

**ZEBULON BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
JANUARY 13, 2025**

Present: Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Shannon Baxter, Beverly Clark, Amber Davis, Quentin Miles, Gilbert Todd-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Matt Lower-Planning, Bob Grossman-Police, Chris Ray-Public Works, Kellianne Williams-Asst. Town Manager, Sam Slater-Town Attorney

Planning Board Present: David Lowry, Kyle Adams, Sr, Dominick Schilling, George Roa, Stephanie Jenkins

Absent: Niya Moton

Call To Order

Mayor York called the Joint Public Hearing to order.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor York asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve the agenda. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor York read a proclamation in recognition of Dr. Laura Johnson who served on the Planning Board for many years.

New Business

TA 2025-01 – Regional Mixed Use

Planning Director Matt Lower presented a proposed text amendment to add a Regional Mixed Use Zoning District. He provided context for the recommendation, noting that Zebulon had grown 82% in the past five years, with a population increase from under 7,000 in 2020 to potentially over 13,000 by the end of the current year.

It was explained that the Town had significant developable open space in its future growth area, with nearly 8,000 acres of agricultural land and about 2,000 acres of vacant land. Matt emphasized the need to plan for these large open spaces while considering community character and choice, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Examples of regional mixed-use developments from other cities, including Newport News, Green Bay's Titledown, and a suburban example from Lynchburg, Virginia were shared with the Board. He noted that none of these types of developments were currently permissible by right in Zebulon.

Mr. Lower outlined several benefits of implementing a regional mixed-use zoning district:

1. Potential relief for residential property taxpayers due to the high value per acre of regional mixed-use developments.
2. Clear and simple standards for investors, creating a predictable investment environment.
3. Enhanced quality of life for families by providing interesting places for leisure activities.
4. Increased competitiveness for the municipality by allowing for fiscally productive development.

The proposed Regional Mixed-Use District would include:

- A dimensional standards table
- A master plan requirement
- Design standards aligned with existing UDO standards
- An updated table of permitted uses

Matt emphasized that the Master Plan requirement would still involve elected or appointed official review as part of the zoning approval process.

Commissioner Baxter asked for clarification on how the term "substantially" would be interpreted in relation to conforming to the Master Plan. It was explained that it meant actions could be rationally related to statements or policies within the Comprehensive Plan.

Matt was asked to identify areas on the Transportation and Land Use plan that might fall into the new regional mixed-use zoning district. It was explained that it would be the next step after finalizing the district details.

There was a discussion about the potential lack of green areas in regional mixed-use developments. Lower noted that current standards require a 5% open space minimum and a 75% maximum lot coverage. He added that half of the 15% open space must be dedicated to public plaza or green space.

David Lowry sought clarification on the maximum front setback of 15 feet and the possibility of granting additional feet for outdoor public seating, plazas, or green space. Matt Lower explained that the provision aimed to ensure buildings were built close to the street, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Domenick Schilling asked about regulating the wide range of permitted uses and how to determine which uses would be allowed. Matt stated it would be partly a policy preference and would be determined at the initial application stage.

Mr. Schilling also expressed concern about the potential congestion and confusion in areas with on-street parking, bike lanes, and pedestrian lanes. Matt acknowledged the concern and explained that the proposed standards aimed to provide flexibility while setting a template for safe and functional street design.

Public Hearing

Mayor York read a statement for the public hearing process and then declared the public hearing open.

Mayor York asked for anyone wishing to speak in favor.

Nicholas Walton of Watsonia Drive stated that he supported the Mixed-Use Development and wanted to see it approved.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak in favor. There were none.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in opposition. There were none.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone who wished to speak neither for nor against but just had comments. There were none.

Mayor York closed the public hearing and referred the matter to the planning board for their consideration.

Adjourn

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to adjourn. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 4th day of August 2025

SEAL



A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Glenn L. York", written over a horizontal line.

Glenn L. York – Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ana Gomez Rindahl", written over a horizontal line.

Ana Gomez Rindahl – Town Clerk

