

**Northumberland County Planning Commission**  
**February 20, 2025**  
**Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was originally scheduled to be held on February 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Northumberland Courts Building and using Zoom (telephonic meeting). However, inclement weather postponed the meeting one week to February 27, 2025 at the same location. The meeting had the following in attendance:

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

Others in attendance:

Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

Philip Marston (Zoning Administrator)

**RE: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Parker.

Mr. Parker led the commission in the invocation, as well as the Pledge of Allegiance.

**RE: AGENDA**

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

**RE: MINUTES – January 16, 2025**

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to accept the January 16, 2025 minutes, and Mr. Williams seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adopting the minutes from January 16, 2025.

**RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

There were no commissioner's comments.

**RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Mr. McKenzie noted that the Capital Improvement Plan Subcommittee will meet the first week of March, and that the Office of Building and Zoning received another Conditional Use Application that will be heard at the March 20, 2025 meeting.

## **RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

## **RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mr. Parker asked Mr. McKenzie to read the notice for the public hearing. Mr. McKenzie stated that this public hearing is a request by Kevin L. Brown, owner, for a Conditional Use Permit to allow construction of a multi-unit dwelling on property zoned A-1, Agriculture. The property is shown as Tax Map Parcel # 6-(1)-5-H and is located on Lone Walnut Road. Mr. Parker opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Brown if he would like to speak on his proposed multi-unit dwelling. Mr. Brown stated that he owns 25 Lone Walnut Road (a multi-unit dwelling at the corner of Lone Walnut and Gibeon Rd). Mr. Brown stated that the area has a large demand for rental properties and that he is ready to close on another duplex in the county. Mr. Garland asked if his request tonight is a separate parcel than 25 Lone Walnut Road to which Mr. Brown stated yes. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Brown, as per your conditional use application, did you notify any neighbors? Mr. Brown said no. Mr. O'Brien again referenced Mr. Brown's conditional use application, and stated you are looking to build 4 units, with 3 bedrooms each, to which Mr. Brown said yes. Mr. O'Brien stated that the parking area for the residents of the multi-unit complex is not shown on the site plan. Mr. Brown stated that Mr. O'Brien is correct, but that the parking area will be in the front yard of the property, between the units and Lone Walnut Rd. Mr. O'Brien asked if Mr. Brown would amend his site plan, and Mr. Brown stated yes. Mr. Williams asked Mr. Brown if the proposed multi-unit housing complex would be larger than the existing multi-unit complex (at 25 Lone Walnut Road). Mr. Brown stated that it would be 40 feet longer than the existing complex (140 feet vs 100 feet).

Mr. Garland called the first person on the public comment sign in sheet, Mr. Robert Wirth. Mr. Wirth stated that he lives at 2435 Gibeon Road and his is not used to speaking in public. Mr. Wirth stated that his name is Robert Wirth and I am respectfully submitting this letter in opposition to the proposed multifamily dwelling units on Lone Walnut Road, Callao, VA, Tax Map Parcel #6-(1 )-5-H.

There already exists a multi-family dwelling unit on the corner of Lone Walnut Road and the intersection of Gibeon Road (Route 600). The proposed application parcel is adjacent to the existing unit, forming a 2-acre "block," per se.

The current complex has 4 units, each having 2 bedrooms. Under normal circumstances I think it would be safe to say that each unit has a reasonable potential of 2 parents and 2 children. 4 people per apartment, times 4 apartments, would equal 16 occupants per acre.

Lone Walnut Road and the surrounding area is currently a single-family residential area. Most homes are located on one acre and a few are on multi-acre lots. By and large these homes are occupied by far fewer than 5 people per home, but for arguments sake, let's say 5 as the number of occupants per acre. That makes the potential number of occupants living in the existing apartments 3 times the number of inflated single-family occupants

per acre. 16 persons per acre in the existing multi-unit as opposed to 5 per acre in a single-family home. This does not appear to remotely match the existing person-per-acre dynamic.

