

PLANNING AND ZONING

Mission

To develop and administer a comprehensive and strategic planning program designed to maintain quality and sustainable growth within Randolph County.

Summary

The administration and legal enforcement of land use is managed along with related development regulations. Planning issues analysis and related staff support are provided to the Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and related committees and organizations on public matters involving physical and strategic growth of Randolph County. This department has 9.00 allocated positions.

Overview

Randolph County first implemented zoning in 1972, through its first zoning ordinance, but it was only for one area of the county. At that time the State of North Carolina had decided to locate the North Carolina Zoo in Randolph County, but only on the condition that the area around the Zoo be zoned to enhance and preserve the special character of the Zoo site. The Zoo zoning ordinance imposed development standards on commercial businesses and other uses in a specific area around the N.C. Zoo. Responsibility for zoning administration was given to Harold Holmes, Randolph County's first county manager. The County Manager remained responsible for zoning administration until 1979. In 1979, the Board of Commissioners placed Zoning Administration, Building Inspections, and Ambulance Service within the framework of the Public Health Department. Hal Johnson was appointed Director of Allied Health Services, which included Zoning and Building Inspections.

1974 was the year that County Commissioners adopted a subdivision ordinance and established the Randolph County Planning Board and the Randolph County Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment heard so few cases, however, that in 1980 it and the Planning Board were combined as one entity.

In 1977 the County adopted its first land use plan.

In 1979, the County Commissioners implemented zoning for another portion of the county; this time it was for Trinity Township, where a lot of development was taking place.

In April of 1983, Bob Crumley, County Manager, presented an administrative reorganization proposal to the County Commissioners. The reorganization involved creating two new departments: Property Development (including Building Inspections and Planning and Zoning), to be headed by Hal Johnson of the Health Department; and Emergency Services (including Fire Marshal and Emergency Medical Services), which would create a new position of Emergency Services Director. The Commissioners approved this reorganization, with the directive that the changes were to be implemented as soon as feasible and practical. Both of these newly created departments remained at the McDowell Center.

In 1987, the County Commissioners implemented countywide zoning and adopted the Unified Development Ordinance (which included zoning, subdivisions, watershed, and flood regulations). During the 1987-88 budget process, Frank Willis, County Manager, separated Building Inspections and Planning and Zoning into two different departments, effective July 1, 1987. Bill McDaniel was named as Chief Building Inspector and made department head of the newly created Building Inspections Department. Hal Johnson remained department head for Planning and Zoning. At this time the Planning and Zoning Department moved to the basement of the old Courthouse.

Planning and Zoning moved to the Randolph County Office Building in 1989, when the County purchased the building from the Sara Lee Corporation. Here they are housed on the first floor, next to Building Inspections.

In 1989, Planning and Zoning began working with Computer Services and other involved departments on a new concept—centralized permitting. The County Commissioners wanted to make the development permit process more convenient and accessible to the public. An integrated database computer program was written in-house by Computer Services staff and fully implemented in 1991. That same year, the program won a N.C. Association of County Commissioners Outstanding County Program Award.

In 1989, County Commissioners adopted a road-naming ordinance so that emergency services (fire, police, ambulance) could locate rural addresses more quickly. In conjunction with the countywide road-naming project begun in 1989, the County Commissioners adopted an addressing ordinance in 1991 that provided a uniform system of road addresses to facilitate the provision of public safety/ emergency services and postal delivery. Oversight of these programs was given to the Planning Board and the Planning Director.

In late 1992 the County Commissioners directed Hal Johnson, Planning Director, to organize a countywide strategic planning process, to include all municipalities. Mr. Johnson spearheaded a committee whose goal was to identify and develop an action plan for long-term strategic issues facing the county. This process was completed in 1995.

In 1996 the County Commissioners adopted a junked vehicle ordinance and gave the Planning and Zoning Department primary responsibility for enforcing it. In 1998 this stand-alone ordinance was repealed, and junked vehicle regulations were incorporated into the zoning chapter of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Several important events involving the Planning and Zoning Department took place in 2002. The County Commissioners adopted the Randolph County Growth Management Plan, a long-range guide for public policy decisions concerning the overall growth and development of the Randolph County community. It focuses on physical growth and development but also addresses quality-of-life issues such as preservation of heritage assets in an increasingly fragile rural environment. Adoption of the Growth Management Plan resulted in an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. A new article was added to deal with the creation of a Technical Review Committee and a development impact analysis for major residential subdivisions. The Technical Review Committee, made up of Planning and Zoning staff, prepares information in five areas

outlined in the development impact analysis: housing development analysis, water resources, traffic analysis, public education impact, and agricultural impact.

Geographic Information System

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) began in Randolph County in 1987 when the Tax Department purchased Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., (ESRI®) ArcINFO® software to automate parcel mapping. The County remained active over the next several years building various data coverages for Tax Department use and Planning Department purposes. Randolph County GIS development increased in 1991 during the development of the first E911 system with property addressing and road naming.

Since 1995 County departments have been utilizing GIS Inquiry to display and print data for geographical areas. Through this inquiry interface users could have access to over twenty different data layers. For example, the Planning Department has access to Zoning, Watershed, Flood Plains and many other coverages instantly when querying on a parcel

Also starting in 1995 the Randolph County Planning Department began using ESRI® software to produce spatial maps of special interest in Randolph County. The office started by using ArcView®, UNIX version 2.0 and is now using ArcGIS® version 8.3. At that time the available spatial information and the capabilities of the County's GIS were underutilized. Simple maps were created that required minimum resources of the software. However, since June 1998, the department has been better utilizing the resources.

