

Northumberland County Planning Commission
July 17, 2025
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on July 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Northumberland Courts Building and using Zoom (telephonic meeting), with the following attendance:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Roger McKinley	Present
Vivian Diggs	Present	Patrick O'Brien	Present
Allen Garland	Absent	Garfield Parker	Present
John Kost	Absent	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Present
Richard Haynie	Zoom	Charles Williams	Present

Others in attendance:
Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

RE: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Parker.

Mr. Parker led the commission in the invocation, and led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RE: AGENDA

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

RE: MINUTES – June 18, 2025

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to accept the June 18, 2025 minutes, and Mr. McKinley seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adopting the minutes from June 18, 2025.

RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

There were no commissioner's comments.

RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. McKenzie reminded the commissioners that the next meeting in August is off our regular schedule and will be held one week later than normal on Thursday, August 28.

RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no citizens comments.

RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no Public Hearing

RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS

Mr. McKenzie stated that Mr. Kost had sent out the final draft of the revised Comprehensive Plan to all Planning Commission members two weeks before the meeting tonight. Mr. McKenzie stated that he hoped all of the commissioners had a chance to review the Final Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, and asked if anyone had a particular section of the Plan that they had questions about, had problems with or would like clarification on. No Planning Commission members spoke. Mr. McKenzie offered to quickly go through the chapters in the Comprehensive Plan, but the Planning Commission members did not think that was necessary.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion for the Comprehensive Plan to be forwarded to the relevant State agencies, and recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the revised Comprehensive Plan, stating this motion is made in due consideration of the administrative record before the body, including the planning commission's deliberations and recommendation, the information received via the public hearing, including statements offered by staff, the applicant, and members of the public, the public health and safety, the general welfare of the community, public necessity, convenience, in the exercise of good zoning practices and the body's legislative prerogative, and pursuant to the body's statutory authority. Mr. McKinley seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Roger McKinley	Aye
Vivian Diggs	Aye	Patrick O'Brien	Aye
Allen Garland	Absent	Garfield Parker	Aye
John Kost	Absent	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Aye
Richard Haynie	n/a	Charles Williams	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. McKenzie noted that the Board of Supervisors had responded to the Planning Commission Memo dated June 24, 2025 requesting permission for the Planning Commission to examine whether gazebos on piers could be allowed in Northumberland County. Mr. McKenzie informed the Commission that the Board had given approval for the Planning Commission to investigate allowing gazebos on piers in a memo dated July 15, 2025.

Staff indicated that the Zoning Administrator was not available for this meeting. Staff indicated that the Commission could discuss gazebos on piers, but in his opinion, should not take any actions until the Zoning Administrator could participate in the discussion.

Mr. McKenzie stated that in an email from the VMRC area representative, Jeff Madden, that as long as the gazebos are less than 400 square feet and open sided that they are allowed by state law, if the locality has a local ordinance permitting them. Mr. McKenzie stated that Mr. Palubinski gave county staff the Virginia Code section that refers to gazebos, and it stated that you can have various appurtenances to your pier over state bottom such as an L head or a T head on your private pier, and if not specifically prohibited by local ordinance, gazebos, an in aggregate, all of those appurtenances cannot exceed 400 square feet. Mr. McKenzie also mentioned that the Zoning Administrator talked with Mr. Madden at VMRC and he stated that putting screens on an open sided gazebo on a pier would not be recommended. Mr. O'Brien asked why we can't have screen on it (gazebos)? Mr. McKenzie stated that if there is screen on the gazebo, then the gazebo is not open sided. Several Commission members stated that with the no-see-ums and the mosquitoes, there would no reason to build a gazebo over the water unless you were allowed to screen it in. Mr. McKinley asked that staff check with neighboring counties to see if they allow screens on their pier gazebos. Mr. McKenzie stated he would. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that some screens are pretty dark and could block your neighbors view of the water, and perhaps that is the reason screens are not recommended.

Mr. McKinley requested staff inquire to the VMRC representative if the 400 square feet area for the L and T head is in addition to another 400 square feet for the gazebo. Mr. McKenzie stated that according to State Code, no, you only get 400 square feet in aggregate, which means in total. Mr. McKinley requested again that staff ask the question to VMRC staff. Mr. McKenzie replied that he would.

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Maurice Johnson stated that over water jurisdiction of the county zoning ordinance is not uniform. He stated that in the Shoreline Estates subdivision, the deeds for the property include the land and water and therefore, the waters there are not State Waters. Therefore, VMRC does not have any jurisdiction over these private lands (and waters).

RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Williams and the meeting ended at 7:36 pm. The adjournment vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	Absent	Roger McKinley	Aye
Vivian Diggs	Aye	Patrick O'Brien	Aye
Allen Garland	Absent	Garfield Parker	Aye
John Kost	Absent	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Aye
Richard Haynie	n/a	Charles Williams	Aye