The current proposal under discussion by the gentleman from Maryland asks for 4 apartments with 3 bedrooms each. Again, a possible reasonable estimate might be 5 to 6 people (2 parents and potentially 3-4 children) per unit. 5 people per unit times 4 units would be 20 people on one acre.

The two adjacent parcels combined could potentially be 36 people on 2 acres. This number does not include guests and relatives at social events. My feeling is this does not properly represent the existing population density of our area or in fact that of anywhere that I am aware of in Northumberland County.

It is not my intention to do harm to Mr. Brown or his investment, but I think his proposal has not fully grasped the unique quality of life in Northumberland County that our Supervisors have worked so hard to maintain. It is my hope that the Supervisors will continue to do so.

I am also concerned that an additional multi-unit dwelling would have a negative impact on property value and resale aspects. The number of potential home purchasers will be severely narrowed for those homes in the immediate proximity as well as those located anywhere along Lone Walnut Road, less than one mile in length.

At the very least, the asking prices of homes for sale would almost assuredly have to be lowered to compensate for dwellings which many might perceive as being out of place with regard to the bucolic uniqueness of our rural and agricultural lives.

While there have been some concerns raised over law enforcement issues at the existing units in the past, one cannot predict the future and have little or no value here.

In the existing homes on Lone Walnut and the area surrounding (from Village to Wilberts Corner with Slash in the middle) live people who have resided here for many years, in many cases multi-generationally. They are friendly and polite. We share the same values and are respectful of each other. We lend a hand when it's needed or other times recognize one another's need for privacy.

It is a concern that those with no true roots in the community might not be aware of the uniqueness or fragility of the community and cause, however unintentionally, harm.

In closing, Mr. Wirth said, I want to reiterate that as previously stated, I wish the applicant no harm, but I think the placement of the multi-unit dwelling might be better suited to an area more highly developed with more viable access to services and transportation.

The next citizen to speak was Melissa Lewis. Ms. Lewis stated that she owns 20 some acres at the end of Lone Walnut Road and was not notified when the first apartment was built and were not notified about this second apartment proposed. Ms. Lewis stated she

felt that they should have been notified, as this apartment will impact everyone on this road. Ms. Lewis said we all know what went on in the first apartment, it has gotten better, but there is still a law enforcement presence. Mrs. Lewis built her house in 1997, and had no problems down her end of the road. Ms. Lewis stated that after the first apartment was built things started happening, we noticed things at the beginning of the road of things that were happening that should not have been. Ms. Lewis stated that she would like to keep her neighborhood like it is, where everyone knows everyone and it is safe for children to play. Ms. Lewis stated that that 20 or so people, located on one corner at the beginning road is too many in a very small place. Mr. O'Brien noted that her name was not on the list of adjacent property owners. Ms. Lewis stated that she was not on the list of adjacent property owners in the application. Mr. O'Brien stated that may be why she was not notified. Ms. Lewis stated she was also not notified for the first apartment complex built on Lone Walnut Road. Mr. Garland mentioned that the notices go out to adjoining property owners only.