GIS Site Plans

In June 1998 the office started producing site plans that have changed the scope and the proceedings of Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and Board of County Commissioners Public Hearings.

Prior to the implementation of this program the only visual aids at public hearings were plats provided by the applicants or a County map. These maps provided no real reference for the citizens attending the public hearing nor did they provide a reference for the Board members.

When an application for a rezoning, special use or variance is made, the applicant provides our office with a specific site plan detailing the location of existing structures and parking areas and proposed structures and parking areas. If the applicant does not have a site plan prepared, a site plan utilizing the GIS software is created before the applicant leaves the office. Three site plans are actually created. One site plan is a general vicinity site plan showing the request location in relationship to adjoining parcels and landmarks. The second site plan is more specific and focuses on the specific parcel showing any current and proposed structures. The third site plan is a digital orthophotograph of the specific parcel and surrounding area.

The use of the GIS site plans allows citizens to see where their property is in relationship to the request location and allows them to see what, if any, impacts the proposed development would have on their property. The GIS site plans also allows the taxpayer to see their tax dollars at work providing a useful service.

Integration Into Central Permits System

Another aspect of GIS at work in the Randolph County Planning Department is the integration of GIS into our Central Permit System. Randolph County was the first county in the State to operate a Central Permit System. This office handles all permit requests for land use planning, environmental health and building inspections. GIS is a major asset to the permit system.

When a new application is started, all vital information about the property is automatically gathered from GIS into the Property Development Application. GIS gathers the information concerning flood plains, watershed, water quality critical areas, census tracts and zoning. GIS also assists in the collection of correct directions to the job site. The information may also be obtained by using the GIS Inquiry capabilities provided to our Property Development Technicians through the ArcINFO[®] custom interface that is controlled and managed using ArcINFO[®] Workstation operating on an IBM[®] UNIX box. Through the use of GIS our office is better equipped to more accurately give directions to parcels and determine any existing development on the parcel.

Watershed Management Program

GIS also plays a vital role in the Watershed Management Program. Once again, all vital information concerning a parcel is “imported” into a permit before the Watershed Protection Permit is issued. Through GIS the office is able to determine the actual parcel size, and in some instances, the amount of the parcel in the watershed area.

Zoning Maintenance

Our zoning maintenance is also performed through the use of an ArcINFO[®] custom interface. Parcels that are rezoned are drawn and the appropriate adjustments are made to the parcel and the rezonings are then filed back to the main GIS server so all GIS Inquiry users, including those on the internet, can view the zoning updates.

Current Projects

As is the nature of computer software and computers, Randolph County is always looking for ways to improve the GIS and new coverages that can be created to assist the County in the performance of the assigned duties. Currently the County is working on several different projects to upgrade our GIS.

The Planning Department has just completed working on a water and sewer line coverage for the County. Until this time there has never been a complete, unified up-to-date coverage showing an approximate location of water and sewer lines in the municipalities and in the unincorporated areas of Randolph County.

Another project underway is the transitioning away from the GIS Inquiry using the ArcINFO[®] custom interface and moving to an intranet based application using ArcIMS[®] software.

The County is also in the process of converting the existing coverages from the traditional coverage format to the new geodatabase format that will utilize ArcSDE® and a Structured Query Language (SQL) server.

List Of Current Coverages

The following is a list of the current coverages in the Randolph County GIS.

Tax Library Layers:

Lot Lines (LL) -

Lines identifying legal lot lines that are not parcel boundaries and lot numbers for lots within subdivisions.

Parcel Labels (PL) -

Points representing the center of each parcel and text showing lot number and acreage for each parcel.

Streams (ST) -

Lines identifying streams, lakes and rivers.

Subdivisions (SB) -

Areas representing recorded subdivisions.

Subdivision Labels (SL) -

Points indicating center of subdivision. ** For Map Display Only. **

Taxable Parcels (TPA) -

Tax base map containing area that represent parcel boundaries, road right of ways and railroad right of ways.

County Wide:

Airports (/gis/pz/airports)-

Points representing airport locations up to 5 miles outside of County.

Asheboro Airport Coverages:

(/gis/pz/airport/runway) -

Areas representing the approaches and runway for the Asheboro Airport.

(/gis/pz/airport/airport_buf) -

Area representing 20,000 feet buffer of runway and approaches regulated by planning ordinances.

(/gis/pz/airport/airport_buf1) -

Area representing 821 feet and 1,021 feet elevation buffer.

(/gis/pz/airport/airport_cont) -

Areas representing topo over 821 feet.

(/gis/pz/airport/approaches) –
Detailed elevation lines of approaches.

Appraisal Neighborhoods (/gis/tax/nbhd)
Areas representing appraisal neighborhoods for use in tax reappraisal.

Census Tracts (/gis/dp/cens.blk and /gis/dp/cens.trk) -
Areas representing 1990 US Census Tracts and Blocks.

Census Tracts (/gis/dp/censblk2k and /gis/dp/censtr2k) -
Areas representing 2000 US Census Tracts and Blocks.

City ETJ Areas (/gis/pz/city-etj)
Areas indicating extra city territorial jurisdiction.

City Limits (/gis/tax/cl) -
Areas indicating the municipal boundaries for each city.

