

Northumberland County Planning Commission
October 16, 2025
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on October 16, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Northumberland Courts Building and using Zoom (telephonic meeting), with the following attendance:

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

Others in attendance:
Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

RE: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Parker, and he led the commission in the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

RE: AGENDA

The agenda was not considered.

RE: MINUTES – September 18, 2025

The minutes were not considered.

RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mr. O'Brien welcomed new commission member Jim Michel to the Planning Commission.

RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS

There were no comments.

RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no citizens comments.

RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairman Parker asked the applicant to come up and speak about his proposed project.

Will Barrack stated he was born and raised in Lancaster County and started a landscaping company. Mr. Barrack stated his company is small, just himself and one employee. Mr. Barrack explained that the company does landscaping and hardscaping, as well planting trees and other vegetation. Mr. Barrack stated he has an immediate need to have a building to store his equipment, and a place to be able to work on his equipment when it is raining, so he plans on building a pole barn building on site. Mr. Barrack also stated he needs storage for crush and run and other materials. Mr. Barrack informed the commission that he has already contacted VDOT last year for approval for a small commercial road entrance, as well as putting up a fence along the road frontage for curb appeal, and he has a gate that that is locked with a PIN Code. Mr. Barrack noted that the site is not open to the public and that he would like the opportunity in the future to possibly sell some gravel to another contractor. Mr. Barrack stated he did not have a secretary or an office or kitchen. Mr. Barrack also expressed an interest in having a paver (stone) display to show his customers the varieties available. Mr. Barrack stated he truly doesn't envision a lot of retail sales, as his time is spent at customers sites doing landscaping work. Mr. Barrack stated he wants his company to be able to showcase his work at this site. Mr. Barrack stated he wants to build a steel building with parking, positioning the garage doors on the backside (away from view of the highway), have a storage area for 2-4 piles of material. Mr. Barrack commented that he does a lot of work in Northumberland County, and establishing a presence in the county is a logical progression for him and his business.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Barrack if VDOT said anything about a turn lane? Mr. Barrack stated he has an approved VDOT permit, and at the time of submittal, he was not thinking of retail sales. Mr. Barrack stated the way the entrance permit was approved was an expanded private entrance, which is basically the same as a low volume commercial entrance. Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Barrack to describe his proposed building. Mr. Barrack stated that the building will look a lot like the Tides Inn maintenance building in Irvington, if you have ever seen it. Mr. Barrack added that the building will be 100 foot long, off the road and oriented parallel to the road, with 8 to 10 windows across the top, 16 foot tall, with no exterior lights on the building, 2 roll up garage doors, one walk through door, an office and a bathroom. Mr. McKinley asked how far back off the road is the building? Mr. Marston stated the building looks to be 50 feet back from the road. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Barrack if he would be OK with not having retail sales, as the commission received a public comment from Ben Burton, and he was concerned with traffic flow as a result of retail sales to the public. Mr. Barrack stated he would still move forward if he was not allowed retail sales. Mr. Garland stated he does not believe that a display of materials, a showroom of sorts, is not really retail, as Mr. Barrack just wants his customers to be able to pick the pavers and choose which tree you want to plant in your yard. Mr. Barrack stated he wanted to have some options in the future. Mr. Kost stated that Mr. Barrack wants to store all of his equipment inside, Mr. Barrack replied that is the plan. Mr. Kost stated that his concern was we have too many properties in the county with equipment unattended for many years. Mr. Williams asked the commission why wouldn't Mr. Barrack want retail if he want to expand his business. Mr. Williams stated he would like Mr. Barrack to have a go at it, he sounds like he has good track record with his business so far. Mr. O'Brien asked where is the line between commercial and retail. Mr. Marston stated that contractor (equipment) yards are a by-right use in A1 agricultural zoned land in the county, so he can build the building and develop the site with a building to work on his equipment, but he thought that incorporating retail sales may allow flexibility for the business in the future. Mr. Garland stated that the conditional use permit is to allow retail sales in A1 without having to rezone the property (to business). Mr. Marston stated that was correct. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that when she thinks of retail, she is thinking of a home center that needs parking and access, depending on how much retail. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey

stated that she agrees with Mr. Williams, we want more businesses, although she is worried about expanded retail at this site. Mr. Wilkins-Corey then stated that of course, VDOT will have a say in that as well. Mr. McKinley asked if Mr. Barrack does not get retail in this conditional use permit and he wants to sell retail, will he have to come back to the county for that approval? Mr. Marston stated that Mr. Barrack would have to come back to the county for a small retail business, if not approved tonight with the Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Marston asked if we could tweak the conditions to reflect the concerns raised by a citizen. Mr. McKinley stated maybe we could change the wording of suggested condition #2. Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Barrack if he is going to have sanitary facilities in his new building, and Mr. Barrack said yes and a small office as well. Mr. Kost suggested a change to suggested condition #2 to add at the end..."all retail transactions will be ancillary to the landscaping business." Mr. Marston stated that seems like a reasonable addition. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that the commission does not want to stop him from doing business, and that we do not want to stifle you, and then added, as long as you don't become a home center. We are excited to have a new business come into the county. Mr. Barrack stated that he wants to be good stewards of the land, and make use of a vacant lot in the county. Mr. Kost stated he has revised his addition to suggested condition #2, "sales transactions shall be limited to those that are ancillary to the landscaping business." All commissioners agreed that draft language addition would be acceptable to them.

