



Moore County

Planning Board Special Meeting

July 9, 2026 | 4:00 PM
Historic Courthouse
1 Courthouse Square
Carthage, NC 28327

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Tyler Brady; Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie; Board Member Hugh Hinton; Board Member Ron Jackson; Board Member Guy McGraw; Board Member John McLaughlin; Board Member David Mclean; Board Member Curtis Self;

STAFF PRESENT: Ruth Pedersen, Planning Director; Danielle Orloff, Senior Planner; Ashley Robinson, Administrative Officer; Wayne Vest, County Manager; Laura Williams, Assistant County Manager; Misty Leland, County Attorney; Brian Patnode, Public Works Director; Tom Blue, County Engineer; Matthew Dawkins; Deputy Fire Marshall; Nicholas Stamatopoulos, Assistant Fire Marshal; Zachary Garner, Support Specialist II and Brad Huizinga, Kayla Kern Sheriff

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brady called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

INVOCATION

The invocation was delivered by Board Member David McLean.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Tyler Brady led the Pledge of Allegiance

MISSION STATEMENT

I. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Chair opened the general public comment period, clarifying that speakers addressing a specific public hearing item later on the agenda should reserve their comments for that hearing and would not be permitted to speak at both.

Danny Harward expressed concern over what he described as exponential growth across Moore County. He stated that he had attended multiple public meetings and planning sessions related to the land use plan update and feared that proposed UDO changes would undermine protections for rural and agricultural areas. He urged the

Board to resist changes that would remove citizens' ability to speak before commissioners on development matters and appealed to the Board to be a "beacon on the hill" for common citizens and future generations.

Alisa Davis, representing the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, noted that approximately 4,000 acres of Sandhills Game Lands lie within Moore County. She explained that development adjacent to game lands threatens the agency's ability to conduct prescribed burns essential to maintaining longleaf savanna ecosystems and supporting military training activities. She urged the Board to maintain working land uses adjacent to game and conservation lands.

Gayle Mace expressed concern that many Seven Lakes residents were unaware of the proposed changes. She noted that Seven Lakes is unincorporated and therefore entirely reliant on county government for land use protections. She raised water supply as a critical infrastructure concern, noting that the community had already entered Stage One water conservation measures, and asked that any decisions be made responsibly with community input.

Matthew Parker raised several concerns: the risk of overburdening infrastructure—particularly the East Moore Water District—beyond its capacity for existing residents; the inadequacy of some stormwater management designs seen in the county; and the importance of directing growth toward municipalities that wish to host it, rather than into rural areas. He questioned the rationale for making development easier given overwhelming public sentiment favoring preservation.

Angela Vacek spoke about her experiences with satellite annexation in Vass and the lack of coordination between municipalities and the county on growth planning. She expressed concern about the pace and density of development, its effects on schools and infrastructure, and asked the Board to exercise greater caution.

Joe Freeman a farmer, emphasized that the adopted land use plan has clear goals and that UDO amendments must be consistent with those goals. He also noted that the public-facing agenda did not clearly describe what specific changes were being proposed, making it difficult for citizens to evaluate individual items.

Reese Slavich spoke on behalf of veterans and rural landowners, emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and preserving agricultural land so that future generations may sustain themselves on their own property.

Terry Bryant a farmer, cautioned against increasing development density. He observed that congested developments are the kinds of neighborhoods people eventually want to leave, argued for keeping density as low as possible, and urged the Board to adhere closely to the land use plan.

II. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of June 4, 2026, Planning Board Meeting

Board Member David Mclean made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Board Member John McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed **(8-0)**.

III. ADDITIONAL AGENDA

1. Conflict of Interest

The Chair inquired whether any Planning Board member had a conflict of interest with any agenda item. No conflicts were declared.

The Chair then moved to reorganize the order of public hearing items, noting that Agenda Item IV.4 (Chapter 6, Table of Uses – Major Subdivision) would be taken up first, as its outcome would have bearing on the Chapter 19 amendments.

