



Stanly County Planning Board
October 10, 2022 - Meeting Minutes

Call to Order Vice-Chair David Underwood called the meeting to order on October 10, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in the Gene McIntyre meeting room at 1000 N. First Street, Albemarle, North Carolina.

Stanly County Planning Board members attending David Underwood, Tim Fesperman, Joel Mauldin, TJ Smith & Michael Williams

Absent: Jay Eckman - excused
Kevin Brickman - excused

Stanly County Planning Staff Attending Bob Remsburg, Planning Director & Bailey Emrich, Planner 2

Vice-Chair Underwood asked if there were any conflicts of interests with the case to be heard due to financial or personal relationships.

There were none

Vice-Chair Underwood asked if there were any other additions that the board needed to consider.
There were none.

Vice-Chair Underwood asked for a motion to approve the proposed agenda.

Motion: Michael Williams

Second: Tim Fesperman

Approved: 5-0

Vice-Chair Underwood asked for a motion to approve the minutes from September 12, 2022.

Motion: Tim Fesperman

Second: TJ Smith

Approved: 5-0

Vice Chair David Underwood stated that the board will consider three items. Two ten 10-lot subdivisions and the new Stanly County Land Use Plan.

Vice Chair Underwood shared that the first presentation was by the Centralina Regional Council of Governments who has been contracted to develop a new Stanly County Land-Use Plan.

Vice Chair Underwood thanked those who worked on the plan for their work.

Vice Chair Underwood invited those speaking to share the details of this request.

Michelle Nance of Centralina shared the following:

Thank you for having us and thank you to Stanly County for allowing us to be in the community and work with the residents on this plan. I want to start the presentation with some acknowledgements and then we will flow into the planning process. We will later talk about the future land use maps and those who represented the county in our steering committee.

I want to recognize the local talent, the steering committee. They were a very hardworking group and had a big job. They really guided this plan from start to finish. They helped develop the plan and took in everything they heard from the surveys and helped us identify those areas that needed to be addressed.

Our committee advisors participated in some in-depth interviews. They have specialized knowledge and they really helped make this plan the best that it could be.

I also wanted to thank Bob and Bailey, they have been instrumental in this plan and helping guide us along.

I lastly wanted to thank the Planning Board and Commissioners because without you all this would not be able to happen. You are an instrumental part of this community and make decisions that impact the future.

Let us discuss the planning process of it all. Our role was really to listen and understand what the residents of Stanly want to see for the future. We also discussed what growth and development is coming to the county. We did that by understanding what is here today but also what is the current and planned infrastructure. We put together a plan of action that would help the county grow while also prospering at the same time.

Michelle displayed slides showing the community engagement meetings.

There were a lot of stickers placed on maps concerning what people wanted to see and where. The surveys were great, we got 1,300 surveys back from community members. We did leadership lunches around the county, where we met with local leaders to discuss the future of the county. We went around to all the municipalities and we really talked about what growth pressures were happening in that part of the county. We also rode around to see where everything was and what expansions were happening.

Michelle introduced Reaghan Murphy.

Reaghan shared the following:

Understanding the importance of planning for growth and preservation proactively is key. That was a very important priority for the community members that we spoke with and saw. We did a mapping activity from April to May at our open house meetings. We asked folks to identify where they wanted to see certain types of development and where they wanted to see preservation as well. We had a lot of green stickers placed all over the map. We did an overlay of that map and digitized it to display here today for you to see what the community wants. In general, we saw folks wanting to see preservation throughout

the county's jurisdiction. Higher density residential and commercial were more requested in the municipalities. Folks really wanted to see rural vistas preserved along transportation corridors.

Reaghan went through charts to explain the questions that were asked on the surveys regarding types of growth and where they wanted to see those at.

What we learned the most is that Stanly County residents care so much about their community and seeing it preserved and places that they love preserved. Folks are really passionate and that is a huge strength of this community. The big takeaway is that folks want to see intentional and planned out growth led by infrastructure. Not necessarily leapfrogging the development of supportive infrastructure like water and sewer and transportation. They identified several key priorities that most folks agreed on pretty consistently which included agriculture, infrastructure, local economy, coordination and distribution of growth. We took all these community inputs that allowed us to craft a vision statement for the plan.

Reaghan shared that statement.

