

Northumberland County Planning Commission
March 19, 2026
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on March 19, 2026 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	Zoom	Garfield Parker	Present
John Kost	Present	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Present
James Michel	Absent	Charles Williams	Zoom
James Brann	Absent		

Others in attendance:
Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

RE: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Parker at 7:03 pm, and he led the commission in the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

RE: REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Staff informed the Planning Commission that Mr. Williams and Mr. Garland were requesting to attend the meeting electronically through ZOOM, and according to the adopted Remote Participation Policy, the Commission had to vote to allow a Planning Commission Member to participate remotely. Hearing that, Mr. Kost made a motion to allow Mr. Garland and Mr. Williams to participate remotely. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey seconded the motion and all present vote aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

RE: AGENDA – March 19, 2026

Mr. Kost made a motion to accept the March 19, 2026 agenda, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. The Commission unanimously voted to accept the meeting agenda.

RE: MINUTES – February 19, 2026

Mr. Kost made a motion to accept the February 19, 2026 minutes, seconded by Mr. McKinley. The Commission unanimously voted to accept the February meeting minutes.

RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

There were no commission member comments.

RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. McKenzie noted there will be a public hearing at next month's meeting for a Conditional Use Permit, and that the Comprehensive Plan is up for final approval by the Board of Supervisors at their April meeting.

RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no citizens comments.

RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings scheduled.

RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS

Mr. McKenzie began the process of reviewing the DRAFT Capital Improvement Plan by discussing the Sheriff's Office requests for four vehicles and replacement of the HVAC system in the Sheriff's Office building. Mr. McKenzie noted that while the vehicles are for this year, and are a normal occurrence, the HVAC replacement is a significant cost, but it is not scheduled until 2028. Mr. McKenzie then reviewed the County Emergency Services requests outlined in the CIP, but noted that the county bills patients for services provided, so they have their own funding stream, and with the assistance of grant funding, they have the funds to pay to replace their equipment.

Mr. Kost informed the Commission that he has been working with the emergency services on their strategic plan, and the last item they are requesting is a \$15 million new building. Mr. O'Brien asked, regarding geography, how could you consolidate? Mr. Parker stated that the county needs to have multiple stations, under one chief, and distribute resources throughout the county. Mr. Parker noted that most of the volunteer rescue squad and volunteer fire department members are aging, and there are not enough younger people volunteering to fill the gaps. Mr. Parker stated he can see volunteers going away in the future. Mr. Parker noted there are three volunteer fire departments in the county with 2-4 vehicles each, and those units need to be maintained and eventually replaced, that is the reality.

Mr. McKenzie then briefly covered the Sanitation District capital improvement requests. Mr. McKenzie stated that a lot of the projects we have seen before, as they were in previous capital improvement plans. Mr. McKenzie added that since we have been compiling Capital Improvement Plans for a few years now, the department heads have gotten the hang of the process, and are submitting project requests with adequate documentation so that most questions are answered. Mr. Kost seconded Mr. McKenzie's observation stating that this year, the department heads have come prepared. Mr. McKenzie added that the better the department heads document the need for the project, the easier it is for the CIP Subcommittee to assess the requests.

Mr. McKenzie then transitioned to the School Board requests, stating that they are trying to replace school busses in their fleet, as they are aging. Mr. McKenzie then spoke about the funding request for playground equipment. Mr. McKenzie stated that the Board of Supervisors and the School Board have tussled for more than a year over replacing the

rusted, old playground equipment, as well as the drainage issue that is part of the existing playground area at the elementary school. Mr. Kost added that now the School Board is looking at a staged construction of individual playground area modules, that will spread the cost over time, while allowing at least some playground equipment for the children in the near term. Mr. Kost added, through his work on the Joint Finances Committee, that the Schools are thinking of the future now, which was not the case previously. Mr. Kost informed the Planning Commission that the schools are now getting revenue for the past two years from State government reimbursement. Mr. Kost explained that the schools are consolidating that funding into a temporary school Capital Improvement Fund, in order to return those funds to the County (which they are legally obligated to do.) Mr. Kost stated that the County has created a dedicated CIP fund as well, and eventually, the school CIP funds will be transferred to the county CIP fund. Mr. McKenzie stated he missed the second meeting of the CIP Subcommittee due to illness, and asked whether the schools are purchasing new or used buses, because there are quotes included for both. Mr. Kost stated that the schools are, in the short term, requesting to buy two used buses for \$53,924.