Motion to reorder the agenda, moving Public Hearing item 4 to the first position was made by Board Member Guy McGraw and seconded by Board Member Curtis Self. Motion Passed **(8-0)**.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

4. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 6 Table of Uses, Section 6.1 (Principal Use Table), Section 6.1.J. (Major Subdivision)

Senior Planner Danielle Orloff presented the proposed amendment, which would remove the Special Use Permit (SUP) requirement for major subdivisions in the RA-20, RA-40, and RA-USB zoning districts and reclassify them as permitted by right. Under the proposed change, the Subdivision Review Board (SRB) would serve as the final approval authority for preliminary plats, eliminating the requirement for a quasi-judicial hearing before the Board of Commissioners.

Staff noted that the amendment would also formally add minor, exempt, family, and limited subdivisions to the principal use table for transparency, as those categories are currently permitted by right in all zoning districts but were not previously listed.

The land use plan consistency analysis identified arguments on both sides: proponents argued the change streamlines review and applies objective criteria; opponents noted it would remove the ability of citizens withstanding to testify in a quasi-judicial process

and would eliminate Board of Commissioners oversight of individual major subdivision decisions.

The following signed up or requested to speak during the public hearing:

Michael Parker a land use plan steering committee member, provided a detailed explanation of the quasi-judicial process and argued forcefully against its elimination. He identified what he characterized as five broad categories of proposed UDO changes and explained that the by-right conversion would effectively remove all meaningful public oversight of major subdivisions. He argued that the appeal process available under a by-right system places an unreasonable burden on citizens and provides inadequate notice.

Matthew Parker added that the practical effect of converting to by-right approval would be to make any future Board of Commissioners vote inseparable from responsibility for the policy change itself. He suggested that if by-right approval were adopted, that record of restraint would effectively be voided. He also proposed that a potential compromise—down-zoning a portion of the RA-20/RA-40 land to a less dense classification—was foreclosed by the state's current down-zoning prohibition, making the change effectively irreversible.

Jeff Marcus also a land use plan steering committee member, argued that the by-right change conflicts with the plan's overarching goals of maintaining rural character and protecting sensitive natural resources. **Board Discussion:**

Board members expressed significant reservations. The Chair noted that the community present overwhelmingly opposed the change and that the Board's role is to represent those citizens. Board Member McLean observed that no issue is more central to Moore County than controlling growth, and that once the quasi-judicial requirement is removed, state law does not permit its reinstatement. Board Member Hinton noted that while many counties operate by-right systems, the effect here would be to eliminate a meaningful check at a time when citizens are most concerned about growth. Board Member McKenzie framed the issue as philosophical: theoretically, if all standards are met a project should be approved regardless of process, but the practical record showed that the hearing process had been critical to identifying serious deficiencies.

The Board voted to close the public hearing and proceeded to motions.

Motion to adopt the land use plan consistency statement as **inconsistent** with the Moore County Land Use Plan, pursuant to NCGS 160D-604, was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried (7-1), with Board Member Ron Jackson opposed.

Motion to recommend **denial** of the proposed amendments to Chapter 6, Section 6.1 (Principal Use Table) and Section 6.1.J (Major Subdivision) to the Moore County Board of Commissioners was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board

Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried (7-1), with Board Member Ron Jackson opposed.

1. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 19 (Subdivisions)

Senior Planner Orloff presented the comprehensive Chapter 19 amendments, which she grouped around several key topics: application of general development standards to all subdivisions; changes to the definition and lot thresholds of minor subdivisions; updates to the parent parcel definition and the 500-foot separation rule; stormwater management plan timing (preliminary vs. final plat); addition of NCDOT and departmental reviews to subdivision checklists; and conforming language changes stemming from the Chapter 6 vote taken earlier.

Staff acknowledged that some of the proposed language changes, particularly those converting Board of Commissioners approval to Subdivision Review Board approval—were now moot in light of the Board's earlier vote on Chapter 6.

