County of Surry, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2025

MEETING CONVENED: The meeting of the Surry County Planning Commission was called to order at 6 PM on Monday, December 15, 2025, in the Surry County General District Court, 45 School Street, Surry, VA, by Dr. Giron Wooden, Jr., Chair.

ATTENDANCE: The following members responded present to Roll Call:
Dr. Giron Wooden, Jr., Chair
Mr. Thomas Hardy, Vice Chair
Mr. Breyon Pierce
Mr. Stephen Berryman
Mr. William Seward, IV
Ms. Dianne Cheek
Ms. Carmen D. Judkins
Mr. David Coggin
Mr. Earl Newby, Sr.
Mr. Eddie Brock

ABSENT:
Mr. Theodore Lunsford

STAFF PRESENT:
Mr. Horace Wade, III, Director of Planning and Community Development
Ms. Regina Hilton, Administrative Assistant
Ms. Lola Perkins, County Attorney
Mr. Lorenzo Turner, Planner I
Ms. Haley Keene, Senior Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All

ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA: Chair Wooden entertained a motion to adopt the meeting's agenda as presented. It was moved by Mr. Newby and seconded by Ms. Judkins.

In favor: (10) Wooden, Hardy, Berryman, Cheek, Judkins, Seward, Pierce, Coggin, Newby, Brock
Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0
Absent: (1) Lunsford

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS: Chair Wooden asked the Commissioners for the disposition of the minutes for October 27, 2025. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Mr. Brock and seconded by Mr. Newby.

In favor: (10) Wooden, Hardy, Berryman, Cheek, Judkins, Seward, Pierce, Coggin, Newby, Brock
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: (1) Lunsford

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Mr. Horace Wade, Director of Planning and Community Development, presented information to the Commission on the Comprehensive Plan Update. A memo was provided to the Commission to reiterate the Comp Plan Update process, which was not an update to the entire plan but rather a set of relatively simple updates to future land use policies and updated data in the Plan. Also included was a spreadsheet of comments received on the update, most of which referred to the text in the 2020 Plan. He noted that these comments may inform a more significant, holistic update to the Comp Plan in the next five years, if the County chooses to pursue it. He summarized that staff had worked to provide clarification and further context for certain aspects within the Plan, and would present the final draft to the Commission at their January meeting, followed by a public hearing in February.

Ms. Cheek asked why some public comments lacked corresponding clarifications or responses from staff.

Ms. Haley Keene, Senior Planner, explained that some of the comments were general feedback that did not require a substantive response from staff, although staff may still refer to those comments while formulating and finalizing the updates.

Mr. Hardy thanked staff for their diligent and thorough work on this update.

Chair Wooden asked whether this was to be presented at a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors in March.

Mr. Wade confirmed that it was correct, although the exact date would ultimately depend on the Board's schedule.

Chair Wooden noted that, based on staff-gathered information and comments received regarding the Comp Plan update, and considering the County's development direction, it may be beneficial for the County to pursue a more thorough update of the Comp Plan for its next five-year update.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

COMMITTEE UPDATES: Mr. Wade explained that the last Subdivision Subcommittee meeting had been canceled, but he would like to inform the Commission that their next meeting agenda will include a review of other localities' lot sizes and family divisions, after which they will bring that information to the full Planning Commission. He stated that family divisions, in particular, likely required additional language and revisions to be more beneficial to families in Surry.

The Commission and staff discussed family subdivisions and other subdivision policies.

Chair Wooden stated that he had heard concerns from the public that starting public hearings at 6 PM would be detrimental to public comment; however, data from their past year indicated that it would not be an issue to hold the hearings earlier than 6:30 PM. He asked his fellow Commissioners to consider starting their public hearings at 6 PM when they restructured their by-laws in the new year.

Mr. Wade replied that he could include that as a potential amendment to the bylaws for the Commission to consider.

RECESS: Chair Wooden entertained a motion to recess until 6:30 PM. It was moved by Mr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Coggin.