City Water Lines (/gis/tax/ctywatlines) -
Lines representing roads in the County that have access to public water.

County Line
(/gis/tax/cntyline)
Indicates County line boundaries.

(/gis/dp/st_cntyline)
Indicates County line according to state.

County Zoning (/gis/pz/zd) -
Areas indicating County and municipal zoning.

DOT Road Maintenance Areas (/gis/es/dotmaint)
Areas represent Department of Transportation Road Maintenance areas.

Easements (/gis/tax/esmt) -
Areas showing utility easements.

Emergency Response Districts (/gis/es/esn) -
Areas showing emergency response districts.

Fire Districts (/gis/tax/fd) -
Areas representing taxable fire district boundaries.

Fire Stations (/gis/es/firest) -
Points indicating the location of fire stations.

Flood Plains (/gis/tax/fp) -
Areas representing flood plain zones.

Flood Plain Index (/gis/pz/fp_index)
Flood plain map index.

Geology Layers:

Dikes (/gis/pz/geology/dikes250) -
Digital representation of Dikes from the official State Geology Map that were digitized from(1:250,000scale) base maps. Data was received from NCCGIA.

Faults (/gis/pz/geology/faults2500) -
Digital representation of Faults from the official State Geology Map that were digitized from 1:250,000 scale base maps. Data was received from NCCGIA.

Geology 250K(/gis/pz/geology/geol250) –
Digital representation or the official State Geology map (1:500,000-scale) that were digitized from 1:250,000 scale base maps.

Growth Trends (/gis/pz/gtrends) –
Areas representing general growth trends in County.

Growth Management (/gis/pz/gmareas) –
Representation of Growth Management Areas in County.

Heritage Corridors (/gis/dp/nheritage) –
Representation of various important natural heritage corridors identified by NC Natural Heritage Programs. Data was received from NC Zoo.

Heritage Sites (/gis/pz/heritage) –
Points representing location of historically important heritage sites.

Hydrogeology (/gis/pz/geology/hydro500) –
Area representing underground water sources determined by USGS using 1:500,000 scale maps.

Interest Areas (/gis/dp/intareas) -
Areas representing the Zoo and Uwharrie Forest.

Land Marks (/gis/tax/commmark) -
Points indicating landmarks.

Postal Districts (/gis/pz/postdist) -
Areas indicating postal jurisdictions.

Power Companies (/gis/pz/powerco_area) -

Areas representing local power company service areas.

Power Towers (/gis/pz/power_towers) –

Points locating high voltage powers towers that were generated by longitude latitude provided by Duke Energy.

Randleman Lake Boundaries (/gis/dp/rand.lake/lake)

Area representing proposed Randleman Lake.

Reservoirs (/gis/pz/watersheds/reservoirs) -

Area representing water reservoirs.

Roads Addressing

Road Center Lines (/gis/pz/roads/RD)

Lines indicating the locations of city, state, and private roads. Paper streets and public active roads are also indicated through tax.

Intersections (/gis/pz/roads/rdins)

Line indicates road intersections.

Roadanno (/gis/pz/roads/roadanno)

Show city annotation for map book.

School Attendance Districts – (/gis/pz/cnty_sd)

Areas representing County school attendance districts for Elementary, Middle and High Schools.

School Districts (/gis/tax/sd) -

Area indicating taxable school districts.

Seagrove-Ulah Water District (/gis/dp/seaulahwat) -

Area represents Seagrove-Ulah Water District.

Soils Survey 1999 (/gis/dp/soils/randsoils) –

Area representing soils survey of Randolph County as determined by the US Department of Agriculture, NRCS completed in 1999.

Streams (/gis/dp/streams) -

USGS waterways for Randolph County.

Structures

Single (/gis/pz/address/cntystruct)

Points indicating Addressable structures and their drives.

Multiple (/gis/pz/address/mstruct)

Points representing lots within MH parks or buildings with apartment complexes.

Superfund Sites (/gis/tax/superfund)

Areas where uncontrolled and unregulated, hazardous waste sites (superfund sites) have been located.

Tax Grids

(/gis/tax/countygrid)

Grid indicating County base map grid. (400 scale)

(/gis/dp/grid200sc)

Grid for 200 scale tax maps.

(/gis/tax/map.index)

Index or existing tax maps & inserts.

Telephone Company Jurisdiction (/gis/es/teleco) -

Areas representing service area for telephone companies within the County.

TICS

(/gis/tax/cntytics)

TICS for tax maps including all 100, 200 and 400 scale TICS

(/gis/cntytics2)

TICS for tax maps based on block grids.

(/gis/dp/cntytics400)

TICS for tax base maps. (400 scale only)

Townships (/gis/tax/ts) -

Areas representing County townships.

USGS Quad Map Index (/gis/pz/usgsquad) -

USGS quad map index.

Voter

Voter Precinct (/gis/voter/voteprec) -

Areas indicating voter precincts and NC Senate and House Districts.

City Wards (/gis/voter/wards)

City Ward boundaries.

Voter Main Roads (/gis/voter/mainrd)

Areas indicating main road for small voter plots.

Watersheds (/gis/pz/watersheds/watshed) -

Areas indicating watershed and water critical areas.

Water Source Points (/gis/es/waterpoints/water) -

Points representing water sources used by County and city fire departments.

