

RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH A UNIFIED PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Background

GS 160D-301 and -302 provide for the appointment and compensation of a planning board, board of adjustment, and other advisory boards as deemed appropriate. The statutes also allow local governments to designate one or more boards or commissions to perform the duties of a planning board and a board of adjustment. If approved, the proposed resolution would dissolve the County's current Planning Board and Board of Adjustment and establish a new unified Planning and Zoning Board comprised of eleven regular members and one alternate member. The duties and responsibilities of the current boards would be combined and carried out by the unified Planning and Zoning Board.

APPLICABLE ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Code of Ordinances

Chapter 13 of the Code of Ordinances references the creation, membership, and organization of the County's Planning Board. If approved, this resolution would repeal this section of the ordinance.

Unified Development Ordinance

If approved, this resolution would impact the Unified Development Ordinance overall, as all cases would be heard by the unified Planning and Zoning Board, rather than the boards outlined in the process sections of the UDO.

Staff will present all text amendments at the next Commissioner's meeting as a formal text amendment if the resolution is approved.

Resolutions

Resolution recorded on book 2, page 115 with the Gaston County Register of Deeds that established the County Planning Board would be repealed with the approval of the proposed resolution.

Resolution 2008-155 adopted by the Board of Commissioners on April 24, 2008, effectively created the Board of Adjustment with the adoption of the UDO. Approval of this resolution would not repeal this ordinance, however it is noted that this was the resolution that effectively created the Board of Adjustment, and this resolution proposed the dissolution of the Board of Adjustment.

STAFF SUMMARY

Prepared By: Jamie Mendoza Kanburoglu, Director of Planning and Zoning

Staff is supportive of creating a unified Planning and Zoning Board, as it promotes fiscal responsibility for the department and the County as a whole.

Fiscal Impact: The newly adopted budget has a reduction in board member expenses, allowing only eleven board members to receive the allocated \$25.00 stipend per meeting. This proposal is for the creation of an eleven-member board with one alternate member; however, at no point should there be more than eleven members present for each meeting.

Having one board to prepare for, as opposed to two, will significantly reduce staff time allocated toward preparing agendas and minutes. A unified board will also reduce the amount of time staff are required to work outside of normal business hours.

The proposal is for the unified Planning and Zoning Board to continue operations according to the already adopted planning board schedule for the remainder of the calendar year. The application deadlines will remain the same.

Customers should not notice an impact other than the meeting dates for the cases if they were initially scheduled on a date on the Board of Adjustment's calendar. All fees will be in accordance with the adopted fee schedule.

Staff requests that if the resolution is approved, that the Board of Commissioners appoint members immediately upon approval so that staff can coordinate a training session with the newly appointed members to be held prior to their first meeting on August 4, 2025.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING DATE

The planning board reviewed the resolution at their June meeting and recommended approval of the request 8-1.

Attachments: Resolution