Mr. Kost, mentioned that he is a member of the Joint Finance Committee, and they have had several meetings, and he would like to mention a couple of things. Mr. Kost stated that the update to the voting machines that the Electoral Board requested have be authorized to be purchased by the Board. Mr. Kost stated the new voting machines were paid for with the first bond the County has ever initiated to fund the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Kost stated that the county, when they decided to build the new courthouse building a couple of decades ago, had a lot of cash on hand, so they paid for the new courthouse with cash. In hindsight, Mr. Kost stated the county should have issued a bond for the construction, because the construction depleted the County's cash reserve. Mr. Kost stated it was likely that more bonds will be issued in the future to help fund the CIP, but that he was not sure the Information Technology Department's request to replace the county's servers would merit a bond. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Kost to confirm that there were two CIP accounts. Mr. Kost replied in the affirmative, clarifying that the school CIP account was temporary because there is currently an issue with transferring the funds to the county CIP account. Mr. O'Brien stated he thought it was smart to have a school CIP account. Mr. Kost stated that any money in the school CIP account is county money, as it was supposed to be returned to the county at the end of the respective fiscal year. Mr. O'Brien stated the county is sitting on a large amount of money. Mr. Cralle asked if the money was in an interest bearing account. Mr. Kost stated yes. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey said that the CIP fund total of \$576,587 is going to be added to so that the resulting balance will be around a million dollars. Chairman Parker reminded the Commission that the bond has to be repaid, and the debt service will continue. Mr. McKenzie asked the commission if they were comfortable with the DRAFT FY27-31 CIP enough to advertise a public hearing for the CIP at next month's meeting. Mr. Kost made a motion to advertise for and conduct a public hearing of the DRAFT FY27-31 CIP at next month's regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey seconded the motion. Mr. O'Brien asked staff to reformat the first page of the CIP so it is easier to read. Staff agreed. The vote to advertise and hold a public hearing on the CIP was unanimous.

RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Kost stated he was the Planning Commission liaison to the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and he thought that Mr. Johnson, who is a member of the EDC and was in attendance in the audience, could give a synopsis of the work done regarding the Poor House Tract. Mr. Johnson stated that he met with the Assistant County Administrator, and the Executive Director of the EDC on a multi-phase plan. First is the initial investigation, and the hope is to be able to get a grant for each phase. Mr. Johnson cautioned that the project is going to take a while, and they hope to get Board of Supervisors approval for the 1st phase before the holidays, and other phases in 12-18 months. Mr. McKenzie added that he has been assured by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources that a staff person would make a site visit in the Spring to do a quick survey to try to locate the remains of any historic structures as well as any cemeteries on the property. Several members asked what type of uses are being considered. Mr. Johnson stated that there will be some industrial options, housing options, recreation options (possibly an equestrian trail). Mr. Johnson stated the EDC wants to engage high school students in some projects to hopefully inspire younger people to stay in the county after graduating high school. Mr. O'Brien asked if the animal shelter people have lost interest in the Poor House tract. Mr. Kost stated they haven't lost interest, but since there is no development there, there is no electrical service on site, which would lead to increased development costs. Maurice Johnson stated part of the investigation the EDC is conducting is to identify where the power tap is. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated she was glad to see that we are trying to serve the county.

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. McKenzie stated that the cell phone tower conditional use permit in Callao was tabled for a month by the Board of Supervisors.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Kost and the meeting ended at 7:51 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	Absent	Charles Williams	Aye
Janes Brann	n/a		