Wetlands Inventory (/gis/es/waterpoints/water) -

Areas representing wetlands inventory as identified by US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Development Impact Analysis

In February 2002, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Growth Management Plan and related zoning ordinance amendments that required the Planning Staff to prepare a Development Impact Analysis (DIA) for all major subdivisions that are requested to be developed. Development policies outlined in the Randolph County Growth Management Plan are specifically designed to encourage long term planning among property owners, developers, and County government. The DIA is a key component of the Plan and its use is designed to increase public awareness of the relationship of growth, rural environmental impacts and the capacity of local government to provide adequate public facilities based on future land use demands.

The DIA requires detailed analysis that could only be completed in a timely manner through the use of GIS. Specifically the DIA requires analysis of specific features that could be found within one mile of a request location. The DIA requires that all subdivisions be listed along with the type of subdivision (site built, mobile home, both or N/A), the number of lots and the average acreage within the one-mile radius. Mobile home parks within the one-mile radius must also be listed with the number of approved spaces.

In addition, the DIA requires an analysis of the following general housing patterns:

- ◆ Total number of site built houses within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Total number of mobile homes within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Percentage of site built homes within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Percentage of mobile homes within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Total number of acres within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Average acreage within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Total acreage in tax-deferred farms within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Church facilities within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Youth camp facilities within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Historical Heritage Designated Sites within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Natural Heritage Designated Sites within one mile of the property;
- ◆ Distance and location of the nearest public water line; and
- ◆ Distance and location of the nearest public sewer line.

Performing clips, dissolves and creating buffers around the request location is the method to obtain all of this information. Without the use of GIS, the process that now takes approximately one and one-half to two hours could easily take a complete day.

Service Area: Code Enforcement

Mission

To inspect, monitor, and investigate complaints and initiate legal enforcement procedures concerning all applicable Randolph County development regulations.

Summary

Appropriate field inspections are performed to ensure compliance with the following Randolph County and related development regulations: zoning, flood standards, subdivision regulations, stormwater and related erosion standards, property addressing, junk vehicles, solid waste and illegal dumping enforcement, and related growth management policies and standards. Citizen consultation, both by telephone and in-office/residence visits, legal preparation with the County Attorney, and court-related evidence preparation, which includes on-site posting of property violations, are all components of this service area. This service area has 2.2 allocated positions.

Operations

Code enforcement officers are out of the office doing field inspections much of the day, making sure that citizens are complying with various County regulations. Aggressive enforcement of junked vehicle regulations has been a major focus for the past few years.

The Zoning Code Enforcement process usually begins with a call or visit from a citizen. At that point we try to find out where the violation is, what it is exactly and if it is in our jurisdiction. We also find violations as we are out in the county, but phone calls probably generate 80% of all code enforcement action.

The next step is visitation. At that point we make a record of the violation. We try to determine what exactly is there, if it is in fact a violation, and try to determine what can be done about it. If the property owner is there, we will try to make contact with him at this point and explain the situation to him. Needless to say, the property owner usually has his own explanations of the situation.

After visiting the property, a file is created and a Notice Of Violation sent. This notice outlines the violation to the citizen, gives him a brief description of the action he can take to clear up the violation, how to reach us with questions, and informs him of the time he has to come into compliance. This is normally 30 days. Extensions can be granted, but normally not beyond 90 days. There are exceptions, such as serious health problems.

After 30 days have elapsed, the property is visited again. If the citizen has come into compliance, a record is made of that and no further action is taken. If no action has been taken, the matter is then turned over to the Randolph County Attorney's Office. Though the matter is no longer in the hands of the Planning Department, Code Enforcement is still involved.

The Legal Department begins by sending the citizen a letter informing him his situation is now in the hands of the Legal Department and automatically grants the citizen another 30 days to comply. At the end of 30 days the property is again visited by Code Enforcement. If the

property owner has complied, the process stops. If he has not, the next step is to post the property, which is done by Code Enforcement. Once the property is posted, the citizen has another 30 days to comply. When the 30 days is up, Code Enforcement returns to check the progress. If he is in compliance, a record is made and the process stops. If he is not, Code Enforcement makes a record of the situation, takes pictures, etc., in order to provide the Legal Department with any information they may need to take the citizen to court, which is the next step. A Code Enforcement Officer usually accompanies members of the Legal Department staff on any visitations they may wish to make of the site and is usually present at any meeting with the citizen. Finally, Code Enforcement would be called on to be present evidence at any courtroom procedures.

The only other way a violation is handled, in particular a junk car violation, is towing. If the Planning Department decides to tow a vehicle, the citizen's vehicles are stickered after the 30-day Notice Of Violation letter has expired. The sticker explains that the vehicle will be towed after 7 days if it is not brought into compliance. If, after 7 days, the vehicle has not been brought into compliance, the Planning Department contacts a towing company to remove the vehicles and take them to the landfill, where they are impounded. The Code Enforcement staff is also responsible for getting an Administrative Search Warrant from the Randolph County Magistrates Office in order to legally enter the citizen's property and remove the vehicles. Once the vehicles are removed and the warrant properly served, the Code Enforcement staff is also responsible for filing the proper paperwork for seized property. The citizen is notified of what he may do to recover his property. This is rarely done as it can be cost prohibitive. If vehicles are not recovered, they are ultimately crushed and removed. The County has the authority to pass along the cost of towing and crushing/removal to the vehicle owner.

