

**Northumberland County Planning Commission**  
**June 16, 2022**  
**Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on June 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Northumberland Courts Building and using Zoom (telephonic meeting) with the following attendance:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Garfield Parker	Present
Vivian Diggs	Present	Roger McKinley	Present
Alfred Fisher	Present	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Present
Ed King	Present	Charles Williams	Present
Richard Haynie	Present	Patrick O'Brien	Present

Others in attendance:  
Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

**RE: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Fisher.

Mr. King gave the invocation, followed by Mr. Fisher leading the commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**RE: AGENDA**

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to accept the agenda as is, and Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the agenda.

**RE: MINUTES- May 19, 2022**

Mr. O'Brien motioned to accept the minutes, and that was seconded by Ms. Diggs. All voted in favor of accepting the minutes from May 19, 2022.

**RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

There were no Commission member comments.

**RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Staff did not have any comments.

**RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

There were no citizens comments.

## **RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mr. Fisher opened the public hearing at 7:08 pm.

Mr. Fisher asked if anyone would like to speak regarding the rezoning application. Mr. Blackwell from 28 Family Way Lane (across the street from the applicant), stated that Mr. Webster and Mrs. Lin are great neighbors, hardworkers and has no problem with the rezoning of the parcel to agriculture.

The applicant, Mr. Jeffery Webster, introduced himself and stated he would be happy to answer any questions any one might have.

Mrs. Sandra Blackwell (wife of Mr. Blackwell) of 28 Family Way Lane stated she does not have a problem with Mr. Webster having livestock, but was curious as to what type of livestock he is going to purchase. Mrs. Blackwell also stated that another, housebound elderly neighbor lady was OK with the rezoning, but she did have some concerns about the smell.

Mrs. Judy Jett, a next door neighbor to the applicant at 986 Hull Neck Rd, stated that if the parcel is rezoned, the applicant would enhance the neighborhood and the community with their livestock operation.

Since no one else signed up to speak and there were no persons in the virtual (Zoom Meeting) world, Mr. Fisher closed the public hearing at 7:15 pm.

Mr. Fisher asked if the commission members had any comments.

Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Marston about the previous work the Commission did regarding livestock as a conditional use. Mr. Marston stated the previous work was for R-2 Residential Waterfront, and this parcel is R-1 Residential General. Mr. O'Brien stated that the site has a large house on it, 3 barns, long driveway, is a large lot with 18 acres and looks like a farm. Mr. O'Brien stated the proposal from the applicant states 50 alpaca, sheep, goats, geese, and 450 poultry. Mr. O'Brien stated he thought that would be a rather crowded with all these animals on the property, he stated it seems to be a lot.

Chairman Fisher asked Mrs. Blackwell if she knew what type and how many livestock Mr. Webster had intended to raise on the property? Mrs. Blackwell said she did not know, and that was one of the reasons she was attending the meeting tonight. Mr. Blackwell also added that he did not know the number of animals either.

Mr. Webster stated he did not know where the number of animals came from, but he stated they were in error. Mr. Webster stated that actually he was planning for around 50 four footed animals, maximum at any given time, and that Va. Tech guidance stated 5-6 adult animals per acre, but they plan on having only 50% of that. Mr. Fisher stated that, being a farmer all his life, he thought that was very overcrowded, but asked Mr. Webster to go on. Mr. Webster stated his intent was to stock east region dairy sheep, and milk them, and the offspring be raised as either as replacement stock for other farmers, for

meat, or to be sold to others who will finish them off and harvest the meat. They also want 5-10 goats, and a couple of hobby alpacas, as well as some companion geese.

Mr. O'Brien asked what are "hobby alpacas" and "companion geese"? Mr. Webster stated that hobby alpacas are kept for their fleece for weaving, and the companion geese are guard geese that warn if any predators are nearby. Mr. Webster stated that the poultry will be rotated throughout the pastures to spread their waste, and lessen the impact of the chickens. Mr. Fisher asked how many chickens would you like to raise? Mr. Webster stated that 8 batches of 50 chickens, so approximately 400, also some laying hens (for eggs), so there would be approximately 500 animals in total on the property.

Mr. Fisher asked how long he has lived at this property. Mr. Webster replied 16 months. Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Webster if he checked the zoning of the property before you bought it? Mr. Webster stated no. Mr. Fisher stated OK. Mr. O'Brien stated that in his defense, he stated that the realtor stated it was a perfect property for horses, so he assumed he was permitted to raise livestock.

Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that she was delighted that he (Mr. Webster) was in good graces with his neighbors. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated she has a problem with the rezoning, as it carries with the property forever. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated she would prefer to use it as conditional use, so that when Mr. Webster sells his property the conditional use zoning would go away.

Mr. Marston stated that would require a change in the zoning ordinance, and only the BOS can request the Planning Commission to do that.

