Planning Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 6:30 PM
Conover City Hall Council Chambers
101 1st Street E, Conover

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Board was held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers of Conover City Hall.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:	Chairman David Brown, Vice Chairman Mary Reynolds, Planning Board Member D.R. Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Ken Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Sherman Powell
Absent:	Planning Board Member Corey Keisler, Planning Board Member Eddie Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Todd Griffin
Staff:	Planning Director Erik Schlichting and Assistant Planner Heather Stephens.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Item 1. May 13, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was duly made by Vice Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Planning Board Member Hilderbran, to approve May 13, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

III. OLD BUSINESS

There is no old business.

IV. HEARING FOR PERSONS HAVING BUSINESS WITH THE BOARD

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing at 6:31 PM.

With no one choosing to speak, Mr. Brown closed the public hearing at 6:31 PM.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Item 2. Rezoning R25-03 for the property located in Whetstone Manor from R-9A-CD (Residential-Conditional District) to R-9A-CD (Residential-Conditional District)

Mr. Schlichting presented the rezoning item R25-03 for the unaddressed property that is part of the remaining Whetstone Manor development. The development is located along 8th Ave SW and Whetstone Pl SW, with Whetstone Pl SW being a private street for the development. This will be the fourth change from the original approval for twelve units along Whetstone Pl SW. The last time a change was made, it was not built or recorded. The owner is asking for another change to the development, with a triplex on the right side of Whetstone Pl SW and a single-family home along 8th Ave SW.

Mr. Schlichting has asked for the conditions that the buildings match the existing design elements of the development and that the sidewalk will continue on to 8th Ave SW, as was shown in the original plan. The property has access to city services. It is part of an already approved plan and will now have ten finished units instead of the twelve originally planned units. Planning staff recommends approval of this rezoning.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned if there was currently any sidewalk at all.

Mr. Schlichting responded that there is some sidewalk to 8th Ave SW, but not to where the single-family home will be.

Mr. Brown stated that it would have less density than the original plan.

Item a. Public Meeting for R25-03

Mr. Brown opened the public meeting at 6:35 PM.

With no one choosing to speak, Mr. Brown closed the public meeting at 6:36 PM.

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., seconded by Planning Board Member Hilderbran, to approve rezoning request R25-03 to rezone the property located along Whetstone Pl SW (PIN 373112767776) shown on the Exhibit A map from R9-A-CD (Residential-Conditional District) to R9-A-CD (Residential-Conditional District), and find that the request is consistent with the Land Development Plan (LDP), it is reasonable and in the public interest because:
1. The proposed use is consistent with the LDP Future Land Use Map.
2. The site will provide an opportunity to add infill housing.
3. The site is conveniently located near existing infrastructure and public services;
4. The development will provide affordable housing opportunities and housing choice for a variety of demographics including a younger demographic.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None

ABSTAIN:	None

With a vote of 5-0, rezoning request R25-03 was approved.

Item 3. Rezoning R25-04 for the properties located at 211 10th St NW & 802 3rd Ave NW from B-2-CD (Highway Business-Conditional District) to NR-CD (Neighborhood Residential-Conditional District)

Mr. Schlichting presented the rezoning item R25-04 for the project called Conover Walk. Previously, there were two rezoning completed for the properties. The top property was approved first for a townhome development, then the developer added the triangle property, leading to another rezoning to allow for more townhome units. Townhome units are going out of favor in the real estate market, so now the developer would like to change this development to single-family homes.

Mr. Schlichting presented that the new development would have 72 single-family lots, compared to the 120 townhome units previously approved. The developer is still keeping the same elements such as the buffer, amenities, and the wet pond as an amenity. The developer has agreed to have rear-alley access to allow for narrower lots located in the middle of the development, with on-street parking in the front of the lots. Wider lots will be at the back and along 10th St NW, which will have front garage access. It will include the completion of 3rd Ave to that point.

Mr. Schlichting drew Planning Board members attention to the email in their packet that the developer requested that the Planning Board table the item and public meeting until the next meeting as they were unable to make it to the meeting.

Mr. Brown questioned if it is the same egress and ingress as last time.

Mr. Schlichting responded yes, it would be the same connections as before.