Performance Measurements

Goal: To enforce Randolph County junk vehicle regulations

- **Percent of time junk vehicles that are removed within ninety days of receiving a complaint** – Ninety days was chosen as a reasonable amount of time to give a person for removing a junk vehicle because of the process involved. When a complaint is substantiated by Code Enforcement, a letter is sent to the property owner, who is given thirty days to respond. Sometimes the property owner needs an extension of time in order to get the vehicle(s) moved. Usually this extension is another thirty days, which is a total of sixty days from the date the original letter was sent. If there is a greater number of junk vehicles, and it is evident the property owner is making steady progress in having them removed, he may be given up to ninety days to have them all removed. The Junk Vehicle Ordinance has been enforced since 1999, and the Code Enforcement staff has developed a good sense of time that is needed to complete this process. If there has been no action whatsoever after the first thirty days, Code Enforcement may refer that case for legal action then, rather than waiting for ninety days to pass.

The Code Enforcement Officer uses a manual log to mark when a complaint is filed and when it is brought into compliance or referred for legal action. He refers to this log to

determine the percent of time junk vehicles are removed within 90 days. This measure is an indicator of how successful the County is in enforcing its Junk Vehicle Ordinance.

- **Number of enforcement cases achieving statutory compliance** – This number, which is collected from the Code Enforcement Officer’s manual log, is a workload indicator of how many cases were brought into compliance (within the ninety-day period) during the reporting quarter.
- **Number of vehicles moved** – The department secretary maintains a log of the number of vehicles that are moved each quarter. This information is provided by the Code Enforcement Officer after he verifies the number of vehicles that have been moved, based on a site visit to each violation site. This number provides a sense of the magnitude of the junk vehicle problem.
- **Number of cases referred for legal action** – The secretary keeps a running list of all cases that are referred for legal action. Since 2003, the County Legal Department’s Staff Attorney has been handling junk vehicle cases. Prior to that time, these cases were referred to the County Attorney for legal action. Recently the County Attorney began assisting the Legal Department with some of these cases.

Note: The number of complaints brought into compliance plus the number referred for legal action do not necessarily equal the total number of complaints because the quarter ends before the ninety days is up for some. However, those would be counted in the next quarter’s number of cases brought into compliance.

Goal: To conduct impartial and consistent enforcement of standards and regulations contained in the County Unified Development Ordinance

Note: The measures for this goal include solid waste, which is not enforced through the Unified Development Ordinance, but through the Solid Waste Management Ordinance. Beginning with the fiscal year 2005-06, solid waste measures will be separated and placed under a different goal that will appear in the budget document and the quarterly performance measurement reports.

- **Percent of time response to complaints is within three working days, and compliance or initiation of legal action in court is within ninety working days** – Code Enforcement keeps a manual log to track these complaints, which involve solid waste and all development areas except junk vehicles. They attempt to investigate complaints within a day or two, but bad weather and/or reduced staff working due to vacation or sick leave can cause response time to go to three days or more. (There are only 2.2 allocated positions for Code Enforcement.) Experience has taught them that three days is a realistic goal for response time. The process for compliance is the same as that described above for junk vehicle complaints, which makes the ninety-day period a reasonable goal.
- **Total number of complaints; Number of complaints brought into compliance within ninety days; Number of cases referred for legal action** – A manual log is kept of all these numbers. [Note: The number of complaints brought into compliance plus the

number referred for legal action do not necessarily equal the total number of complaints because the quarter ends before the ninety days is up for some. However, those would be counted in the next quarter's number of cases brought into compliance.] These numbers are workload indicators and also measure how effective the department is with the enforcement of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Goal: To give citizens individual and personal attention in a safe and comfortable environment and to provide services in an accurate and timely manner

- **Number of complaints** – This department does not conduct any customer service surveys. A complaint would be something brought to the attention of the department head, who reports that there has never been a complaint filed on any of the three employees who work in the Code Enforcement area.

Service Area: Central Permitting

Mission

To streamline the development permit process in Randolph County while ensuring that the system is more convenient and accessible to the public.

Summary

The County's computer capabilities are maximized while utilizing the general maintenance of a parcel database and property development application as they relate to each of the following stages of permitting: zoning, septic tank applications, well applications, building, electrical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, watershed development permits, and miscellaneous environmental health applications. This service area has 2.6 allocated positions.

Operations

Randolph County is one of the first counties in North Carolina to have a centralized permitting program. All permitting is coordinated through a computerized land records and permitting management system. It is designed to streamline the total development permitting process by integrating all development data by parcel number. All levels of county permitting, including zoning, septic tank applications, well applications, building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical (heating and air conditioning), and 911 addressing can be obtained at centrally managed locations. Citizens coming to the Randolph County Office Building are generally served at the Central Permitting counter, which is staffed by Planning and Zoning employees. Building Inspections is located adjacent to Planning and Zoning. Employees in both departments have computer access to the central permitting system, and employees in both departments can issue a permit. Building Inspections has an Archdale office, and technicians in that office can issue various building permits. All these offices are connected by computer linkage with the Environmental Health Section of the Public Health Department. This linkage allows transfer of applications for soil evaluations (for septic system) from the Central Permitting offices for appropriate processing. The Addressing Section of the Computer Services Department also utilizes this system when assigning a permanent address for a structure once a building permit has been issued.