Public Comment:

David Essick, co-owner of DZT Land Surveying, offered a practitioner's perspective. He supported removing the 500-foot neighbor-proximity rule, calling it arbitrary and legally vulnerable. He expressed concern that the 10-acre threshold for minor subdivisions, while well-intentioned, could produce unintended consequences—for example, preventing a landowner with 12 acres from creating four family lots while simultaneously allowing 20 minimal lots on 10 acres. He also cautioned that adding fire marshal and life safety requirements to exempt subdivisions may conflict with the plain language of NCGS 160D, which expressly exempts certain subdivision categories from regulatory oversight.

Jeff Marcus again addressed the Board, focusing on four concerns: (1) redefining minor subdivisions by acreage rather than lot count would facilitate denser development in rural areas, creating clusters whose cumulative costs—school buses, sheriff coverage, fire services—far exceed the tax revenue generated; (2) moving stormwater management review from the preliminary to the final plat removes any opportunity for public review or enhanced stormwater conditions; (3) the by-right major subdivision language appearing in Chapter 19 was the same issue already decided; and (4) the recommended native plant list should be retained to protect the unique longleaf pine ecosystem.

Debbie Emerson expressed general concern about the impact of increased development, including public safety, loss of community cohesion, and infrastructure strain. She urged the Board to preserve what makes Moore County distinctive.

Tracy Chicatelli chair of Keep Moore County Beautiful, described the increase in roadway litter and dump truck traffic she had personally observed and attributed to ongoing development activity, urging the Board to stabilize the UDO.

Matthew Parker argued that increasing the minor subdivision threshold from four lots to any number up to 10 acres was functionally an end-run around the land use plan's

protections for RA-zoned areas, where major subdivisions are described as prohibited. He contended that the stormwater management plan must remain at the preliminary plat stage because the hearing process is the primary mechanism by which stormwater design deficiencies are caught.

Michael Parker reinforced these points, noting that the land use plan steering committee always worked from the assumption that a minor subdivision meant four lots or fewer, and that expanding the definition to encompass what would previously have been considered major subdivisions breaks faith with the community's expectations when the plan was adopted. He presented agricultural census data from the land use plan showing the predominance of small farms (10–49 acres) as evidence that the rural agricultural character of the county is still economically and culturally vital. He warned that reclassifying large portions of prior major subdivisions as minor effectively opens all RA-zoned land to by-right, minimally regulated development.

John Snipes a lifelong Moore County resident and farmer, spoke to the broader theme of uncontrolled growth and urged the Board to prioritize the interests of existing residents over developers.

Bob Van Houten, a builder with 28 years of experience in Moore County, offered a counterpoint. He acknowledged the value of preserving rural character but argued that growth cannot be stopped, only managed. He supported increasing the minor subdivision threshold, particularly as a tool for infill development on parcels already served by existing roads and utilities and called for collaborative approaches rather than blanket denials.

Board Discussion:

Board members debated the various components at length. Board Member McKenzie noted that minor subdivisions, by definition, cannot create new roads, and that the underlying zoning dimensional standards (minimum lot sizes, road frontage requirements) serve as practical constraints that would limit actual lot counts well below theoretical maximums. Board Member Jackson noted that NCDOT access management requirements would further limit driveway counts on state-maintained roads.

Board Member McLean expressed concern that many of the proposed changes lacked a clear connection to the adopted land use plan and suggested the Board was being asked to move too quickly on consequential, largely irreversible changes. The Chair agreed, characterizing the proposal as containing more inconsistencies than consistencies with the land use plan and noting that the community present had made their views unmistakably clear. Board Member McGraw emphasized that the Board should reach substantive conclusions rather than simply forwarding unresolved questions to the commissioners.

The Board proceeded to vote on each subsection individually. Due to the number of sections involved, tied votes and procedural complexities led to several items being carried forward to the August 6 regular meeting.