This vision is important because it formed the way that we would view the land use plan and the land use maps. We also created 6 key policy areas that emerged based on the takeaways, conversations, and community input that was given.

Reaghan shared those 6 key policies.

Based on all of the input we received we developed a methodology when it came to creating the land use maps and this methodology strived to balance growth and development with emphasis on the availability of infrastructure and the preservation of valuable farmland and other natural resources.

Reaghan shared the current land use map to show what was existing currently.

We looked at major transportation corridors, railroads, water and sewer and we did not just look at the existing infrastructure but we also considered capital improvement plans up to the next 20 years to understand where capacity is now and where it is planned to go in the future. We treated these municipalities almost as additional supportive infrastructure because of the community services that exist there. So that also guided the methodology and the feedback we received.

Reaghan shared a map displaying the existing and future infrastructure.

This is the map that really helped us identify the future land use designation areas.

We found three major identification areas and then designated the airport area as well. The main three areas are rural preservation, secondary growth and primary growth.

The rural preservation area is characterized by a low density agriculture, open space and large lot residential. The plan is recommending a minimum lot size of 5 acres within the rural preservation area to make sure the land is not cut up or sacrificed as smaller residential parcels. Major subdivisions are discouraged generally in this area unless they meet the recommended standards that are in the plan. Those

allow for some additional density which will have to be decided by the commissioners at a later date. A rural preservation area allows for major subdivision as long as a significant amount of the land is put into permanent preservation like Three Rivers [Land Conservancy].

Secondary Growth is more of a transitional area. It allows for slightly higher development density. Areas where infrastructure is not there yet but it is planned or close, generally fall into this category. There are mostly single family residential uses being recommended here. Recommended lot size is around 15,000 square feet which aligns with the current R20 zoning. It also does align with some commercial and industrial development.

The primary growth area is designated for the highest density development. That includes single family but also multi family so things like senior community and mixed use centers. That mixed use density is really inspired by that proximity to the supportive infrastructure and availability of community resources. The recommended lot size in that area is up to 3500 square feet or as low as 3500 square feet. That may change if you are looking at multi family or mixed use development.

Reaghan displayed the future community types and how it correlated to the three categories.

We took all of the stickers that were placed on the map at the community engagement meetings and put them on the future land use designation map that we produced and we found that overall the maps really do align with each other and display what the community wants. We wanted it to reflect the community's vision.

A quick overview of what will be included in the plan itself is an introductory chapter, existing conditions chapter, community engagement process chapter, future land use chapter and the final chapter is the policy recommendations and strategies.

Reaghan allowed the steering committee members to speak.

Kelly Hart shared the following:

Being a part of this land use committee has been enlightening in a lot of ways but the biggest one was that a large number of people had the same views on the county and what they would like to see in the future. From long-time and new residents both, people were looking for a rural area to raise their families. As we heard from the surveys and community meetings it became evident that maintaining the county's agricultural environment became a top priority for its residents. The people wanted the most growth and density to be focused in the municipalities and where both water and sewer are available. Based on the information gathered it is my thought that the plan before you tonight blends perfectly with what the county wants to see.

Candice Lowder, Stanly County Economic Development Director shared the following:

I would like to recognize those that worked behind the scenes Bob, Bailey, Reaghan and Michelle. I feel like the plan put before you is a solid compromise of the priorities of the citizens of this community.

Preservation and stewardship are priorities of the plan and we believe it balances the growth that we all know we are going to be pressured to have due to our distance from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community. The land use maps were made collaboratively and based on the supportive infrastructure that is already here so hopefully this will not impact economic development projects moving forward . The plan considers all existing zoning designations and takes into account the economic development target growth areas. We believe these recommendations will strengthen Stanly County’s competitive advantage to live, work, and play. The policies around manufacturing connect land use, transportation, infrastructure, and ensure Stanly County can maintain our competitive advantage as we attract and retrain employers and their work forces. I personally believe that this plan will serve as a critical road map for the future development of Stanly County. I have lived in the county and been in local government for over 15 years and am still learning.