The permit process begins with a property development application (PDA), at which time a permit number is assigned. The PDA provides all pertinent information related to a job and lists all the different permits that will be required for that job. The PDA can be generated only at the Central Permitting counter at the County Office Building. However, an applicant may go to the Archdale office and provide the information and appropriate fees to the technician there. The technician will telephone that information to an employee at the Central Permitting counter, who will create the PDA; then the Archdale technician can print it for the applicant. All permits for that property will use the same permit number.

The zoning permit is issued first, then the septic tank application. The applicant must call Environmental Health to come out to do a soil evaluation for the septic system. If the septic application is approved, Environmental Health gives a clearance letter to the applicant, who must present this letter in order to get the building permit. (The actual septic system permit is issued directly to the applicant by Environmental Health.) Once the building permit has been issued,

the subcontractors can get the electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and insulation permits. When permits are printed, a receipt is automatically generated. If the applicant is using the County's prepay system, he will be faxed the receipt as confirmation of his permit(s).

Central Permitting employees receive 2-4 weeks of in-house training before they begin working behind the counter. They learn about all County ordinances that affect central permitting and how other County departments and municipalities are involved in that process. They will ride along with a building inspector or environmental health specialist to observe what they do in the field. After this initial training, they will work with an experienced employee behind the counter for about 3 months before they are allowed to work independently.

Central Permitting employees provide various handouts to citizens to help them understand the permitting process and the sequence of the steps involved. They also distribute educational materials on protecting water quality, guidelines for disposal of land clearing and construction demolition debris, and open air burning regulations in North Carolina. (See samples of various handouts attached.)

The Planning Systems Coordinator conducts a daily audit of all permits issued (including those issued from the Archdale office). If she finds that a permit was issued when it shouldn't have been, one of the Code Enforcement officers will become involved.

At the beginning of the 2003-04 fiscal year, Central Permitting employees began issuing applications for Randolph County Fire Marshal permits (fireworks/blasting, flammable and combustible liquid storage, fire safety, special use, etc.)

Performance Measurements

Goal: To streamline the development permit process while making the total permit system more convenient and accessible to the public

- **Percent of time a permit or application is fully processed within thirty minutes or less** – Although processing a permit usually takes only five minutes or so, the thirty-minute standard was chosen to take into account that at times only one Property Development Technician may be working at the counter, with more than one applicant waiting. However, three other employees are cross-trained to work the counter, and one of those should be able to cover for the absent Property Development Technician most of the time. If an application were not issued within thirty minutes, staff would make a note of the exception on a log for such. According to the department head, there has never been an exception. It would seem appropriate that the thirty-minute standard be reduced to fifteen or twenty minutes.
- **Number of applications or permits issued** – These numbers come from a computer report and reflect the workload for this service area. They also provide a good indication of how much and what types of development are going on in the county.

Goal: To give citizens individual and personal attention in a safe and comfortable environment and to provide services in an accurate and timely manner

- **Number of complaints** – This department does not conduct any customer service surveys. A complaint would be something brought to the attention of the department head, who reports that there has never been a complaint for this service area. (It was determined that “with fewer than 30 complaints during the year” should be removed from the wording of this goal.)

Service Area: Planning

Mission

To develop and administer programs related to the physical and strategic growth of Randolph County that are designed to allow the County to maintain quality and sustainable growth.

Summary

Specific development ordinance amendments are identified and drafted to implement county growth management objectives. Public Facilities Impact Analyses are prepared, related neighborhood information meetings are facilitated, and formal technical review is performed in furtherance of county growth management objectives. Technical review to facilitate public hearings is also coordinated and staff support is provided on all related issues to the Randolph County Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners. Technical and program support is also provided in the specialized areas of stormwater education and watershed management, urban and rural transportation planning, natural heritage resource management, tourism development, and county recreational planning. This service area has 4.2 allocated positions.

Operations

Rezoning Process

All applications for rezoning are processed through the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Randolph County Office Building. A residential rezoning request requires a neighborhood information meeting prior to the public hearing process. The first public hearing is before the Randolph County Planning Board. The Planning Board makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, who makes the final decision after conducting the final public hearing. The majority of land within the county is zoned Residential Agricultural (RA), which is a low-density, rural, single-family residential classification. Requests for rezoning must show that the proposed rezoning would be compatible with the area and according to the Growth Management Plan for the area.

All areas of the county are governed by countywide zoning regulations. Several municipalities in Randolph County extend their extra-territorial zoning jurisdictions up to two miles from their municipal limits. Those municipalities are Asheboro (2 miles), Archdale (1 mile), Franklinville (1 mile), Liberty (1 mile), and Randleman (1 mile). Ramseur, Seagrove, Staley, and Trinity have no extra-territorial zoning jurisdiction. The Town of Staley did not have zoning regulations until October 2003. The County issues all of Staley's permits and does their code enforcement. Other municipalities with zoning regulations must issue appropriate zoning permits and clearance before the County issues a building permit.

The fee for rezoning applications is \$100. This fee is to offset the expense to the County for legal advertising and other costs connected to the rezoning. The complete rezoning public hearing process normally takes about 90 days, depending on when the application is submitted and on actions of the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners.

The first step in the rezoning process is the issuance of a rezoning application. This request is scheduled for a Planning Board meeting. All adjoining property owners are mailed a notification of the request, what the request entails, and when the Planning Board public hearing on that request will be. Signs with the same information are also posted on the property. (If the request is for a special use permit, a legal notice is placed in the newspaper prior to the Planning Board meeting because the Planning Board makes the final decision on special use permits.) Following the Planning Board meeting, the rezoning request is scheduled for public hearing at a Board of County Commissioners meeting. Adjoining property owners are notified once again, signs are posted on the property, and a legal notice is placed in the newspaper.