Chairman Parker opened the public hearing at 7:34 pm, Mr. McKenzie stated no one had signed the sign up sheet to speak in person tonight. Mr. Parker asked if there was anyone online who wished to speak on the conditional use permit under consideration. No one online responded, so the public hearing was closed at 7:36 pm.

Mr. Garland made a motion to recommend approval of the Light Industry Conditional Use permit, including the revision of suggested condition #2 to the Board of Supervisors for approval, and added 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, and the vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed unanimously by the Planning Commission members present.

Mr. McKenzie then stated that next month, on November 13, 2025 at 7 pm, the Board of Supervisors will hold another public hearing on the Light Industry conditional use request, and at that public hearing the Board will make a decision to allow or deny their request.

RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS

Chairman Parker asked Mr. McKenzie to introduce the work session items. Mr. McKenzie stated the effort is to revise the county pier and boathouse zoning ordinances to allow for shelter roofs on piers. Mr. McKenzie displayed on the video screen the proposed changes to the pier and boathouse zoning ordinances. Mr. McKenzie explained the county would need to delete item B. in the existing pier zoning ordinance, that currently states “Open-sided shelter roofs or gazebo-type structures shall not be placed on private noncommercial piers.” Mr. McKenzie continued, the changes to the Boathouse Ordinance were to add the words “and Shelter Roofs” to the title of the ordinance, to add in section A., (1) “Shelter Roofs shall not exceed 400 sq. feet, and 20 feet in height”, add to (2), (7), and (8) “and shelter roof”. In addition, revise the Table of Usages, to add “Shelter Roofs”, as a by-right use on private non-commercial piers in all zoning districts except R-1 (not allowed), and as a conditional use in R-4, and add “Shelter Roofs (with objections)” as a conditional use on private non-commercial piers in all zoning districts except R-1 (not allowed). Mr. McKinley asked where the height of the shelter roof was measured from, and Mr. Marston replied from Mean Low Water (MLW).

Mr. Parker opened the public hearing on the zoning ordinance revision to allow shelter roofs on private, non-commercial piers at 7:42 pm. Mr. Bell, from 834 Wicomico Point Rd, spoke in favor of the zoning ordinance change. He stated he was in total support of this amendment and that the people of the county would like to have this as an option. Mr. Bell noted that it was interesting that you could have a shade structure for your boat, but not for people. Mr. Bell stated this was a great idea and the county will benefit from this change. Mr. Bell stated that the proposed changes to the ordinance are very simple, clear and easy to understand. Mr. Parker thanked Mr. Bell for his input.

Mr. Parker asked if anyone else would like to speak on the proposed change to the zoning ordinance, there were no one. Then Mr. Parker asked if anyone online would like to comment on the proposed zoning changes, and there were no responses. Mr. Parker closed the public hearing at 7:45 pm.

Mr. Kost made a motion stating that 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, and move to recommend approval of the zoning ordinance changes with the modifications to allow shelter roofs on piers. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey seconded the motion, and vote is as follows:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS

There were no discussion items.

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

RE: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORT

Chairman Parker asked for a Board of Supervisor's Meeting report. Mr. O'Brien stated the meeting was mostly financial decisions. Mr. McKenzie reported that the Vacation Home Rental in Fleton Beach Conditional Use Permit was approved by the Board. Mr. Parker stated he has heard reports of vicious dogs harassing citizens. Mr. McKenzie stated that the Board did discuss that topic, and the county attorney told the Board of Supervisors that the county currently has a subdivision based leash law, and that the area in question is not a conventional subdivision. The county attorney stated that a residential subdivision has clearly defined geographic extents. The county attorney continued, if you clearly define the area in question for a new leash law area by known roads or other well known landmarks to make it clear where the geographic area covered by the leash law exists for animal control and police officer enforcement, then that would be a perfectly acceptable course of action. Mr. McKenzie stated the Board took no further action on the topic that night. Chairman Parker asked staff to give a report on the status of the county leash law at the next meeting. Staff agreed to report next time on the county leash law.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Garland made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. McKinley and the meeting ended at 7:58 pm. The adjournment vote was as follows:

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