Travis Morehead, Three Rivers Land Trust shared the following:

My day job is the Executive Director of Three Rivers Land Trust, so conservation is something that I do everyday. When you apply the principles that we heard so strongly from the surveys and the feedback, it does so much to benefit Stanly County. It preserves North Carolina’s number one industry which is agriculture. I can't overstate that fact because between 2001 to 2016 North Carolina lost 732,000 acres of agricultural lands. We are projected to lose 1.1 million between now and 2040 if plans like this are not adopted across the state. That study was done by the American Farmland Trust. So those are significant things that this plan addresses. When you think about the context of how this plan is made you are saying very low density in these rural areas which is great. It gives folks an opportunity to put the growth in the municipalities, which is great. Think about our school system, we all recognize the shortcomings that sometimes the school system has and it affects so many things by putting that growth around those cities and leaving those areas in the county active agricultural. When folks drive by those active farms, they might think those fields are vacant but I will tell them all the time that it houses North Carolina's number one industry. If you approve this plan you are being forward thinking of our conservation efforts in the county and the state but you are also making a wise decision in using our resources for the future regarding schools and infrastructure. North Carolina has 59 percent of national significant soil which is so important. Once you cover the prime soil up you have truly lost it forever. I highly recommend you approve this plan. Thank you for your time.

Michelle Nance thanked the Planning Board for hearing the presentation of the plan.
Michelle Nance asked if there were any questions.

Tim Fesperman “I noticed the members of the committee, one thing that stands out to me is that there seems to be no one from emergency services included in this process. You look at some of these maps and measure how far it is from an ambulance base, it is a long way from primary or secondary growth. If you listen to the radio it used to be once or twice a month we would run out of ambulances but now it is daily. I am a little concerned that none of these people were involved from fire or police services. The area below Stanfield is rapidly growing and presenting problems.”

Michelle Nance “One of the points that Travis made that I will underline is keeping that growth closer to the municipalities, has a cost to it.”

Tim Fesperman “Well, most of those services are not municipality generated. Your fire departments in the county are not municipality generated. Those are county functions that are to everyone. Where you put them is important. But just because you put them in the municipality that is far away is not solving the problem. I think emergency services should be included in these plans.”

Bob Remsburg “You are correct that we probably should have included someone. The challenge was making a diverse committee and meeting that balance. We went through a change in the Emergency Services director position while this was being developed. We do have you and TJ with the background.”

Michelle Nance “We did have the opportunity to meet with the county manager on several occasions to talk through the plan.”

TJ Smith “So the survey you did through the county, was there a lot of people who showed up?”

Michelle Nance “We had about 1300 people fill those out and the steering committee used their networks to push that out. Some of the county commissioners had big followings as well. So most of it came in digitally but we did have some paper copies come in. The open houses were in person.”

The Vice Chair invited anyone else to come speak for or against.
No one came forward.

The Vice Chair asked for a motion to recommend to the County Commissioners adoption of the Stanly County Land Use Plan.

Motion: TJ Smith

Second: Michael Williams

Approved: 5-0

Vice Chair David Underwood shared that the Stanly County Commissioners will likely hear this request at their November 7, 2022 meeting.

The Board had a 10 minute recess.

The Vice Chair introduced the second item on the agenda, a request to approve a 10-lot subdivision design by Marlow Electric Company with Eagle Engineering for a 12.08 acre lot on Brattain Road, Locust.

Bob Remsburg shared the following details:

This is a 10 lot subdivision on 12.08 acres with the smallest lot being 43,926 square feet. Two entrances and a long shared driveway which is an interesting design. The driveway will be maintained by the HOA. There is an 8 inch waterline extension with hydrants to serve that area. The waterline is coming off Bethel Church Road. There will be a septic system for each lot, they have perked 3 lots which all did fine. They

have proposed preserved space which relates to the Land Use Plan indirectly in that if you are driving along Bethel Church you won't really see this because of that preserved space. They have proposed a sidewalk along Brattain Road with the central mailbox between lots 6 and 7. It is in a growth area per the Land Use Plan, it is zoned RA. Traffic on Bethel Church Road is about 2,000 cars per day depending on if school is in session or not. Construction criteria points were achieved by water in a growth area, tree preservation, minor HOA, sign and landscaping at the corner of Bethel and Brattain and the sidewalk. The design is unique, the same company is doing a development is Locust and looks fairly similar to this. This was approved by DOT.

Tim Fesperman "Is that because DOT will not allow individual driveways?"

Bob Remsburg "Yes."

Tim Fesperman "So that would serve almost as a service road?"

Bob Remsburg "Yes, and will be maintained by the HOA which will be like a driveway agreement."