Prior to the Planning Board meeting on a rezoning or special use application, the Technical Review Committee (consisting of staff from the Planning Department, Environmental Health and Building Inspections, as may be requested by the Planning Director) meets to approve the site plan and to complete the development impact analysis. They make a recommendation to the Planning Board, based on their findings. If the request is for a subdivision or mobile home park, a neighborhood information meeting is held prior to the Planning Board meeting

The Planning Board normally meets the first Tuesday following the first Monday of each month. Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Randolph County Office Building. The Board of County Commissioners normally meets the first Monday of each month at the same location. Their rezoning public hearings are scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

The Planning Board also acts as the County's Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial board empowered under law to hear appeals from a ruling by the Planning and Zoning Director or to authorize a variance from County-developed regulations. Special and unique hardships must be shown before consideration for variances. Appeals from decisions of the Board of Adjustment may be taken to the North Carolina Superior Court.

Special Use Permits

A special use permit request refers to a situation in which a particular kind of land use is permitted in a zoning district only when the Planning Board issues the permit after making specific findings required by the zoning ordinance. The Planning Board may affix appropriate conditions to the special use permit for the protection of and compatibility with neighboring properties and the public interest.

Much like the judge in a courtroom setting, the Planning Board sits as a "quasi-judicial" administrative body in its special use permit review role. The main focus and role of the Board is on gathering relevant evidence and protecting the rights of citizens appearing before the Board. As a result, N.C. laws require that the Planning Board follow special rules of testimony and evidence in order to make a required decision to issue or deny a special use permit. All citizens providing information or testimony to the Board must do so under sworn oath. In granting the permit, the Planning Board must find

- That the use will not materially endanger the public health or safety if located where proposed and developed according to the plan as submitted and approved;

- That the use meets all required conditions and specifications;
- That the use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, or that the use is a public necessity; and
- That the location and character of the use if developed according to the plan as submitted and approved will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and in general conformity with the Land Development Plan for Randolph County.

As part of a presentation at the public hearing, it is in the applicant's or citizen's interest to present specific testimony to support or oppose each of the above findings upon which the Board is required to make.

Some examples of uses requiring a special use permit are schools, cell towers, mobile home parks, rural family occupation, group homes, nursing homes, adult care homes, junkyards, and travel parks. Examples of conditions that may be imposed are setbacks, lighting, signage, buffers, and screens.

Subdivisions

A subdivision is the division of land into two or more tracts for sale or building development. To insure that subdivisions meet County standards, no lot or plat within Randolph County's subdivision jurisdiction is to be transferred or recorded by the Register of Deeds until a final plat has been approved by the Planning Board (major subdivisions) or the Planning Director (minor subdivisions). North Carolina law requires that before any plat is recorded by the Register of Deeds, it must first be approved by a designated Review Officer appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Review Officer certification is provided by the County Planning and Zoning Department. Once the Review Officer has certified that the plat or map meets all statutory requirements, it can be presented to the Register of Deeds for recording.

Manufactured Housing

County zoning regulations do not unnecessarily restrict manufactured housing; however, they do regulate the placement and appearance of manufactured homes to assure their compatibility with neighboring site-built homes. Mobile home parks consisting of more than two units for rental purposes located on one tract (in same ownership) are allowed in Residential Mixed zoning districts after issuance of a Conditional Use of Special Use Permit by the Planning Board or Board of County Commissioners. Mobile home park development is subject to standards and requirements outlined in County ordinances.

Watershed Protection and Water Critical Areas

Almost the entire northern half of Randolph County is located in one of the following watersheds: Randleman Lake, Lake Reese, Sandy Creek, Rocky River, Lake Lucas and Bunch Lake, Polecat Creek, Badin Lake, and Bear Creek. The topography of land in watersheds is such that all drainage would eventually lead to the reservoir. Minimum lot sizes and watershed classification are mandated and approved by the State.

Randolph County also provides water critical area protection to all areas within one-half mile of the reservoir water line. Minimum lot size and development standards in the water critical areas are designed to provide additional protection to the County's water resources.

County and State watershed regulations strictly regulate the amount of impervious surface that can be built upon lands located within a watershed area. Developers should contact the County Planning and Zoning Department to determine the allowed impervious surface coverage for any project other than a single-family residence.

Flood Zone Management

It is the policy of Randolph County not to encourage development within the areas of class A flood hazard boundaries. A special flood development permit must be issued by the Zoning Board of Adjustment before any construction commences within these areas. After obtaining the permit, all structures must be elevated or floodproofed two feet above base flood elevation. On streams where floodways have not been designated, Randolph County requires a setback of two times the stream width or twenty feet, whichever is greater.

Property Development Technicians will review appropriate floodway maps before issuance of a zoning permit. If the proposed construction might be close to the floodplain, the permit will be flagged for an on-site field inspection by an Environmental Health Specialist or the Planning and Zoning staff.

Soil Erosion Control Plans

Randolph County requires that soil erosion control plans be submitted by the developer of affected property to the N.C. Division of Land Resources. The N.C. Sedimentation Pollution Control Act requires that a soil erosion and sedimentation control plan be approved by the State prior to any land disturbance of more than one acre. NCGS 160A-417 requires that a soil erosion control plan be approved for the site of the building activity before the County can issue a building permit. Randolph County routinely notifies the appropriate State agency when development is occurring that may require compliance with these State laws. Strict legal penalties can result from a developer's willful non-compliance with these regulations.

