Moore County

Planning Board

May 7, 2026 | 6:00 PM
Historic Courthouse
1 Courthouse Square
Carthage, NC 28327

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Tyler Brady; Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie; Board Member Robert Bortins; Board Member Ron Jackson; Board Member Guy McGraw

STAFF PRESENT: Danielle Orloff, Senior Planner; Kathryn Stapleton, Senior Planner Ashley Robinson, Administrative Officer; Misty Randall Leland, County Attorney; Laura Williams, Assistant County Manager; Zachary Garner, Support Specialist II and Nathan Trueblood, Cadet Deputy

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brady called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM,

INVOCATION *Member Volunteer*

The invocation was delivered by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE *Member Volunteer*

Chairman Brady led the Pledge of Allegiance

MISSION STATEMENT *Member Volunteer*

Board Member Bortins read the Mission Statement

I. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Please sign up on the Public Comment Sign-in sheet near the door

No Public Comments

II. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Vice Chair McKenzie made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Board Member Bortins seconded. Motion passed **(5-0).**

1. Approval of Minutes of April 2, 2026, Planning Board Meeting

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III. ADDITIONAL AGENDA

Chairman Brady inquired whether any Planning Board member had a conflict of interest concerning the agenda items to be addressed at the meeting. Hearing none, the Chairman indicated the Board would proceed.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Conventional Rezoning Request: ParID 00053286, US 15-501 Hwy., from Rural Agricultural (RA) and Neighborhood Business (B-1) to Neighborhood Business (B-1).

Senior Planner Kathryn Stapleton presented the conventional rezoning request for a parcel located on US 15-501 Hwy., identified as Parcel ID 00053286. Senior Planner Stapleton explained that the request was to rezone a portion of a 10.5-acre parcel owned by Dabbs Brothers LLC from Rural Agricultural (RA) and Neighborhood Business (B-1) to Neighborhood Business (B-1) in its entirety.

Senior Planner Stapleton provided historical background, noting that the property had carried split zoning established prior to 2010. The front 400 feet of the property had been assigned to a Rural Business (RB) zoning district at that time due to existing and adjacent commercial businesses. When the Unified Development Ordinance was adopted in February 2014, the RB zoning district was updated to the Neighborhood Business (B-1) zoning district. The rezoning request would bring the entirety of the property under the Neighborhood Business (B-1) designation, consistent with the front portion already zoned as such.

Senior Planner Stapleton noted that the property is not located in a watershed or flood zone and is not within a half mile of a voluntary agricultural district. Referencing the zoning map, she described the property as situated near other Neighborhood Business (B-1) and Highway Commercial (B-2) zoning to the north, with Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning also present in the area. Adjacent commercial uses in the vicinity include Lee Electrical Construction approximately a half mile to the north and Estes Trucking Company further north on 15-501. Senior Planner Stapleton presented photographs of the property taken from multiple vantage points along US 15-501 Hwy., noting a vacant building across the highway believed to be owned by Pope Electric.

Senior Planner Stapleton concluded that the requested Neighborhood Business (B-1) rezoning is consistent with existing uses located near the property and is supported by the zoning and land use map designations. She advised that the land use plan supports the request, as the Neighborhood Business zoning district increases accessibility among living, working, and shopping and is conveniently located along US 15-501 Hwy. in proximity to existing commercial businesses.

Staff recommended the Planning Board make two separate motions: first, to adopt the Moore County Planning Board Land Use Plan Consistency Statement and authorize the Chairman to execute the document as required by North Carolina General Statute 160D-604; and second, to recommend approval or denial to the Moore County Board of Commissioners for the conventional rezoning.

Planning Board Member Ron Jackson asked whether the property owner had owned the property before the split zoning was established. Senior Planner Stapleton confirmed that the applicant had owned the property for quite some time and that the RB zoning had been in place prior to his ownership, likely due to existing commercial activity on the site at the time. She noted that the Neighborhood Business

(B-1) zoned portion currently encompasses only the front portion of the property along the highway frontage.

Chairman Brady opened the public hearing. Planning Board Clerk Robinson called William Dabbs as the sole registered speaker.

Mr. William Dabbs, 233 Dogwood Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina, addressed the Board. He stated that he had owned the land for several years and that when he purchased the property, it was already zoned commercial along its highway frontage. Mr. Dabbs noted that he had been in Moore County since 1994 and had been developing land in Moore County for approximately fifteen years. He explained that he is in the process of phasing out of his Moore County business activities as he transitions toward retirement and is spending more time on the coast. He stated that he does not have specific development plans for the property at this time but acknowledged that having the entirety of the parcel zoned commercial would make it more marketable and allow him to better realize its value if he chooses to sell. Mr. Dabbs mentioned awareness of nearby residential developments, including Legacy Lakes and a proposed McKee subdivision across the street, and suggested that at some point the property might be marketed for a small retail business, coffee shop, day care, or similar use—though he emphasized that any buyer would need to come in with their own plans and go through the appropriate review process. He summarized his primary goal as seeking uniform Neighborhood Business (B-1) zoning across the parcel with an eventual intent to sell.

The Chairman asked whether any Board members had questions for Mr. Dabbs. Hearing none, the Chairman confirmed there were no additional speakers and closed the public hearing.

Board Member Jackson moved to adopt the Moore County Planning Board Land Use Plan Consistency Statement as **consistent**, and to authorize the Chairman to execute the document as required by Northa Carolina General Statute 160D-604. The motion was seconded by Board Member Bortins. No discussion was held. The motion passed **5-0**.

Board Member Bortins moved to recommend **approval** to the Moore County Board of Commissioners for a conventional rezoning of a portion of one parcel located on US 15-501 Hwy., identified as Parcel ID 00053286, per Deed Book 4674, Pages 440–441, through the Moore County Registry, owned by Dabbs Brothers LLC, containing approximately 10.5 acres, from Rural Agricultural (RA) and Neighborhood Business (B-1) to Neighborhood Business (B-1). The motion was seconded by Board Member Jackson. No discussion was held. The motion passed **5-0**.

V. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Danielle Orloff, Senior Planner

Senior Planner Danielle Orloff delivered a presentation summarizing the discussions that had taken place at a Board of Commissioners work sessions held on April 14, April 20, and May 4, 2026, regarding proposed UDO text amendments related to subdivisions and the Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCOD). Senior Planner Orloff emphasized that no votes were being taken at this meeting, and that the purpose of the presentation was to ensure that the Planning Board knew of the previous work session discussions in advance of the upcoming joint work session with the Board of Commissioners scheduled for May 18, 2026. Senior Planner Orloff noted that the May 18 meeting would start at 3:00 PM and that Planning Board members who had comments or concerns but could not attend were asked to submit written statements to her by Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

Subdivision Discussion Summary

Senior Planner Orloff explained that prior to the May 4 work session, there had been two previous work sessions with the Board of Commissioners—one focused on subdivisions and one on the HCOD—and that the May 4 session was a combined review of both topics. She summarized the outcome of the Commissioners' discussions on subdivisions as follows:

Regarding **minor subdivisions**, the Commissioners elected to keep the minor subdivision definition the same, maintaining the maximum of four lots. The Board agreed to correct certain language for clarity, particularly removing what Senior Planner Orloff described as confusing or unfair language related to the "500 feet from the original property boundaries" provision—specifically, the requirement would be amended to read "inside parent tract boundary and exclusive adjacent parcel owners for a period of 3 years," so that non-adjacent parcel owners across the street or otherwise unaffected by the subdivision would not be unnecessarily notified. The three-year waiting period was retained without change, and the allowance of minor subdivisions in all zoning districts where dimensional standards are met was also unchanged. One substantive proposed change was the addition of all department reviews to the checklist (Section 19.16), so that agencies such as the fire marshal and public utilities would be included in the review of minor subdivision plats. Senior Planner Orloff noted that there had been issues with access easements being used as roads without meeting fire code requirements, and that adding the fire marshal review to the checklist would help ensure compliance with standards such as 20-foot width, 13-foot 6-inch clearance, and accommodation of 76,000 pounds. She also noted the potential implementation of a road maintenance agreement for life safety purposes, to ensure that all owners of access easements understand their obligations to maintain those easements to applicable standards.