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Powell, seconded by Vice Chairman Reynolds, to table the Rezoning R25-04 item for the properties located at 211 10th St NW & 802 3rd Ave NW from B-2-CD (Highway Business-Conditional District) to NR-CD (Neighborhood Residential-Conditional District) and the public meeting for the item until the July 8, 2025 Planning Board Meeting.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

With a vote of 5-0, the item was decided to be tabled until the next Planning Board meeting.

Item 4. Rezoning R25-05 for the property located at 4007 C&B Farm Rd from Catawba County R-20 (Residential) to Conover R-9A-CD (Residential-Conditional District)

Mr. Schlichting presented the rezoning item R25-05 for 4007 C&B Farm Rd. The property is an odd-shape and is contiguous to the City limits. The property was purchased in the last five years or so and was wooded until recently. It was possibly farm land in the past. There is a stream that connects to Lyle Creek at the back of the property with a floodplain surrounding it. The same people that designed Keisler Dairy Rd & Emmanuel Church Rd plan are the ones who are presenting this rezoning. The request is for the approval of two different styles of lot sizes with 40' and 50' minimums. They will have lots larger than those sizes, but this is the minimum.

Mr. Brown questioned where the floodplain would be in relation to the development.

Mr. Schlichting responded that it is the light blue section on the map towards the bottom of the property. The development would remain completely outside the floodplain.

Mr. Schlichting stated that it is mostly surrounded by Catawba County R-20 zoning, except closest to the Lyle Creek school area, which is in the city's zoning jurisidition. A city sewer line currently runs along the stream area and water runs along C&B Farm Rd, so access to sewer and water is available. The developer would be responsible for acquiring access to Pony Dr. The three entrances off of C&B Farm Rd spread traffic out of the development. They have also provided an access point to the south. In the land development plan, we show the intersection at C&B Farm Rd & 16 as a commercial node, with the intent of commercial or higher-density residential development nearby. This development would be in proximity to that commercial node and Fire Station Three is already down the road.

Mr. Brown questioned about the Pony Dr. acquisition.

Mr. Schlichting responded that the road is in place, but it is a private road. The property owner may already have access to the road, but they would have to ensure they have access.

Mr. Schlichting presented that the LDP map shows this area as low- to medium-residential. If the entire parcel is considered, it is under three units per acre. The floodplain area is hard to develop and to cross, so it would be unlikely for that to happen. They will have a future right of way opening and sewer easement that will run toward the floodplain for the sewer connection and any possible future development. The development is still under four units per acre without the floodplain property being included, which is the density for the R-9A zoning jurisdiction. There will be at least two off-street parking spaces for each home, with some homes only having a one-car garage. On-street parallel parking will be along the two shared open spaces where mail kiosks will also be located.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on the future stub out location on the right and where on-

street parking would be.

Mr. Schlichting responded that the connection provided is to the neighboring property that could potentially develop in the future. On-street parking will be provided near the two open-space amenity areas shown on the plan.

Mr. Schlichting presented that this development is closer to things that could possibly develop, and existing services are already nearby. This development matches up with the LDP map. Planning staff recommends approval.

Mrs. Shirley, representative of the project designer, presented the item. They see this development as filling in the outskirts of the city and being near existing services. The additional rooftops nearby may help with commercial development in the area of the commercial node. They will need to work with NCDOT for all entrances on C&B Farm Rd. A two-four-year timeline for build out is very possible as they do not have to extend utilities to the site. 40' ft homes will realistically only accommodate a one-car garage, so that is why they have asked for that condition. They understand parking can be a concern and will provide on-street parking in the development. 50' lots will have two-car garages and two driveway spots. They did not want to lock any developers out, so that is the reasoning behind different garage options.

Mrs. Shirley stated that this development would be low-to medium-density. The lots would have five-foot side setbacks and hardy plank siding instead to allow for better fire protection. This will allow for a ten-foot separation between homes and would meet the fire code. The provided on-street parking will be near the two open spaces that are closer to the 40' lots. There is a possibility of adding green space and a neighborhood trail to the floodplain area. They will be providing enhanced landscaping along C&B Farm Rd where they will be keeping trees that already exist while filling in missing spots.

