



Chester County Council Subdivision Ordinances Workshop

R. Carlisle Roddey Government Building
1476 J A Cochran Bypass | Chester, SC 29706
Friday, March 28, 2025 | 4:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Pete Wilson, Councilman Mike Vaughn (virtual), Councilman Corey Guy, Councilman John Agee, Councilman Bobby Raines, and County Administrator Brian Hester, County Attorney Nicole Workman

Absent: Vice Chair Erin Mosley and Councilman William Killian

1. Call to Order

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:04pm and declared a quorum of council members present.

Administrator Hester provided an overview of the public hearing on proposed subdivision codes. He emphasized the purpose of the meeting was to offer balance and different perspectives on the county's comprehensive plan and subdivision ordinances. Mr. Hester highlighted the county's focus on planned, smart growth and wanted to provide an opportunity for developers, industry professionals, and the public to share their insights on potential implications of proposed zoning and subdivision code changes.

Chairman Wilson stated since there were seven citizens set to speak, he would allow each citizen six minutes.

2. Public Comment on Proposed Subdivision Codes

Kathy Rishebarger of 2794 Lyle Road, shared her perspective on the proposed subdivision codes. She discussed her involvement in county council meetings and her recent completion of the Citizens Academy. Barger emphasized the importance of preserving Chester County's rural character while accommodating growth. She advocated for protecting farmland, woodlands, and wetlands, and stressed the need for developments with amenities like walking trails and open spaces. She urged the council to consider the long-term impacts of their decisions on future generations and the environment, expressing concern about losing the county's historical heritage and natural beauty.

Robin Dodson of 3631 Hernandez Road, spoke passionately about preserving the county's natural environment. She advocated for conservation requirements in all developments, from small to mega projects. Mrs. Dodson expressed concern about light pollution affecting the night sky and the displacement of wildlife due to land clearing. She highlighted safety issues with road developments, particularly near school bus stops, and stressed the importance of keeping the county's rural heritage. Mrs. Dodson called for high-level conservation in residential, commercial, and industrial building projects, emphasizing that once natural resources are destroyed, they cannot be recovered.

John Osinga of 13821 Phillips Road, reviewed the subdivision plans and focused on specific tables in the document, particularly table 2.4. He had questions about the green and yellow indicators and how these requirements would affect developers' ability to build on properties. When seeking clarification, County Administrator Brian Hester suggested that Mr. Osinga contact Jeremy Ward, the county planner, directly to discuss the technical details of the draft ordinance.

Osinga's primary concern was understanding how the proposed requirements would impact land development strategies.

Benji Layman of 8720 Red Oak Boulevard Suite 420, a civil engineer who worked on Rick Meadows development, provided a developer's perspective on the subdivision ordinance. He appreciated the work done but suggested improvements to the sketch plan process. Mr. Layman recommended a pre-sketch stage where developers could get initial input before formalizing plans. He liked the conservation subdivision concept and supported wider buffers and open spaces. Mr. Layman raised questions about the placement of Planned Development Districts (PDD) and suggested the ordinance needed more guidance on townhome and alley developments. He was particularly concerned about early-stage requirements like street names and traffic impact assessments, which he felt were premature in the initial sketch plan phase.

Tom Miller of 1682 Pleasant Grove Road thanked Jeremy for creating the revised zoning ordinance, which he believed Chester County needed. Mr. Miller urged the council to consider landowners' rights and property values when implementing the new ordinances. He suggested that buffer requirements could be more flexible, potentially incorporating planting or berms to achieve conservation goals while allowing more effective land use. Mr. Miller expressed hope for a fair and productive document that would balance the interests of all parties involved in land development in Chester County.

Tim Helline of 1830 Hands Mill Hwy., owner of Carolina Farms, passionately discussed Chester County's development potential. He advocated for creating more diverse housing options, particularly one-acre lot subdivisions with interior roads. Mr. Heyline suggested the county needed to accommodate different types of buyers, proposing developments with 25-30% open space, no mass grading, and homes starting around \$550,000-\$600,000. He recommended a careful, slow approach to developing the zoning code, emphasizing the importance of getting it right the first time. Mr. Heyline shared his experience in real estate development and expressed a desire to help Chester County maintain its rural atmosphere while intelligently managing growth. He discussed potential road maintenance challenges and suggested ways to create sustainable, attractive neighborhoods that preserve the county's character.

Kathleen Smith of 1830 Hands Mill Hwy. also signed in to speak but declined when asked.

3. Council Comments

Chairman Wilson concluded the meeting by thanking all the speakers for their insightful comments and perspectives. He commended Mr. Ward and Mr. Levister for their hard work on the subdivision codes. Wilson acknowledged that addressing subdivision and zoning issues had been challenging throughout his time on the council but expressed optimism that they were making good progress. He appreciated the council members' attendance and the respectful nature of the public hearing.

4. Adjourn

Councilman Raines motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Guy. Vote 5-0 to adjourn.

Time of adjournment: 4:40pm

Kristie Donaldson

Clerk to Council