Mr. Fisher stated that conditional use has backstops for the county, and allows control if things go haywire, the county would have a recourse. Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Marston if that was correct, and Mr. Marston said yes, if they violate the conditions.

Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated she thinks its great that Mr. Webster wants to start a business here, and stated we need more people like you. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated if we have livestock as an option in R-2, we should be able to have them in R-1, as well.

Mr. O'Brien asked if we could modify the zoning ordinance? Mr. Marston replied, only if the BOS requests the Planning Commission to do that.

Chairman Fisher stated he would like to work with these people.

Mr. Haynie stated the Board of Supervisors is not in favor of spot zoning.

Mr. Fisher wanted to know which neighbors were notified. Mr. McKenzie stated that all properties that are adjacent, diagonal, or across a street from the property, but that he did not have the list of names and addresses of those notified, as they were back in his office.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Webster if anyone offered the alternative of conditional use to you.

Mr. Webster stated that Mr. Marston did, but that a conditional use permit causes uncertainty in a business and keeps the business from expanding in the future, so that is why he wanted a rezoning.

Mr. McKinley stated that once the conditions are set by the BOS, the applicant can come back to the board to change the conditions in the future, and clarified that you do not have to renew a conditional use permit every year, but it could, very well, limit the number of animals allowed. Mr. Fisher stated that conditional use is not like someone is watching over you. If you abide by the conditions, you would not have any problems. Mr. McKinley stated that unless you get a complaint from someone that you are abiding by the conditions.

Mr. Webster stated that he still wants assurance that his operation can make money, and limiting the number of animals could cause him to be unsuccessful.

Mr. McKinley stated he liked the idea of the new business and liked the detail provided in Mr. Webster's letter.

Mr. Marston stated that the conditional use animal numbers for R-2 are for administrative approval, likely you could get more animals if you want to go to the BOS for a conditional use in R-1 (if the county changes the R-1 zoning ordinance to allow livestock).

Mr. O'Brien stated his understanding is that spot zoning is dead on arrival with the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Webster stated that the time it takes for the county to change R-1 to allow livestock likely will be after the deadline he has for getting livestock this Fall, and before that he has to spend \$4K for a hoop building to house them in.

Mr. Marston stated the Planning Commission could include the recommendation to add livestock as a conditional use permit in R-1 with this rezoning to the BOS in July. Mr. McKenzie clarified that it would be up to the BOS to instigate any change to the zoning ordinance, to which Mr. Marston agreed.

There was discussion among members of the timing of working on the zoning ordinance, the requisite 2 week public notice required at both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for the public hearings and it was noted that it was unlikely this could occur before September of this year, unless special meetings were scheduled.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to ask the BOS to recommend to revise the zoning ordinance to allow livestock in R-1, similar to what was done in R-2 last year. Mr. McKinley seconded the motion and all voted unanimously for the motion.

Mr. Fisher stated they have to make a recommendation to the BOS as to whether rezone Mr. Webster's property to A-1 or not. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Garfield Parker	Nay
Vivian Diggs	Nay	Roger McKinley	Aye
Alfred Fisher	Nay	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Nay
Ed King	Nay	Charles Williams	Aye
Richard Haynie	n/a	Patrick O'Brien	Aye

The final vote was to recommend to deny the rezoning request, 3 for, 5 opposed.

Mr. King made a motion to recommend to ask the BOS to request the Planning Commission to revised the zoning ordinance to allow livestock in R-1 as a conditional use, similar to what was done in R-2 last year.

Mr. Fisher asked if Mr. Webster had any question or comments, and Mr. Webster said no.

**RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS**

There were no work session items scheduled.

**RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. McKenzie gave an update on the Proposed Canoe/Kayak Launch at the Glebe Point Fishing Pier, that the conceptual plan is done, the application is done, and it is almost ready to be submitted.

Mr. Parker stated that the county really needs to do a countywide survey to see what people really want in the county. We are not getting any input from the citizens. We need to conduct a survey to see what people want. Mr. Parker stated that the county is losing young people, losing working class people, and the county needs to find out what the citizens want, and conduct a survey.

Mr. Fisher suggested we get the Economic Development Authority to come speak to the Planning Commission to see what they have been doing to attract businesses.

Mr. Williams asked if there is a way to speed up the process of modifying the zoning ordinance. Chairman Fisher stated we have to follow the state rules on advertising for public hearing, and that is non-negotiable.

**RE: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORT**

There was no report on the Board of Supervisors, as there were no public hearings scheduled in May.

**RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. King made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm. The adjournment vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Garfield Parker	Aye
Vivian Diggs	Aye	Roger McKinley	Aye
Alfred Fisher	Aye	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Aye
Ed King	Aye	Charles Williams	Aye
Richard Haynie	n/a	Patrick O'Brien	Aye