

MACON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

March 22, 2006

A meeting of the Macon County Planning Board was held on March 22, 2006 at the Macon County Environmental Resource Center. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Board members present were Ronnie Beale, Lamar Sprinkle, Susan Ervin, Evelyn Southard, Larry Stenger, Jimmy Goodman, Evelyn Owens, Alan Marsh, Mark West, Mike Decker, Eric Pierson, County Planner Stacy Guffey and Planning Assistant Gregory Hunt, members of the press and members of the general public, Rick Moorefield – County Attorney, Jack Morgan – Chief Building Inspector, Richard Lightner – County Appraiser, Josh Pope – County Mapping, Barry Patterson – Director of Environmental Health, Rebecca Crawford – Town of Franklin Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Alan Marsh made a motion to amend the minutes to include Mike Decker and Alan Marsh as being present at the January 18th meeting. Evelyn Southard seconded the motion and the minutes were accepted and passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No unfinished business

PUBLIC SESSION:

Bill Dyar spoke about the forum that was held at Tartan Hall and on development on property next to him and the impact of this development on his property. Dyar requested that run off be addressed in the future.

John Sill thanked the Board for the work done to date and the need to adopt an ordinance that could be enforced. Sill suggested looking for monies to help fund enforcement. Sill also addressed erosion prevention methods.

Bill Van Horn applauded the Board on work done and time line set to work on Subdivision Regulations Ordinance. Van Horn commented on ways to bring problems to the attention of those charged with enforcing ordinances. Van Horn gave examples of concerns regarding subdivisions and other issues.

Marty Kimsey spoke on his appreciation of the Board's work and on how the Erosion Control Ordinance handles most of the concerns mentioned previously. Kimsey asked the Board to move slowly and cautiously since subdivision development in his opinion has gotten better not worst. Kimsey asked the Board to stop and not rush into writing a Subdivision Ordinance.

Chuck Coburn spoke of his time in Florida and here in Macon County and how that affected his view of the subject of ordinances. Coburn stated subdivision regulations should have been in place 10 years earlier while he lived in Florida and the Board should not wait to do a subdivision ordinance here.

NEW BUSINESS:

Beale described how the Planning Board utilizes the public to give input on work on ordinances and other work done by the Board. Beale then announced that several County employees were present to speak on the impact of growth and development is having on their departments.

Richard Lightner spoke on growth of county and elevated rate of taxes on property. Lightner talked about planning for development on slopes. For taxation some developers are recording one lot at a time to keep lower tax rates. Lightner also mentioned the tax office is having problems tying housing and lots that do not coordinate in deeds recorded. Lightner spoke on the issue of who takes care of roads in wash outs or heavy rains.

Stenger asked about growth of subdivisions from 2005 to 2006. Lightner responded that there are 2 to 3 each month with over 3 to 4 lots being divided. Ervin asked for specific things Lightner sees as a need to be included in the proposed Subdivision Ordinance. Lightner stated that the key is community development and Macon County should come up with a plan for community development. Goodman asked Lightner if he thought subdivisions are getting better or worst. Lightner responded that some are good and some are bad.

Sprinkle asked Josh Pope from County Mapping about illegal maps. An open discussion began on the existence of mentioned illegal maps and questionable deeds.

Barry Patterson talked on his experience since June 2005, when he became the Director of the County Environmental Health Department. Patterson stated that he has about half the staff needed to keep up with the growth in Macon County. Patterson mentioned that his department is about 12 weeks behind on inspections and permits. The Environmental Health Department will be getting its 6th staff member in July. Patterson also stated that the inspection/permit process will never get better than 3 to 4 week waiting period. Patterson anticipates 4 developments with 350 lots in the next 6 months in addition to regular work load. Patterson announced his department sees 110-120 permit applications per month, 45 to 50 new installations per month and 600-650 per year. Patterson answered the question about septic and water on slopes in Macon County. Patterson stated that 65% of slopes are not able to have septic approval; this is about one third of the County. Patterson mentioned that the average lot size is 3,500 to 5,000 square feet is needed on flat ground and 1 ½ acres are needed for slopes. Patterson also mentioned that 100 feet setback between the well and septic is the general accepted guidelines.

Jack Morgan shared his impressions on what is coming in the future for Macon County in the way of development and growth. Morgan talked about his meetings with developers and their disbelief of no regulations in Macon County for them to build subdivisions. Morgan mentioned that the State of NC has no steep slope regulations. Morgan asked the Board to do something to get a hold on what is to come. Morgan gave examples of poor judgment of home builders. Gave his recommendation for Subdivision Ordinance pertaining to lot size based on slope, roads based on wide and number of homes.

Alan Marsh left meeting at 4:30 PM because of prior commitment.

Beale asked to set a continuation of this meeting for March 29th at 5:00 PM.

Beale closed County Employee roundtable discussion and opened discussion on Subdivision Ordinance. Guffey and Beale announced that the Board could not discuss the Proposed Draft of the Subdivision Regulations Ordinance since the County Attorney had left the meeting and it could not be discussed without Mr. Moorefield being present. Beale mentioned the Board would need to meet more often to work on the Subdivision Ordinance.

Beale entertained a motion to continue this meeting until Wednesday, March 29, 2006 at 5:00 PM.

Stenger made a motion to continue the meeting and Jimmy Goodman seconded it, all voted and it passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Ronnie Beale - Chairman

Stacy Guffey - Clerk/Secretary to the Board