Section-by-Section Votes:

Section 19.3.B – Exempt Subdivision Submittal Requirements (*Proposed: add general development standards for life safety access and maintenance to exempt subdivision plats; update checklist*) Board Member David McLean made a motion of **consistency** and was seconded by Board Member Ronald Jackson. This section resulted in a **4–4 tie** on the consistency motion and was **continued to the August 6, 2026, regular meeting** for further consideration, with legal questions raised about whether life safety requirements may be applied to state-exempt subdivision categories. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson; Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie; Board Member Curtis Self; Board Member Guy McGraw

Section 19.6.A – Minor Subdivisions Identified (*Proposed: change definition from maximum four lots to any number of lots totaling up to 10 acres; remove 500-foot proximity restriction on parent parcel; add NCDOT review requirement*)

Motion to find Section 19.6.A **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried **(5-3)**, with three members opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson; Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie; Board Member Guy McGraw

Following discussion, the Board determined that while the 10-acre redefinition was inadvisable, the removal of the 500-foot proximity rule represented a legitimate improvement. The Board voted to recommend approval of a modified version of Section 19.6.A that removes only the 500-foot adjacent parcel restriction while retaining the existing four-lot maximum, the existing three-year timeframe, and the existing 20-foot utility easement width (consistent with state down-zoning law constraints), and without incorporating the proposed bold new language.

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.6.A as modified—retaining the four-lot maximum and existing dimensional standards while removing only the 500-foot adjacency restriction—was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member Guy McGraw. **The motion carried (8-0).**

Section 19.6.D – Minor Subdivisions Access Requirements (*Proposed: apply general development standards for life safety access and road maintenance to minor subdivisions*)

Motion to find Section 19.6.D **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. **The motion carried (8-0).**

Motion to recommend **approval** of the amendments to Section 19.6.D was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member Guy McGraw. **The motion carried (8-0).**

Section 19.7.A – Major Subdivisions Defined (*Proposed: redefine major subdivision by acreage rather than lot count, consistent with the proposed minor subdivision*)

change) The Board determined this section was not applicable following the earlier Chapter 6 vote and the rejection of the minor subdivision acreage threshold.

Motion to find Section 19.7.A **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. **The motion carried (8-0).**

Motion to recommend **denial** of the revisions to Section 19.7.A was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David Mclean. **The motion carried (8-0).**

Section 19.7.C – Major Subdivisions Preliminary Plat Submittal and Review – Subdivision Review Approval Steps (*Proposed: replace Board of Commissioners quasi-judicial process with Subdivision Review Board administrative approval*)
Determined not applicable following the Chapter 6 vote.

Motion to find Section 19.7.C **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Motion to recommend **denial** of the proposed amendments to Section 19.7.C was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson.

Section 19.7.E – Major Subdivisions Preliminary Plat Submittal (*Proposed: apply general development standards for life safety access and road maintenance to major subdivision preliminary plats*)

Motion to find Section 19.7.E **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Curtis Self. The motion carried **(8-0).**

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.7.E was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie. The motion carried **(8-0).**

Section 19.7.G – Major Subdivisions Preliminary Plat Submittal and Review – Drainage (*Proposed: move required stormwater management plan submission from preliminary plat stage to final plat stage*) This section resulted in a **4–4 tie** on the **consistency** motion and was **continued to the August 6, 2026, regular meeting.** **Opposed:** Chairman Tyler Brady; Board Member Hugh Hinton; Board Member David Mcleean; Board Member John McLaughlin

Motion was made by Board Member David Mclean for a 15-minute recess and was seconded by Chairman Tyler Brady.

Motion was made by Chariman Tyler Brady to re-open the meeting at 7:30 pm and seconded by Board Member David Mclean.

Section 19.7.J – Review by the Subdivision Review Board *(Proposed: reduce preliminary plat copy submissions from 15 to 3)*

Motion to find the amendment to Section 19.7.J **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.7.J as presented was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Section 19.7.K – Action by the Board of Commissioners *(Proposed: replace Board of Commissioners language with Subdivision Review Board; not applicable following Chapter 6 vote)*

Motion to find Section 19.7.K **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Motion to recommend **denial** of Section 19.7.K was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Section 19.7.L – Approval Criteria *(Proposed: conforming language changes replacing Board of Commissioners with SRB; not applicable following Chapter 6 vote)*

Motion to find Section 19.7.L **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Motion to recommend **denial** of Section 19.7.L was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member Hugh Hinton. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Sections 19.7.N, 19.7.O, 19.7.P, and 19.7.Q – Conditional Approval, Denial, Expiration, and Appeal *(Proposed: conforming language changes replacing Board of Commissioners with SRB throughout; not applicable following Chapter 6 vote)*