Mr. Parker called Martha Lamb to speak. Ms. Lamb stated she lived on the corner of Gibeon Road and Lone Walnut, adjacent to the proposed multi-unit complex. Ms. Lamb stated they own 5 acres, and when the property across the street sold, she thought a single family residence would be built, but instead they are proposing 4 units with 3 bedrooms each. Ms. Lamb said they moved to their present house 18 years ago. Ms. Lamb stated they had a lot of police presence at other apartments. Ms. Lamb stated they have a barn and only two people live on five acres. Ms. Lamb said that this proposed project is very unfair for the people along Lone Walnut Road. Ms. Lamb stated if they want to sell their house, the people looking at the house will have to drive by an apartment building, you have one, now you have two, that is a lot of people. Ms. Lamb stated that Callao does not have a supermarket, or fast food, you have to go to Warsaw or Heathsville to shop and go to the post office. Ms. Lamb stated they have a 25 foot by 40 foot swimming pool they like to use in the Summer, there goes my privacy. Ms. Lamb stated she doesn't want to live here, even though she had planned on dying here. Ms. Lamb stated her sister in law lives two houses behind us, and she was not notified. Ms. Lamb stated that recently here home price had started to go up, not that they were planning on selling, but it was good to know. Ms. Lamb stated that everyone going down that road is going to see the apartments and won't want to buy a house nearby. Ms. Lamb stated (this proposal) is a distraction to my life, and I am retired, so I spend a lot of time at my house and yard, I don't want to leave my property. Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Marston due to the impact of this proposal, shouldn't you have notified all landowners along Lone Walnut Road? Mr. Marston stated that he thought contacting all property owners along Lone Walnut Road would be a bit much. Mr. Marston stated there were some discrepancies with the map, but noted that the county did place a Notice of Zoning Action sign on the property to alert neighbors about the proposal. Ms. Lamb stated that the sign just says Zoning Actions, that is not enough information for the public. Therefore, Ms. Lamb stated, she made a sign that said 4 apartments with 3 bedrooms each to let people know down Lone Walnut Road what is proposed for that lot.

Chairman Parker next called Susan Awe. Mrs. Awe stated that she lives at 142 Lone Walnut Rd. Mrs. Awe stated she lives across the road from the proposed multi-unit complex. Mrs. Awe stated that her sister lives on the corner and she owns a 1 acre lot and lives next to her mother. Mrs. Awe stated that she looked at property in Heathsville, and

Mr. Vanlandingham asked why she didn't want to live next to her mother. Mrs. Awe stated she didn't think that was an option, but Mr. Vanlandingham said he owned the farm field next to her mothers house and sold her a lot adjacent to her moms house 13 years ago, for her to build her house on. Mrs. Awe stated that she is from Long Island, New York in a very tight, packed together neighborhood. Mrs. Awe stated that it is very different on Lone Walnut Road, with agricultural fields and spread out single family residences on 1 acre lots. Mrs. Awe said that she lives in a serene, calm and beautiful area. Mrs. Awe related that when she lost her husband, neighbors stopped by and offered their condolences, which she said never would happen where she used to live. Mrs. Awe stated that when she learned that there were going to be four units built with 3 bedrooms on 1 acre, not in a lot in Callao, not in a community that would draw people, but across her lot on Lone Walnut Road, she didn't understand the reasoning. Mrs. Awe stated that she didn't think that someone would rent an apartment and put down roots here. Mr. McKinley asked how many residences are on Lone Walnut Road, and someone in the audience stated 24 residences. Mr. McKenzie noted that some of the properties on Lone Walnut Road are in Westmoreland County.

Chairman Parker next called Patsy Self to speak. Mrs. Self stated she lived at 14775 Richmond Road. Mrs. Self stated that she used to go to Lone Walnut Road to sleigh ride when she was younger. Mrs. Self stated the reason she was attending this meeting is that she used to drive down Lone Walnut Road to Haynesville in Richmond County. Mrs. Self wanted to know if they were going to open Lone Walnut Road to cross the stream into Richmond County? Mrs. Self stated that VDOT closed the road, and is there any chance they will reopen the road into Richmond County?

Mr. Michael Brann was called by Mr. Parker to speak. Mr. Brann stated that he 795 Lone Walnut Road and that he has lived there since 1976. Mr. Brann noted that there are 26 houses on Lone Walnut Road, and that his dad owned the road and the bridge over the stream washed out in 1997, and it will never be rebuilt. Mr. Brann stated that the first set of apartments, had a neighbor with a drug dealer in their driveway that they had to run off. Mr. Brann stated that apartments bring crime to the area, as well as lowering out property values. Mr. Brann talked to some of his neighbors and they did not know about the proposed second apartment complex.

