

County of Surry, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2025

MEETING CONVENED: The meeting of the Surry County Planning Commission was called to order at 6 PM on Monday, November 17, 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. Theodore Lunsford
Mr. Breyon Pierce
Mr. Stephen Berryman
Mr. William Seward, IV
Ms. Dianne Cheek
Ms. Carmen D. Judkins
Mr. David Coggin

ABSENT:

Mr. Eddie Brock
Mr. Earl Newby, Sr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Horace Wade, III, Director of Planning and Community Development
Ms. Regina Hilton, Administrative Assistant
Mr. Darius Savedge, Senior Planner
Ms. Lola Perkins, County Attorney
Ms. Haley Keene, Senior Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All

ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA: Chair Wooden entertained a motion to adopt the meeting's agenda. It was moved by Mr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Hardy.

In favor: (9) Wooden, Hardy, Berryman, Lunsford, Cheek, Judkins, Seward, Pierce, Coggin
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 0

Absent: (2) Brock, Newby

CONSENT ITEMS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Emerging Technologies Zoning District Ordinance Update

Mr. Horace Wade, Director of Planning and Community Development, introduced the item. He said that, for background, during the January 2025 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission approved by a vote of 7-0 for staff to bring forward ordinance amendments to the Emerging Technologies Zoning District Ordinance. He said that staff would present those proposed amendments tonight.

Ms. Lola Perkins, County Attorney, provided an overview of the proposed amendments to the Emerging Technologies Zoning District Ordinance. She explained that staff engaged with outside consultants and counsel to fully identify the necessary updates and draft amendments, which would be brought to the Planning Commission in a public hearing process once finalized. Staff's objective was to provide the final draft Ordinance to the Commission as soon as the legal review was completed, then the amendments would be advertised for public hearing and presented at the Commission's December 17th meeting.

Ms. Perkins summarized the proposed amendments, which included updates to ensure compliance with recent updates to Virginia State Code, adjustments to permitted uses within the Zoning District, expansion of the acreage required for ET District zoning and the best avenue for authorizing that expansion, establishment of any other parameters for determining eligibility of parcels under 500 acres, and review of language to ensure clarity and comprehension of the Ordinance itself. She reiterated that staff's work on formulating these amendments was informed by their consultant group, their outside legal counsel, and the Commission.

Mr. Wade concluded that staff was anticipating to bring forward this draft Ordinance to the Commission next month. He said they still had some work to finish before it was complete, and as soon as it was, they would send it to the Commission and advertise it as required by law.

Chair Wooden encouraged the Commissioners to reach out to Mr. Wade or Ms. Perkins if they had any further questions or concerns about these amendments after tonight's meeting.

Mr. Berryman asked if the energy storage facility use would be a by-right use or require a conditional use permit (CUP).

Mr. Wade replied that in the proposed amendments, it would be included as a definition in the permitted by-right uses for the Zoning District. However, the definition did not include battery technologies utilized in consumer products and motor vehicles. He said that this was included to ensure their definitions were consistent; however, the Planning Commission could recommend that the energy storage facilities require a conditional use permit if they felt it was appropriate. He said that staff had previously discussed adding battery energy storage systems to the by-right use, then separating out the other, more intensive uses to require a CUP.

Mr. Berryman asked if someone had 30 acres; they could not rezone it to ET because of the 500-acre requirement.

Ms. Perkins confirmed that it was correct: a parcel would need to be 500 acres to be rezoned to an ET District. She said that staff was considering whether to allow smaller parcels to be rezoned to the ET District on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Coggin said that he would like to make two suggestions to the site development regulations. First, he wanted to ensure the Ordinance adequately addressed exterior lighting in the ET District so that there would be no light trespass onto neighboring properties or light pollution in their rural areas. Second, he would like to see fire protection plans and proffers to the Fire Department included.

Mr. Pierce asked how the 500-acre minimum size for the ET District was determined.

Ms. Perkins answered that the creation of the ET District was initiated by an application, not by the County or Planning Commission, and the 500 acres were part of that. She acknowledged that there was not much precedent in that regard, and staff thought 500 acres was reasonable for a self-contained data center campus or a similar large massing of buildings.

Mr. Pierce asked how an applicant with 499 acres would be handled, given that 500 acres is the minimum.

Ms. Perkins replied that, right now, it could not be, but if the Ordinance were amended to include more flexibility, that could come forward in the County's process on a case-by-case basis. She clarified that staff was thinking the 500-acre requirement would remain in place, and

that the amendments to the Ordinance could include new opportunities for smaller parcels to be considered under certain parameters and a process. Staff believed it did not need to be only a CUP process, but that would certainly be part of the analysis of all available options.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

COMMITTEE UPDATES: Mr. Wade reported that the County held a community open house earlier this month, which had a good turnout and many questions about future maps, definitions, and other Comp Plan language. He noted that the update was not for the entire Plan; rather, they were working on data updates and the review of their future land-use policies. He encouraged the Commissioners to share their questions and comments with staff prior to December 1, when comments would be closed. He summarized that staff will provide the Commission with anonymized public comments at the December 15 meeting, a draft at the January meeting, and the public hearing at the February meeting. The Subcommittee will also have a meeting after the Commission's December meeting and before the January Commission meeting to ensure all concerns have been addressed.

Mr. Wade reported that the Subdivision Subcommittee was reviewing minimum lot sizes for the AR District, family division rules, notification of subdivision applications, and permitting for water and sewer connections. He stated that the Subcommittee would have its next meeting on December 10 to review those items with staff.

Mr. Pierce asked whether the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission could have a joint meeting in the near future to review all of these updates.

Mr. Coggin asked about the meeting on Sunken Meadow Pond scheduled for tomorrow night. He asked whether the Commission would be receiving a presentation on that topic this evening.

Mr. Wade clarified that no, the meeting tomorrow was not hosted by the County and was actually held by another organization. He encouraged the Commissioners to educate themselves on the issue, then ask the right questions to the right people. He clarified that the meeting was tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. at the rec center.

PC SECRETARY COMMUNICATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Wooden entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:06 PM until the December 15 meeting. It was moved by Mr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Lunsford. Motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned.