

**Orange County Unified Development Ordinance
Public Information Meeting
October 19, 2009 7:00pm – 8:30pm
Southern Human Services, Chapel Hill, NC**

Summary Report

Staff Note: This summary report has been posted on-line on the Unified Development Ordinance website (<http://www.co.orange.nc.us/planning/UDO.asp>) and will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners.

Twelve (12) people attended the Public Information Meeting, including members of the public, staff, and one Planning Board member. Listed below are those who signed-in or who stated their name while speaking.

Meeting Attendees: Bruce Ballentine, Dan Jewell, Mr. and Mrs. Earl McKee, Allan Rosen, and Frank Thomas

Orange County Staff Present: Craig Benedict, Brad Broadwell, Tom Altieri, Michael Harvey, Perdita Holtz, and Dottie Schmitt

MEETING NOTES

Welcome and Introductions: Craig Benedict welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Staff Presentation:

- Michael Harvey, Zoning Administrator/Enforcement Officer, made a presentation and in general conveyed: What is a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO); Project purpose, scope, process, and timetable; and Opportunities for public input during the process.

Public Comments/Questions:

“Public”: Commends staff for undertaking this. Existing documents are hard to understand, have contradictions.

“Public”: Various critical subjects (parking, stream buffers, etc.) appear in multiple places in multiple documents. Things would “creep up” just because you missed a sentence in an obscure area of a document.

“Public”: Can the public get a list of the identified inconsistencies to be addressed? So this project will not change needed development regulations? At what point in time will we define metrics of whether the UDO is succeeding?

Mr. Benedict: We do need to clearly identify and communicate the goals of this repackaging/rewrite effort. You do want to be able to say “what is a success?”

Mr. Harvey: We’re going to post sections on the webpage as we develop them.

“Public”: Will staff be making recommendations to shorten any of the processes?

Mr. Harvey: Yes.

Mr. Benedict: There will be an approval procedure section (i.e., process 1 through 6).

“Public”: There is an unusual threshold requirement in the Subdivision Regulations – the 21st lot of a subdivision kicks you into an Special Use Permit (SUP) process. Needs to be looked at again – make part of future changes. Planning Board should be able to approve 20 lots or less (without BOCC involvement). He experienced 6 months of waiting on BOCC agenda during the Orchard subdivision development process. In the end it was approved by BOCC. Why the wait?

Mr. Benedict: Suggest a graphic timeline of how long every party (staff, Planning Board, and BOCC) has to review projects.

“Public”: Are there metrics and stats for approval time for each approval process? Do you know how long it has taken historically for approvals?

Mr. Benedict: We want to move towards this. We have deadlines for staff and Planning Board review. Do not have deadlines for BOCC decision.

“Public”: After staff and advisory board review, project went through County Attorney review. Lengthened the process. Why didn’t County Attorney review occur concurrent with staff review? Streamline.

“Public”: Move towards intense use of sites to save more of the site in open space - cluster subdivisions. Cluster subdivisions require community wastewater systems. Falls apart on political side. Commissioners very wary due to system failures 20 years ago. Is there a way to put this in the Ordinance ‘by right’ if designed to specific criteria? Take political part out.

Mr. Benedict: We need to identify and have a forum where BOCC can review current technology and then say yay or nay to this concept. Don’t bait someone with a regulation that looks like you can do it but you really can’t.

“Public”: Wants more exploration of example just given. How does this fall in scope of what we can do now (with UDO)? Sounds like solution phase is not even on the table.

Mr. Benedict: Correct.

“Public”: So in August 2010 we will have a document that identifies solutions?

Mr. Benedict: Yes.

“Public”: People coming to these meetings are going to be more solution oriented. How can we ensure solutions get addressed without taxing staff?

Mr. Benedict: We’ll identify but it’ll have to wait. We want to do these major thought processes as much as possible.

“Public”: Shocked at amount of info given to him when he joined Planning Board; hasn’t even gotten through all of it yet and believes other Planning Board members haven’t either. With staff retirements, time will be limited and this will be a long process.

Mr. Benedict: 3-1/2 less positions. But this is the most actual planning work we’ve undertaken in his tenure.

“Public”: Will go back to his staff and pull together list of problems they had with process.

“Public”: Deadline is ambitious. Take time to do it right rather than meet rigid deadline. Get document on the street at 95% perfect and then get feedback and do text amendments as needed over the next couple of years to get up to 100%.

“Public”: Believes the list of items that need to be done to fix inconsistencies will put our suggestions to shame. Just fixing the inconsistencies will be a huge improvement.

Mr. Benedict: We’re trying to get advisory boards to come up with some joint priorities.

“Public”: Understand not getting into policy changes but existing ordinances fall under old policies. Text could still be confusing even if inconsistencies are fixed. Take existing text and rewrite text to be more clear without changing actual policy.

Mr. Harvey: That’s what we’ll be doing – rewriting text but not changing policy.

Mr. Benedict: Commissioners will want strike and delete version with references to old sections.