concerned that farmers will lose water to developments who tap wells to irrigate landscaping. We are a rural area first and those needs must be met.
- Dead-end roads have some advantages...less crime and safer for children to play
- Should only connect one subdivision to another if landlocked. One project can devalue another if they are connected.
- If there isn't language in the subdivision ordinance allowing the developer to get extensions based on poor economic conditions, this should be added.
- Potential length of the first 2 steps in Subdivision Ordinance is too long.
- Who wants to build a business if you can't see it from the road?
- Would like to see incentives for water conservation for all developments.
- Need to coordinate our requirements with Pittsboro, Siler City, etc. so that developers will know the requirements for all.
- We are an agricultural county first and we want to make sure we prevent collisions between farming and development that will hurt farming.
- We must protect our water supply...no irrigation for "prettiness", even with well water
- Commend the Board of Commissioners/Planning Board for getting started on this, especially getting developers to work with neighbors
- For subdivision ordinance, the potential process length is too long, especially the first 2 steps
- Applying new regulations to existing designs already in process could be a problem...i.e. the effect of new rules on previously approved sketch designs
- Grandfather existing applicants to avoid a mess

OTHER ISSUES (NOT SPECIFIC TO PROPOSED REVISIONS)

- I would like guidance on how to best utilize my land environmentally...what trees to save, what habitats to preserve, etc. Can we get that somewhere?
- Problems getting DOT to clean up after storms...if we add more developments, this will get worse.
- Need good leadership of the county ...don't like current leadership
- I want to see the major corridors work approved too...concerned about business developments on roads.
- The county should be working as hard on infrastructure as we are on buffers...why aren't we?

*NOTE: Several attendees were confused or concerned about changes related to % of improvements required vs. % bonding. One change is to increase 40% to 75% the amount of infrastructure to be completed before the County will consider accepting bonding on the remainder. The County already has the discretion to require all improvements to be done or to allow a financial guarantee to cover the remainder. The requirement is for all improvements to be completed at the time of final approval. The County may accept a financial guarantee but is not required to. This requires the developer to do more and the County to retain less in the financial guarantee.—Keith Megginson, Planning Director