Regarding **major subdivisions**, Senior Planner Orloff outlined two key proposed changes that emerged from the Commissioners' discussions. First, the Commissioners proposed removing the Special Use Permit (SUP) requirement for major subdivisions in RA-20, RA-40, and RA-USB zoning districts, replacing it with a Subdivision Review Board (SRB) approval process only and reclassifying major subdivisions as permitted by right in those districts. She explained the current process—which includes pre-application, infrastructure and fire flow testing, SRB review of preliminary plat, and then a quasi-judicial SUP hearing before the Board of Commissioners—and noted that the proposed change would streamline the process by removing the special use permit requirement. Second, the requirement for a fully approved stormwater management plan at the preliminary plat stage would be shifted to the final plat stage; at preliminary plat, only a stormwater narrative would be required. Senior Planner Orloff noted that a full stormwater management plan is a costly undertaking and that requiring it at preliminary plat—before an SUP is granted—creates financial risk for developers who might ultimately be denied. Under the proposed process, as-built inspections, construction drawings, and final plat review would still be required before any lots are created. She also mentioned that staff and the county engineer were working to better separate and delineate stormwater and watershed (quantity vs quality) requirements within the UDO, as the two are often confused.

The Board engaged in a substantive discussion on the stormwater narrative proposal. Planning Vice Chair McKenzie, drawing on his background as an engineer, expressed support for the concept of moving the full stormwater management plan to the final plat stage, but emphasized the importance of having very clear guidelines around what the narrative at the preliminary plat stage must include—such as pre- and post-development flow estimates—so that expectations are well understood and developers know what they will ultimately need to achieve. He noted that from a public confidence standpoint, clarity around the narrative would help address concerns that stormwater management is being deferred without accountability. Senior Planner Orloff confirmed that this discussion had already been had with staff and the county engineer, and that they were actively working on separating the stormwater and watershed language to make the requirements more self-explanatory, though she acknowledged that the full resolution of that issue may not be ready in time for the May 18 meeting.

Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCOD) Discussion Summary

Senior Planner Orloff then transitioned to a summary of HCOD discussions. She explained the basic structure of the HCOD, noting that it is an overlay district—not a taking—that applies an additional set of requirements on top of existing zoning districts. She noted that the overlay was not applicable to residential uses in any form and that historical errors applying the overlay to residential parcels had been corrected. She outlined the two subdistricts: the Rural Highway subdistrict, which generally applies to corridors leading outside the county away from municipalities (primarily US 1, US 15-501 from Carthage ETJ to Lee County, and NC 690), and the Urban Transition subdistrict, which applies to corridors between municipalities (including US 1 from Southern Pines ETJ north to Cameron's ETJ, and US 15-501 between Pinehurst and Carthage). Both subdistricts currently apply a blanket 400-foot setback from the right-of-way on either side, a standard established when the UDO was rewritten5. Senior Planner Orloff noted that discussions around potentially reducing this width were ongoing. She also noted that since certain sections of the 15-501 corridor between Aberdeen and Hope County are increasingly rural in character—particularly past the Seven Lakes area—there was discussion about reclassifying that portion from Urban Transition to Rural Highway.

Senior Planner Orloff referenced the down-zoning bill currently in effect at the state level and cautioned that any HCOD standards that are removed would not be able to be re-added in the future, which made the discussion of what to change particularly impactful.

Senior Planner Orloff walked through examples of how uses are evaluated within the HCOD, illustrating that the overlay adds a layer of use review on top of the underlying zoning district. In the Urban Transition subdistrict, certain uses such as warehousing are on the prohibited list and cannot be requested, whereas they would not be prohibited in the Rural Highway subdistrict.

This prompted discussion among Board members about the practical effects of the use restrictions in the overlay. Vice Chair McKenzie stated that he struggled with the concept of prohibiting a use in the highway corridor that is otherwise permitted in the underlying zoning district, using warehousing as an example. He argued that this effectively pushes such uses further off the highway and onto secondary roads, increasing neighborhood traffic impacts rather than reducing them. He suggested that the use restrictions within HCOD might be worth eliminating altogether, with the zoning district itself serving as the appropriate mechanism for determining allowable uses, and that the HCOD's value lies primarily in the aesthetic and design standards it establishes—particularly with respect to viewsheds along corridors. He acknowledged that this was a broad statement and offered to put his thoughts in writing ahead of the May 18 session.

Board Member Jackson echoed this concern, stating that the county had lost businesses that would have been beneficial because of the highway overlay's restrictions, giving Duke Energy as an example of an entity that requires direct highway access and will not locate on a secondary road. He argued that if the underlying zoning is not appropriate, it should be corrected directly rather than addressed by layering additional restrictions on top of it. Senior Planner Orloff confirmed that the use discussion had not been deeply explored at the May 4 Commissioner's review and acknowledged that it would be a significant point for the May 18 joint session.

Member Jackson also raised a question about the HCOD's parking standards and the rationale for required parking setbacks. Senior Planner Orloff explained that the original intent of the corridor standards was to preserve views of the rural landscape as travelers approach municipalities, rather than presenting a view of parking lots immediately adjacent to the highway. She noted that the overlay includes specific parking paving, striping, and curbing requirements for the Urban Transition subdistrict but not the Rural Highway subdistrict.

Vice Chair McKenzie expressed his view that the intent of protecting viewsheds is sound, but that the focus should be on buffer and landscaping standards rather than the location of parking noting that a parking lot set behind meaningful landscaping is quite different from one with no screening at all. He drew a comparison to a manufacturing facility he had observed on a highway in Stanly County, where the absence of any landscaping buffer between the building, parking lot, and the roadway created an undesirable visual result, and argued that meaningful landscape and buffer requirements—even if trees take time to mature—are the appropriate tool rather than prohibiting uses outright.

Senior Planner Orloff noted that the HCOD currently allows up to five years for plantings to grow in and suggested that a slightly larger setback might help mitigate visibility concerns during that establishment period. She also noted there is a 50/50 evergreen and deciduous mix requirement to avoid situations where all plantings die off or lose their screening capacity simultaneously.

Vice Chair McKenzie raised concern about the HCOD's current design standards, which require the entire building to meet design requirements. He noted that a proposed option being considered would limit design standard requirements to only the highway-facing facade of the building, which would reduce costs for developers while still addressing the primary visual concern from the corridor. Senior Planner Orloff confirmed this was on the table as a potential compromise but had not yet been decided.

Board Member Bortins, noting that he would be out of the country and unable to attend the May 18 joint session, asked whether he could submit written comments. Senior Planner Orloff confirmed that written comments submitted by Tuesday, May 12, would be incorporated into the presentation. Board Member Bortins then raised a creative procedural question related to the down-zoning bill, asking whether it might be possible to implement certain changes on a time-limited or temporary basis—such as a "dollar" incentive provision with a defined expiration date—so that the county could adjust standards to incentivize development over a defined period without permanently removing protections that could not later be restored. County Attorney Leland said that this would not be allowed.

Board Member Jackson also requested that Senior Planner Orloff bring information to the May 18 meeting about setback standards applicable within municipalities, noting that the interaction between county HCOD standards and municipal annexation activity along the corridors creates inconsistencies that the Board should be aware of when making decisions.

Senior Planner Orloff summarized the purpose and timeline: the May 18 joint work session is intended to result in a clear direction on what changes will be brought forward as a text amendment for the June 4, 2026 Planning Board meeting, with a corresponding hearing before the Board of Commissioners also scheduled for June. .

VI. BOARD COMMENT PERIOD

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Bortins moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Board Member Jackson. Motion passed **5-0**. The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ashley Robinson