Agricultural/Farm Use of Land

Randolph County zoning regulations shall not apply to bona fide farms with the exception of swine farms as defined by County zoning authority provided by NCGS 153A-340. These regulations do not impose or exercise any controls over croplands, timber lands, pasture lands, orchards, idle land, or other farm houses, barns, poultry houses, or other farm buildings, including tenant or other houses for persons working on farms, as long as such shall be in the same ownership as the farm and located on the farm.

Property Addressing

Randolph County provides a uniform system of addressing for all structures located within the county. Addresses issued by the County are required for postal service and public service utilities and are a vital component of the County's 9-1-1 emergency response telephone system.

New addresses are generated during the construction process, utilizing advanced computerized Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, and are coordinated through the County's Central Permit System. A *Street Address Guide* for all roads within the county and

its municipalities is available for a nominal fee from the County Planning and Zoning Department.

Growth Management Plan

Randolph County planning, rezoning, and public policy development decisions are based on the Growth Management Plan adopted by the County Commissioners February 2002. The Plan prepares broad policy statements that will, when combined with designated growth management areas, form an overall growth management philosophy for the County. The Plan identifies growth areas (primary and secondary) of the county where a higher density of various types of development is anticipated based on existing and future public infrastructure needed to support growth.

The Plan also identifies critical, important, and sensitive growth areas, including watersheds, wetlands, flood plains, active farmlands, and similar land resources (rural growth area). Density and layout designs of major residential subdivisions would be sensitive to groundwater recharge and the possibility that placement of public infrastructure and other public facilities may be limited.

The goal of the Growth Management Plan is not to stop growth, but to channel the more intense growth to areas where public infrastructure allows growth to be sustained over the long term. The Plan also provides development options for those properties located in environmentally sensitive or otherwise remote rural areas of Randolph County. The growth management development process includes

- Development impact analysis (prepared by County planning staff)
- Technical review & site analysis (planning staff & developer)
- Neighborhood information meeting (informal walk-in session held at County Office Building between staff, developer, and citizens)
- County Planning Board public hearing (recommendation to County Commissioners)
- Board of County Commissioners public hearing (final decision)

Growth Management Plan Policy guidelines include

- Economic development
- Public infrastructure
- Industrial development
- Commercial development
- Residential development
- Environmental quality
- Planning coordination
- Heritage management

Policy guidelines are not zoning ordinance codes. They are designed to be flexible and to provide guidance to boards making rezoning and other public policy land use decisions.

Performance Measurements

Goal: To allow for citizen participation and input into land use and growth management

- **Percent of time first public hearing is held within 60 days of a filed application** – The Unified Development Ordinance states that a public hearing will be held within 90 days of a filed application. However, the department attempts to schedule the public hearing within 60 days. Thirty days would not be a reasonable standard because the Planning Board meets only once a month, and sometimes there are too many requests pending to put them all on the same agenda, or there might not be enough preparation time to get a request on the next agenda. There could be other factors causing a delay in the public hearing process (changes to the application, etc.). If there were to be a filed application for which a public hearing was not scheduled within 60 days, the exception would be noted on a log. However, the department head states that there has never been an exception.
- **Number of applications filed** – The computer can be queried with beginning and ending dates, and a report is generated, giving the number of applications filed between those dates. This information is helpful in determining employee workload, and it is useful information regarding what is going on in the county with land use and growth management.

Goal: To determine the feasibility of a residential development project based on the relationship of the planned growth to the capacity of Randolph County to provide adequate public facilities

- **Percent of time that a development impact analysis is completed within 14 days of receipt of preliminary plans** – A development impact analysis is very involved and detailed and takes a long time to complete. Planning staff may get multiple plans at the same time. Some required information on the analysis comes from other agencies (impact on affected schools, for example), and the staff must wait for that information to be received. For these reasons, the department head chose 14 days as an appropriate standard for this measure.
- **Number of subdivision plans received** – This number simply reflects the number of plans that came into the office during the quarter and were analyzed by the Plan Review Officer.

Goal: To provide an extra opportunity where adjacent property owners might meet with a developer and the County planning staff to review preliminary residential subdivision proposals and provide input and comments prior to formal public hearings

- **Percent of time neighborhood information meetings are held within 30 days of date application filed** – These meetings must be held prior to the public hearing. And since the public hearing is normally scheduled within 60 days of the filing of the application, that means the neighborhood information meeting must be held within a shorter period of time.

- **Number of applications filed** – A computer query will provide this number. This number may be less than the number of plans received since not all plans are approved. On the other hand, the number could be larger if it includes plans submitted in a previous quarter that were not approved until a subsequent quarter

Goal: To provide administrative, facilitation, or technical support to specific county organizations related to recreation, transportation, tourism development, and heritage asset maintenance

- **Percent of time that meetings were held within 30 days of need** – The Planning and Zoning Director is the one who sets the meeting dates for such organizations as the Tourism Development Corporation, Rural Planning Organization, and various ad hoc committees. In order to keep business on track, he has determined that 30 days is the maximum time period that should elapse between learning of the need to meet and holding the meeting.
- **Number of special meetings** – The Director keeps a log of all meetings scheduled.