

Summary of Chatham County Commissioners Regular Meeting on September 18, 2017 submitted by Terri Tyson

My summary of the meeting will include the most important items on the agenda discussed or acted on, not all items, and will include my impressions and commentary from a political point of view. I use regular language, not professional planning board or town manager verbiage. As a citizen I have my own interpretation of the actions and points made by the commissioners. Anyone can view the videos or do more research into areas that interest them.

I attended the September 18th Chatham County Commissioners meeting. They held a work session earlier that day including a “vote on a request to adopt Resolution to Slow the Climate Crisis by Reducing Methane Emissions from Natural Gas Systems.” I plan to follow up on this to see how commissioners voted. The wording of the resolution seems biased to me since they refer to the “climate crisis”, assuming there is a crisis. Since fracking has benefited our economy greatly, and the possibility of fracking taking place in Chatham County is remote, although possible in a small area in the corner of the county, I don’t believe it is something that should be proactively be discouraged before it is even being proposed.

The agenda included two major items along with the consent agenda, public input session and reports from the commissioners at the end of the meeting. I spoke during the public input session. There were only two other speakers,

including a man who spoke historically about our area. He shared his impressions of the revolt of people who wanted to control their own businesses and how taxes and fees have continued to go up. I spoke in favor of Briar Chapel's developer's request to increase the number of housing units since I am a new resident there. The third speaker was a woman who wanted a major public statue removed from Pittsboro.

The first major item was a legislative public hearing request by Elkins Sawmill to rezone a portion of property, located off King Road from R1 Residential, to IH, Heavy Industrial.

Their lawyer spoke regarding the request to expand their mulching operation to another part of the county located near the border not far from the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant.

My understanding is that in Chatham County there seems to be many fees and months and months of waiting in order to make things happen for businesses, even with normal reasonable requests. There should be an expedited process to encourage local businesses rather than deter them. There are among other things, environmental impact studies, storm water studies required (very expensive), lawyer fees, etc.

Jay Elkins, the business owner, spoke about all the processes he has had to go through and all the expenses, such as the storm water studies which cost from \$30,000 to

\$50,000, and the difficulties of getting something done. The definition of a stream by the county is if it only has water a few weeks a year.

So we need to find a path for businesses to grow, not hinder them.

The other major item was a vote on a request by NNP Briar Chapel for a revision to the Chatham County Compact Community Ordinance, Section 6.2 Maximum Size, to increase the dwelling cap from 2,500 to 2,650.

Chatham County staff said some things were discussed including plans to help with fire department access such as restricting parking on different sides of the streets on different weeks, etc. The affordable housing requirement or payment in lieu by the developer was also discussed.

During the commissioner's discussion, it was noted the multi unit housing will have their own association separate from the Briar Chapel HOA.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the request to increase the number of housing units.

The Town Manager spoke about the "Brunch Bill" for Chatham County, which Pittsboro has already approved. She said there could be a public hearing for this.

During the commissioners report at the end of the meeting, Vice Chair Diana Hales (District 3) said because of the

anticipated growth of Chatham County in the next couple of years, she would like to look into expanding the Board of Commissioners from 5 to 7 members. She asked the attorney to report next month on the legal process and the state law regarding this move. She said they will look into the process as to whether there will be a committee and how it might be comprised, at large, county wide, or districts only. The county attorney will report at the next meeting.

I believe this is an interesting development and should be looked into and studied for all possible political ramifications.

Terri Tyson