In favor: (10) Wooden, Hardy, Berryman, Cheek, Judkins, Seward, Pierce, Coggin, Newby, Brock
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: (1) Lunsford

NEW BUSINESS – PUBLIC HEARINGS – 6:30 PM

1. **Ordinance Amendment 2025-02**

Mr. Wade provided a brief overview of the Ordinance Amendment 2025-02. For background, at the Commission's last meeting, they reviewed the proposed amendments to the Emerging Technologies (ET) Zoning District Ordinance. Staff was currently finalizing the amendments with their external consultants and counsel, and the legal review was now complete. The purpose of tonight's public hearing was to review and recommend approval of the draft before sending it to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

Mr. Wade summarized that staff's proposed changes included language updates to ensure compliance with the Virginia State Code, clarification of terms, changes to by-right, permitted, and accessory uses, addition of eligibility parameters for waivers related to minimum lot size and maximum height, additional exterior lighting requirements, definition of circulation plan, and additional site development regulations.

Ms. Cheek asked if AR-zoned land could be rezoned to ET if it was less than 500 acres. She asked whether an AR-zoned parcel would need to be rezoned to M-1 and then request a waiver, as detailed in Sec. 3-1103(A).

Mr. Wade replied that if a parcel was zoned AR and did not meet any of the waiver criteria, they could not apply for the waiver.

Ms. Perkins clarified that, under the current draft of the Ordinance, if an AR parcel is next door to an M-1, M-2, or ET parcel, it would be eligible to apply for a waiver. She said that, with regard to Ms. Cheek's question, the AR parcel does not need to be rezoned to M-1, M-2, or ET to apply for the waiver. She said, however, that they could submit an application for rezoning to the ET District, which would eliminate the need for the waiver.

Ms. Cheek asked what the outcome would be for an AR parcel that did not border an M-1, M-2, or ET District parcel.

Ms. Perkins replied that in that case, rezoning to the ET District would be the only option. They certainly could rezone to an M-1 or M-2 and go through the waiver process, and then it would be by right. She added that if the AR parcel was under 500 acres, the waiver would still be required even if it were rezoned to ET. She explained that the proposed amendment allowed for parcels under 500 acres to go through that waiver process, which did not exist within the current Ordinance.

Mr. Berryman asked how staff determined the accessory uses for the ET District.

Ms. Perkins answered that a previous applicant to the County had included accessory uses in their permit conditions, based on public and Planning Commission comments. When staff looked at potential changes for the ET District, they felt an appropriate change would be to standardize those accessory uses. To ensure compliance, it was best to include them in the Ordinance.

Mr. Pierce asked how the 500-acre minimum parcel size was determined.

Mr. Wade answered that staff considered what an appropriate lot size would be for a large data center campus or a similar large-scale project. They concluded that 500 acres was the appropriate size, but also understood that flexibility was needed. He said there may be some projects that make sense for smaller parcels, but that ultimately depends on the parcel's environmental conditions and the specifics of the project.

Mr. Coggin asked if a battery storage facility would require going through the ET District process.

Mr. Wade replied no; battery storage facilities were permitted in the AR District with a CUP. However, in the ET District, it would be a by-right use, subject to additional parameters.

Mr. Berryman asked if supplemental regulations remained the same and were not part of the proposed amendments. He asked if those regulations would remain the same regardless of the zoning district.

Mr. Wade confirmed that it was correct.

Chair Wooden opened the public hearing.

Seeing no speakers, Chair Wooden closed the public hearing. He said that if there were no further questions from the Commission, he would entertain a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the approval or denial of Ordinance 2025-02.

A motion to recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-02 was made by Mr. Hardy and seconded by Mr. Coggin.

In favor: (10) Wooden, Hardy, Berryman, Cheek, Judkins, Seward, Pierce, Coggin, Newby, Brock
Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0
Absent: (1) Lunsford

PC SECRETARY COMMUNICATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Wooden entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:44 PM until the January 26, 2026, meeting. It was moved by Mr. Berryman and seconded by Mr. Hardy. Motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned.