

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

TUESDAY JUNE 24th, 2025 at 4:00PM

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.

Chairman Anthony Saponaro called the meeting to order for the Planning Commission. In attendance were Ms. Angela Newnam, Mr. Jonathan Gach. Mr. Jonathan Kanipe, Mr. Tony Williams, and Mr. Billy Clarke, Town Attorney, were also present. Ms. Diane Fourton and Mr. Ken Hornowski were not present.

Chairman Saponaro called the meeting to order, noting that at least three members were present, making it an official meeting. He acknowledged the presence of the members

Chairman Saponaro asked if anyone had any adjustments to the minutes from April 22, 2025.

Mr. Billy Clarke made a motion by Billy to approve the minutes from April 22, 2025. Second by Angela. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Saponaro noted that Town Manager Jonathan Kanipe had prepared a report that was shared with the group prior to the meeting.

Mr. Jonathan Kanipe discussed the evolution of the Planning Commission, noting that it previously met infrequently (once every other year), then increased to bi-weekly meetings, and eventually monthly meetings. He proposed changing the meeting schedule to quarterly meetings to be more effective. This approach would give administration more time to prepare materials, allow for more targeted solutions, and potentially result in more productive meetings that could last longer than the typical one-hour timeframe.

There was discussion about how work would continue between meetings. Mr. Kanipe noted that board members could work in pairs on specific projects without constituting an official meeting. Commissioner Drew Stephens(in the audience) raised concerns about open

meeting laws, pointing out that if three or more members communicate via email about commission business, it would constitute a public meeting. Mr. Kanipe clarified that two members could work together on a project, but they should not engage the full commission in discussions outside of public meetings.

The board discussed several work items:

1. **Noise Ordinance:** Angela mentioned that dog barking was the most frequent noise complaint according to police reports. The commission discussed potential approaches to noise regulation including:
 - Defining a "quiet day" on Sundays with restrictions on construction and powered equipment
 - Establishing "quiet hours" during evenings (potentially 10 PM to 6 AM)
 - Using the standard of "audible from inside the home" as the threshold for violations
 - Including exceptions for events, holidays, and necessary early morning activities
 - Implementing warnings before issuing fines

The board reviewed research on noise ordinances from the North Carolina School of Government and other municipalities. Chief Beddingfield had advised against using decibel meters due to training requirements, calibration issues, and challenges holding up in court.

2. **Lighting:** The board briefly mentioned addressing lighting issues but did not discuss it in detail during this meeting.
3. **Construction and Property Maintenance:** Discussion included potential requirements for construction permits to include notification to neighbors and restrictions on timing of activities.

Mr. Kanipe mentioned that the commission had accomplished many requested tasks and had more to do. He noted that they were planning a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners and Board of Adjustment to ensure alignment on priorities and direction.

Chairman Saponaro discussed the plan to move to quarterly meetings with potentially longer durations. This would allow more time for preparation and substantive discussion. The board agreed that the new schedule would be more efficient than monthly meetings.

The board also discussed holding a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners and Board of Adjustment in August (rather than July due to member availability). This meeting would help establish priorities and ensure alignment across the town's governance bodies.

Mr. Kanipe noted that by July 1st, the town would likely be finished with Hurricane Helene cleanup activities, allowing them to focus on moving forward with planning initiatives.

Mr. Tony Williams, has experience responding to noise complaints, shared insights about the types of complaints received, which included dog barking, construction activities, music, and children playing.

A motion was made by Chairman Saponaro to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. Jonathan Gach and was unanimously approved.

Chairman Saponaro adjourned the meeting at 4:35 pm.