Mr. O'Brien (addressing Mr. Brown, the applicant) stated that in Appendix B of the Conditional Use Application, the site plan shows no fencing, no vegetation, no lighting, and no signs for the proposed apartment complex. Mr. Brown stated that is correct, the only sign will be the address. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Brown if he would consider landscaping? Mr. Brown stated he could put up fencing or vegetation to block the view of neighbors. Mr. Brown stated he wants to address the crime concerns, noting that he has only owned the first apartment complex since 2023. Mr. Brown stated that he instituted a background check on tenants. Mr. Brown also noted that in his 2 bedroom units, he limits occupancy for 3 persons, and for a 3 bedroom unit, he would limit occupancy to four persons. Mrs. Diggs asked Mr. Brown if the lighting for the apartment complex is on the front and back? Mr. Brown stated that the lighting is on the arch of the building (gable ends). Mrs. Diggs asked Mr. Brown if he would consider adding shrubbery around the units. Mr. Brown stated he would.

Mr. McKenzie asked Chairman Parker if now would be a good time to read the draft suggested conditions. Chairman Parker said it would be appropriate to read the suggested conditions at this time. Mr. McKenzie stated that county staff came up with these suggested conditions for the multi-unit apartments on Lone Walnut Road if approved: 1. All required permits and/or licenses shall be obtained from all appropriate regulatory agencies including but not limited to Va. Department of Transportation and Va. Department of Health, 2. An erosion and sediment control plan and a stormwater management plan shall be prepared and approved by all appropriate regulatory agencies, 3. Any proposed lighting shall be non-reflective and directed downward to prevent any glare on Lone Walnut Rd. and adjoining properties, 4. There shall be at least 2 parking spaces provided for each apartment, 5. Non-compliance of any of these conditions shall result in this permit to come back before the Board of Supervisors for possible revocation. Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Brown if he was OK with the suggested conditions and he said yes.

Berkley Todd Lewis stated that with all the elements included in the application, there is not much room left on the 1 acre lot to put anything else in there. Susan Awe stated that she felt that bushes and fencing is inconsistent with the neighborhood. Mrs. Awe stated that it would disguise the building but not fit in with the existing neighborhood. Martha Lewis stated she renovated a single family home to be used for rental property. Ms. Lewis stated that she had to hire a property management company because she use to cry at the condition of the house when the renters moved out. Ms. Lewis stated she is OK with a single family home on that lot, however, renters do not keep up the property, gravel driveways are loud when cars are coming and going, and she was also worried about gravel stone on the road. Ms. Lewis asked if there was a property management company or any plans to show what the buildings will look like when completed (other than an aerial view of the lot)?

Mr. Brown responded that he can do evergreen bush landscaping like the neighbor did across the street, so you cannot see the apartments from the road. Mr. Brown added that the current and future tenants have undergone background checks, as well as credit checks, and that he plans to employ a property manager for the complex.

Chairman Parker asked how large is the property? Staff responded one acre. Mr. Parker asked if there is enough room to build the apartments, well, septic, driveway and parking? Mr. O'Brien speculated that the Health Department would have the septic at the back of the lot and the reserve drain field in the front. There was a question of how they would be able to fit parking if both the front and back were drainfields, but there was no answer, as Mr. Brown has not applied for a septic or well permit, so any questions about the location of drainfields or well are moot.

Mrs. Diggs stated she would vote to recommend approval, pending visually screening the apartments with a fence or vegetation. Mr. O'Brien made a motion to add a suggested condition to the list of conditions for Mr. Browns that stated that the applicant will add suitable landscaping in order to screen the view of the properties across Lone Walnut Road. Mrs. Diggs seconded the motion, and the all commission members present voted "aye" and the motion passed.

