



Chester County Council Workshop

Subdivision Ordinances

R. Carlisle Roddey Government Building
1476 J A Cochran Bypass | Chester, SC 29706
Monday, July 14, 2025 | 4:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Pete Wilson, Councilman Bobby Raines, Councilman John Agee, Councilman William Killian (4:07pm arrival), County Administrator Brian Hester, County Attorney Nicole Workman, Clerk to Council Kristie Donaldson

Absent: Vice Chair Erin Mosley and Councilman Corey Guy

1. Call to Order

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:03pm and stated there was not a quorum of council members present at the moment. Chairman Wilson thanked the members of the Planning Commission for attending and also members of the audience.

2. Consideration of Subdivision Ordinances

a) Urban Conservation Subdivisions

Director Ward presented urban conservation subdivisions as a strategic approach to land development in areas with public water and sewer. The proposal reduced lot sizes from 10,000 to 6,500 square feet, allowing developers to build more homes while preserving 33% of the land as open space. This approach differed from traditional subdivisions by requiring that half of the conserved land could be privately owned for agricultural purposes, while the other half had to be common space accessible to residents, such as trails or small community farms. Located in high-density residential zones, these subdivisions aimed to maximize infrastructure use, create more attractive living environments, and provide additional green spaces. The plan offered flexibility in approval methods, including by-right, special exception, or conditional use, and was designed to balance growth with land conservation, responding to citizens' desires to protect rural character while allowing moderate development. Councilman Agee referenced the Greenway in Fort Mill as an analogous outdoor recreation area. Councilman Raines stated that allowing urban conservation subdivisions by-right would be the simplest option and closest to where we wanted to go as a county.

b) Rural Conservation Subdivisions

Director Ward presented rural conservation subdivisions as a strategic approach to land development in rural areas without public water and sewer. The proposal reduced lot sizes from two acres to one acre, allowing developers to save 55% of buildable land while supporting agricultural preservation. This approach aimed to provide landowners with an alternative to high-density rezoning or keeping land solely as farmland. The plan offered incentives such as reduced infrastructure requirements, including narrower roads and less stringent stormwater management. Director Ward suggested that half of

the conserved land could be used for active farming or timber, with the other half accessible to residents for recreation and outdoor activities. The proposal was designed to address the needs of aging landowners, support the agricultural economy, and protect the environment. Director Ward recommended allowing these subdivisions with parameters, such as limiting the number of homes and considering road conditions, to ensure they fit the character of rural areas and do not overwhelm local infrastructure. There was robust discussion among the councilman about the details of this option. There was broad agreement that rural conservation subdivisions would be a suitable option for rural development in our county, and discussion hinged on what parameters, if any, to set. Councilman Killian stated that he would like to see this sort of subdivision across the entirety of Chester County. Councilman Agee and Raines discussed infrastructure and soil issues. In addition, Chairman Wilson noted that, due to the large amount of land in the county zoned R-2, some measure of control was needed to protect rural character in unsuitable areas for development. To help address this, Chairman Wilson requested setting parameters based on road condition. Chairman Wilson also recommended requiring special approval for any such subdivision over fifty houses, to which Councilman Agee and Killian countered with closer to one hundred houses. Director Ward noted this feedback and pledged to submit a revised draft proposal for consideration to adequately preserve rural Chester County.

c) Infrastructure Requirements for Large-Lot Medium Subdivisions

Director Ward introduced large-lot medium subdivisions as a way to replicate successful older rural subdivisions like Victorian Hills and Peden Oaks. The proposal allowed medium subdivisions with lots of one and a half acres or more, eliminating requirements for sidewalks, stormwater management, and streetlights. These subdivisions would include a road frontage buffer and new open space requirements. Director Ward aimed to create an option that maintained the character of traditional rural developments, offering larger lots that provide more space and a more open living environment. The proposal was designed to be flexible, potentially allowing lots to average 1.5 acres rather than strictly requiring each lot to be that size. Director Ward suggested these subdivisions would be similar to rural conservation subdivisions but with slightly different parameters, such as maintaining standard road widths and potentially requiring rezoning due to existing zoning restrictions. The goal was to provide developers with an option that preserves the rural aesthetic and lifestyle that many Chester County residents value. There was discussion between the Planning Commission and County Council regarding the road width, gravel shoulders, and a preference was noted for these large-lot medium subdivisions to mirror the road standards for rural conservation subdivisions. Administrator Hester suggested making 1.5 acres the average lot size for these subdivisions, instead of the minimum, to provide flexibility.

3. Council Comments

Councilman Agee noted the census bureau's statistics for 2025 that stated there was a 7% decrease in population in Chester County and that more deaths occur than live births. Councilman Agee stated the subdivisions can't be all over—they must have schools.

Commissioner Walley acknowledged the paving project on 901 and stated the new road had larger shoulders that she appreciates.

Chairman Wilson asked that we keep Councilwoman Mosley's mother in our prayers due to recent health issues.

Councilman Killian stated that Councilman Guy could not make the meeting due to assisting his mother to the doctor.

4. Adjourn

Councilman Killian motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Raines. Vote 4-0 to adjourn.

Time of adjournment: 5:31pm

Kristie Donaldson

Clerk to Council