Mr. Brown questioned about the homes along C&B Farm Rd. and if there was any buffering around them.

Mrs. Shirley responded that there are five homes along C&B Farm Rd. and that they will have a buffer around the front of the development.

Mr. Schlichting stated that he had questioned NCDOT about having more access off C&B Farm Rd for single-family homes, and they said no.

Mrs. Shirley presented some possible amenity options, such as playgrounds for kids, a dog park, and firepits, along with mail kiosk areas in the amenities. They would consider more amenities depending on what different developers would have. Catawba County is currently looking at a 7,400 home deficit, so this would help to fill that gap that still exists.

Mr. Brown questioned if the developer would be a single-home builder.

Mrs. Shirley responded that due to the size of the neighborhood, it would probably be a single home builder.

Mr. Hilderbran questioned about the plans for the type of buffer next to the stream.

Mrs. Shirley responded that they would be leaving the wooded area as is.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned if an HOA will govern the development.

Mrs. Shirley responded that the HOA would own and maintain all the open space on the property.

Mr. Powell questioned the 40' lots and the space between units.

Mrs. Shirley responded that there would still be five-foot side setbacks, so a minimum of ten feet between them. Townhomes are getting harder to price, but single-family detached homes are still eager to be purchased, according to their market research.

Mr. Hilderbran stated that the surrounding land is mostly agricultural and that surrounding property owners may want to clearly designate the agricultural area with signage.

Mr. Schlichting presented that the lot sizes were numbered separately on the different pages of the plan, but there are 164 lots overall. The side setback on the corner lots is twenty feet, so it is not right up on the road either.

Item a. Public Meeting for R25-05

Mr. Brown opened the Public Meeting at 7:11 PM.

Kim Harding, located at 4004 Pony Dr, spoke against the rezoning. Her concerns were the development using Pony Dr., her property is next to the property, worried about people and animals coming to her property, worried that the construction would contaminate their well water, current accidents at C&B Farm Rd & 16, concerns about their livestock, and that the schools are overcrowded.

Steven Harding, located at 4004 Pony Dr., spoke against the rezoning. His concerns were that there was already enough traffic from school, his livestock, and this would keep him from shooting and hunting on his own land.

Mr. Brown questioned Mr. Schlichting about the annexation and if it would affect any surrounding properties.

Mr. Schlichting responded that it would only be this property that is annexed into the city limits.

Mr. Brown closed the Public Meeting at 7:16 PM.

Mr. Schlichting stated for clarification that the project would move forward with annexation only if approved by City Council. Annexations happen when property owners request to be within the city limits and the City does not do involuntary annexations anymore.

Mr. Brown stated that it is consistent with the LDP and not excessive density and it is single-family. Traffic issues are always present at any rezoning and the schools are notified well in advance of these developments beginning.

Mr. Hilderbran disagreed with the schools being notified as they do not know until something like this happens based on his time on an advisory board in the past.

Mr. Schlichting responded that every time we have an approval of a development, they send the school a letter. The problem is, even though the development is approved, the houses may not go up. They track permits through the County. They wait until permits get pulled to make sure these developments are being built, so that does cause a delay in building a new school sometimes. Catawba County School enrollment is down overall, but can change from one school year to the next.

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Powell, seconded by Vice Chairman Reynolds, to approve rezoning request R 25-05 to rezone the property located at 4007 C & B FARM RD (PIN 374316824893) shown on the Exhibit A map from Catawba County R-20 (Residential) to R9-A-CD (Residential-Conditional District) and find that the request is consistent with the Land Development Plan (LDP), and is reasonable and in the public interest because:

1. The proposed use is consistent with the LDP Future Land Use Map.
2. The site is located near existing infrastructure and public services;
3. The development will provide affordable housing opportunities and housing choice for a variety of demographics including a younger demographic.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	Planning Board Member Hilderbran
ABSTAIN:	None

With a vote of 4-1, the rezoning request R25-05 was approved.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Item 5. May Permit Report

Mr. Schlichting presented the May Permit report.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Board Meeting is July 8, 2025 at 6:30 PM.
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 07:27 PM.

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David Brown, Planning Board Chairman	Erik Schlichting, Planning Director