Mr. Garland stated that he appreciated what Mr. Brown is trying to do, as more than likely the rentals would probably fill up quickly. However, Mr. Garland stated that the single family residences are already there, the land around the site is zoned agricultural, and that he did not think this is the best place to put additional apartments. Mr. McKinley stated that he agreed with Mr. Garland, as the current residents bought their homes on one acre agricultural lots many years ago, and that he cannot be in favor of the proposal. Mr. Williams stated he tended to agree with Mr. McKinley and Mr. Garland. Mr. Williams asked why only adjacent property owner were notified, and not all of the residents on Lone Walnut Road. Mr. McKenzie stated that Virginia State Law only requires notification of adjacent property owners, or to put it another way, those who share a property line. Mr. Williams clarified that the first set of apartments were built, the county allowed duplexes by right in Agriculturally zoned land, and that is why nobody on Lone Walnut Road was contacted regarding those apartments. Shortly thereafter, in 2003, the county changed the zoning ordinance so that duplexes (or apartments) require a conditional use permit on A-1, agriculturally zoned land. Mr. Williams stated he felt like Mr. Brown was trying to do too much on that size of property. Mr. O'Brien stated that he felt that Mr. Brown will have a very difficult time meeting all the conditions for the four unit development on 1 acre of land. Mr. O'Brien stated that he was not too concerned about the public notifications, as evidently the work got out (pointing to the size of the citizens in attendance). Mr. O'Brien stated that he would be voting against Mr. Brown's proposal. Mrs. Diggs stated that she would not vote against Mr. Brown's proposal, as the county needs affordable housing. Mrs. Diggs stated that if Mr. Brown cannot get everything necessary on the property, the relevant regulatory state agency will stop the development. Mrs. Diggs stated she did not think it up to us to decide if everything will fit or not. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that the county Comprehensive Plan that we have been working on has a section stating we need more affordable housing. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated she was torn with this decision. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that if somehow we could have a compromise of putting less than four units, maybe that could work for the applicant and county. Chairman Parker asked Mrs. Wilkins-Corey if she was asking Mr. Brown to modify his proposal, as well as asking Mr. Marston if the application can be changed at this time. Mr. Brown stated if necessary he will go down to three units. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Brown if his project would work with 3 units, and Mr. Brown said yes.

Mr. McKinley stated that he is making a recommendation about the 4 units proposal contained in Mr. Brown's conditional use application and made a motion to recommend denial to the Board of Supervisors, based on the comments of the audience. Mr. Garland seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed, (5 Aye, 2 Nay). The public hearing was closed at 8:21pm.

Chairman Parker thanked all of the citizens for coming out tonight and thanked them for their input. Chairman Parker stated he hoped the citizens can work with Mr. Brown.

**RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS**

Mr. McKenzie presented the Northumberland County 2024 End of the Year report to the Planning Commission. Mr. McKenzie went through all of the work the Planning Commission did last year, and noted that the 2024 total estimated construction cost was \$65,691,585.24 in 2024, compared to \$59,793,853.45 in 2023. Mr. McKenzie stated that was a 9.5% increase from last year, and that the county is headed in the right direction. Mr. McKenzie then discussed the breakdown in construction between single family homes, modular homes, double wides, mobile homes and commercial construction, noting the number of units, the zoning the units were built on as well as the magisterial district. Mr. McKenzie then highlighted the work of the Building and Zoning office, noting how many permits were issued and how many inspections took place. Finally, Mr. McKenzie broke down how many piers were built in the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay watersheds as well as the distribution of wetland projects. Mr. McKenzie noted that the End of the Year Report for 2024 will be on the county webpage, in case any one wants to reference the document.

After finishing his presentation, Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. McKenzie if there shouldn't be some mention of the work the Planning Commission did on Hampton Hall Landing? Mr. McKenzie examined the report, verified there was no mention of Hampton Hall and thanked Mr. O'Brien for pointing that out. Mr. McKenzie stated he would add that to the report before presenting to the Board of Supervisors next month.

Mr. McKenzie began the discussion on the Comprehensive Plan, and Mr. Garland asked the Chairman if we could pick up this discussion up at the next Planning Commission, to which Chairman Parker agreed.

**RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

There were no discussion items scheduled.

**RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. McKinley made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and the meeting ended at 8:46 pm. The adjournment vote was as follows:

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