Bob Remsburg "They are fairly deep lots and in fact the hash area is the proposed septic area. The homes are fairly close to the road but depending on the septic systems they can move the homes further back. They actually own both sides of Brattain Road"

Bob Remsburg further explained the maps on the slideshow.

Tim Fesperman "Where do the waterline and hydrants go, do they go on that driveway?"

Bob Remsburg "They will probably go along the road probably and follow the right of way."

Joel Mauldin "Is that road one way in and one way out?"

Bob Remsburg "I was hoping that they would be here to answer those questions, I do not know. I would make it that way if I were them."

Michael Williams "It looked like on the map that there were entrances on both sides."

Bob Remsburg "It did look that way but I am not sure of their plan."

TJ Smith "Before it got to us did the Fire Marshall look at this?"

Tim Fesperman "I was looking, it is so close to the road and the waterline. If a house was on fire I have a feeling that all the fight will be off of Brattain Road anyways. That is just a thought. If they set the homes way back that may not be the case. It is a private road and would be like a driveway and the fire department cannot dictate the size of a driveway. It is like these gated communities that don't build the gates big enough for the fire trucks to get through."

David Underwood "There again, they can service that from Brattain Road."

Bob Remsburg "Right, the required setbacks would be 50 feet from the house."

Bob Remsburg "The Fire Marshall did receive it but he has not replied to it."

Michael Williams "It looks like on the map it says they are not planning construction for two more years."

Vice Chair Underwood “What is the limit on presenting, it is three years?”
Bailey Emrich “2 years.”

Vice Chair Underwood “In my opinion, it is better to have one driveway instead of 10.”

TJ Smith “My only concern is that I know how these things work and the small driveway, they will hold a garage, car and all of their other stuff. There will be no room and that driveway will fill up and get backed up. From what I did, the driveway isn't but 25 feet.”

TJ Smith “Are we legally able to say that we would like them to have at least 4 cars per driveway.”

Bob Remsburg “You do hold a card that requires you to review and approve plans. If the plan meets the code generally you cannot turn it down. It is not conditional zoning or a developers agreement, but this is a situation where you have some leverage to say that you agree with it but you strongly recommend that the driveway be at least 30 feet long.”

Joel Mauldin “If this is not supposed to start construction until 2024 then why do we not table this and let them come in and explain it to us. Because right now we are acting as the developers.”

Vice Chair David Underwood entertained a motion to table this request until the next scheduled Planning Board meeting.

Motion: TJ Smith

Second: Tim Fesperman

Approved: 5-0

Vice Chair David Underwood introduced the third item on the agenda, a request to approve a 10-lot subdivision by Steve Helms of Helms Builders for a 23.86 acre subdivision on the southeast corner of Lake Glenn Drive and Renee Ford Road, Stanfield.

Bob Remsburg Shared the following details:

23.86 acres with the smallest lot being 1.03 acres and the largest lot being almost 5 acres. It has a driveway entrance on Lake Glenn Drive and one entrance on Renee Ford road but it serves 2 lots. They will have Stanfield water with septic systems. It is currently located in a growth area but in the future it would not be. It certainly has very large lots. It is zoned RA and Renee Ford Road sees about 3800 cars per day. The existing Lake Glenn subdivision has 18 homes in it. He got his construction criteria points from large lots, tree preservation and public water.

Bob Remsburg displayed the proposed layout on the slideshow

Tim Fesperman “What is the average lot size in the Lake Glenn subdivision?”

Bob Remsburg “They should be about 30,000 square feet as long as they do not pre-date zoning. You see the lots along Polk Ford Road with the larger lots. It does meet all the requirements of the subdivisions.”

TJ Smith “Is DOT going to require them to widen that road?”

Tim Fesperman “They won't require them to widen Renee Ford Road.”

Bob Remsburg “This is not enough lots to require the widening of a road. But there is a change coming to that area, they are going to be putting in a four way stop at that intersection of Renee Ford and River Road.”

No one was present to speak for or against.

Vice Chair David Underwood entertained a motion to approve the preliminary design for the subdivision on Lake Glenn Road.

Motion: Michael Willaims

Second: Joel Mauldin

Approved: 5-0

Vice Chair David Underwood entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Tim Fesperman

Second: TJ Smith

Approved: 5-0

Time of adjournment: 7:57 PM

Vice Chair, David Underwood

Clerk, Bailey Emrich