Motion to find Sections 19.7.N, 19.7.O, 19.7.P, and 19.7.Q **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Motion to recommend **denial** of the amendments to Sections 19.7.N, 19.7.O, 19.7.P, and 19.7.Q was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Section 19.8.J – Minimum Design Standards as Shown on Preliminary Plat (Street Trees) *(Proposed: replace recommended native species list with a reference to the prohibited species list only)*

Motion to find Section 19.8.J **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member Curtis Self. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.8.J was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Sections 19.12.A and 19.12.B – Major Subdivisions Final Plat Submittal Requirements and Action by the Administrator *(Proposed: conforming language changes replacing Board of Commissioners with SRB; not applicable following Chapter 6 vote)*

Motion to find Sections 19.12.A and 19.12.B **inconsistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member Guy McGraw. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Motion to recommend **denial** of the amendments to Sections 19.12.A and 19.12.B was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. The motion carried **(7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson

Section 19.16 – Subdivision Plat Requirements (Checklist) *(Proposed: add departmental reviews—public utilities, environmental health, GIS, public safety, NCDOT—to all subdivision plat checklists; move stormwater management plan from preliminary to final plat column; add road maintenance agreement note)* Motion for **consistency** resulted in a **4–4 tie** and was **continued to the August 6, 2026, regular meeting**. **Opposed:** Chairman Tyler Brady; Board Member Hugh Hinton; Board Member David Mclean; Board Member Curtis Self

Section 19.17 – Subdivision Plat Certification Requirements *(Proposed: add private access easement and NCDOT acceptance letter certifications to plats)*

Motion to find Section 19.17 **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.17 as presented was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Section 19.17.B – Certification Statements *(Proposed: add a plat certification statement)*

Motion to find Section 19.17.B **consistent** with the land use plan was made by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie and seconded by Board Member David McLean. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

Motion to recommend **approval** of Section 19.17.B was made by Board Member David McLean and seconded by Board Member John McLaughlin. The motion carried **(8-0)**.

*Motion to continue items 5, 6 & 7 to August 6, 2026 @ 6:00 pm regular Planning Board meeting and the remaining items 2 & 3 to September 3, 2026 @ 6:00 Regular Planning Board Meeting, made by Board Member Guy McGraw and seconded by Vice Chair Tucker Mckenzie. **The motion carried (7-1)**, with one member opposed. **Opposed:** Board Member Ron Jackson*

2. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 7 – General Development Standards, Section 7.8 (Highway Corridor Overlay District) and related subsections

This item was **continued to the regularly scheduled September 3, 2026, Planning Board meeting** to allow adequate time for public participation and Board deliberation.

3. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 3 – Intent of Zoning Districts, Section 3.20 (Highway Corridor Overlay District)

This item was **continued to the regularly scheduled September 3, 2026, Planning Board meeting**.

5. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 14 – Appeals & Variances, Section 14.1.B (Appeal of Administrative Decision – Applicability)

This item was **continued to the regularly scheduled August 6, 2026, Planning Board meeting**.

6. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 7 – General Development Standards, Section 7.2 (Access to Lots), Section 7.11.H, 7.11.I, 7.11.J (Native and Prohibited Species Lists)

This item was **continued to the regularly scheduled August 6, 2026, Planning Board meeting**.

7. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 20 – Definitions, Section 20.2 (Definitions)

This item was **continued to the regularly scheduled August 6, 2026, Planning Board meeting**.

V. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Planning Director Ruth Pedersen noted that the next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 6:00 PM**, and that three additional items are already on the agenda for that meeting. The Highway Corridor Overlay District items (IV.2 and IV.3) were scheduled for Thursday, **September 3, 2026, regular meeting** to allow for dedicated time and full public participation on what is anticipated to be a heavily attended session. Board members requested the highway corridor item be placed early on the September agenda.

VI. BOARD COMMENT PERIOD

No board comments were recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Board Member David Mclean and seconded by Vice Chair Tucker McKenzie meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.