



**Planning Board Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026
City Hall – 6:30 PM.**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Launderville at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance

Lucille Launderville
Stephanie Hanson
Sharon Zakszeski
Carrie Moffett
David Van der Vossen
Chris Sekula

Nicole Morgan, Development Services Director
Tanya Shannon, City Clerk
Commissioner Sherwood, Board Liaison

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Van der Vossen to approve the agenda, with an amendment to add discussion of the NCEM Advisory Flood Data 1% Annual Chance Map in relation to the Land Use Plan. Seconded by Ms. Moffett. ***Vote 5-0; motion carried.***

4. Potential Conflict of Interest/Association Disclosure

No member indicated any conflict or association with any item on this evening's agenda.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Van der Vossen moved to approve the August 11 minutes with a correction to the vote count for UDO Article 11 – Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. He noted a discrepancy and felt that Ms. Moffett voted against. He requested that the minutes reflect the vote as follows: Yes – Mr. Van

der Vossen, Lucille Launderville, Sharon Zakszeski, Stephanie Hanson; No – Carrie Moffett (4-1), and the motion was seconded by Ms. Hanson. ***Vote 5-0; Motion carried.***

Ms. Hanson noted that the August 20 minutes require a correction and clarification regarding tree mitigation, in which "live oaks" were replaced with "longleaf pines" in the record. Also, Mr. Van Der Vossen noted that a correction is needed to reflect that the board's consensus did not recommend adding NCEM flood maps to the LUP.

A motion was made by Mr. Van der Vossen to approve the August 20 minutes, with the corrections listed above, seconded by Ms. Moffett. ***Vote 5-0; motion carried.***

6. **Public Comment** -None

7. **Old Business** – None

8. **New Business**

Discussion of Potential Regulations for Feathered Livestock

Staff introduced the item, noting it was placed on the agenda as "feathered livestock" consistent with how it was originally presented by a Commissioner. Staff noted that a prior proposed ordinance from 2019, drafted by former Chief Code Enforcement Officer Ruth Beck, had been recommended for approval by the Planning Board at that time but ultimately failed to receive a second when presented to the Board of Commissioners. Staff reviewed research conducted on how other municipalities regulate backyard chickens, referencing ordinances from Leland, Cary, Durham, Wilmington, and Garner, and offered to provide copies to the Board.

The Board engaged in a wide-ranging discussion covering the following topics:

Environmental and Public Health Concerns

Ms. Hanson, drawing on personal experience growing up on a commercial chicken farm, shared that they had consulted with the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Agriculture, and Brunswick County Environmental Health regarding groundwater contamination risks. The consensus from those agencies was that four to six backyard chickens pose no meaningful risk to well water. The primary complaint Environmental Health received regarding chickens was air quality, specifically odor, rather than water contamination. The board member emphasized that proper composting of chicken manure, including the use of wood shavings and regular turning, is essential to odor control, and suggested this practice be incorporated into any ordinance.

Comparison to Existing Animal Regulations

Several board members noted that chickens currently exist within city limits, generating complaints, but with no regulatory framework to address them. Comparisons were drawn to existing issues with dogs and cats, with members observing that odor and nuisance complaints related to other animals are already present and arguably comparable to what might be expected from a small number of backyard chickens. It was noted that the city's existing nuisance ordinance (Section 9.1) already addresses accumulations of animal matter and objectionable odors, which would apply to chickens as it does to other animals.

Ordinance Design – Key Elements Discussed

The Board reviewed the 2019 draft ordinance in detail and discussed the following specific elements:

- Permitted species: The Board indicated that the ordinance should be limited to chickens (hens only), and that other feathered livestock such as guinea hens, ducks, and geese would not be permitted in residential zones under the proposed framework.
- Number of birds: A maximum of four to six hens was discussed as appropriate, consistent with what neighboring municipalities allow. Five was noted as the most common limit among researched ordinances; the 2019 draft specified four.
- Lot size requirements: Some jurisdictions, including Leland, require a minimum lot size (e.g., 15,000 square feet). The Board discussed whether similar requirements should apply locally.
- Enclosure standards: The Board discussed replacing the highly prescriptive coop specifications in the 2019 draft with more general standards. Staff noted that Leland's ordinance and others commonly require a minimum of 10 square feet of enclosed area per bird. The Board also discussed referencing NC State Extension or USDA guidance for coop standards rather than codifying specific measurements, though members acknowledged that a formal reference standard would need to be consistently maintained. The Board ultimately discussed incorporating language requiring the floor of the coop's interior watertight area to be covered with approximately 4 inches of moisture-absorbent litter, such as wood shavings, drawing on NC State Extension recommendations.
- Sanitary conditions: The Board agreed to amend the sanitary maintenance provision (section 8 of the 2019 draft) to read that the coop and run enclosure shall at all times be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition, free from accumulations of excrement and objectionable odor.
- Containment: Members agreed that chickens must be contained within a secure enclosure at all times and shall not be permitted to run free.
- Permitting process: The Board discussed requiring a zoning permit, with applicants required to submit a site plan. Staff noted that zoning and code enforcement staff would conduct an initial inspection to confirm enclosure placement prior to permit issuance, and code enforcement would respond to subsequent complaints or violations.
- Enforcement and violations: The Board discussed the existing UDO fine structure of \$50 per day for continuing violations. The 2019 draft included a provision revoking a permit after three violations within any 12-month period. Members debated the appropriate length of the violation window at length, with staff clarifying that a longer window (12 months) actually provides stronger enforcement capacity, as violations accumulate toward the revocation threshold over a greater period and do not reset as quickly. Members agreed the revocation mechanism was an important component.
- Accessory structure classification: Discussion arose regarding whether a chicken coop would count as an accessory structure under the UDO, which could create conflicts with existing limitations on the number and total square footage of accessory structures on a property. Staff suggested the Board may wish to amend the definition of an accessory structure to exclude small chicken coops, while acknowledging that the 30% impervious coverage limitation would still apply regardless.

Community Survey Suggestion

Chair Launderville suggested that, given the divided community sentiment on the issue, a public survey similar to those the city has conducted previously could provide useful input to the Board before finalizing a recommendation. The approach would present draft standards with the survey so

respondents understand which regulations would accompany any approval. Other members acknowledged the value of gauging public opinion but noted that survey respondents tend to skew toward those with strong opinions on either side.

Research from Other Jurisdictions

Staff confirmed that several neighboring communities, including Wilmington and Leland, allow backyard hens and regulate them through their UDOs or codes of ordinances. Southport was noted to have discussed the topic, but no action had been confirmed. Oak Island was noted as not currently allowing backyard chickens. Staff offered to compile the relevant ordinances from researched jurisdictions for the Board's review.

Staff was directed to revise the 2019 draft ordinance to incorporate the amendments discussed, including the updated sanitary conditions language, the 4-inch litter requirement, the containment provision, and clarifications to the permitting process, and to return the revised draft for the Board's consideration at the October meeting.

Ms. Zakszeski moved to table the discussion on feathered livestock for further review, and seconded by Ms. Hanson. Staff will compile the proposed rules, including permit requirements, sanitation standards, and enforcement protocols, for review at a future meeting. ***Vote 5-0; Motion carried.***

9. NCEM Advisory Flood Data 1% Annual Chance Map included in the LUP

Staff reported that the City had formally adopted the NCEM 1% Annual Chance Advisory Flood Data Map at its September 1, 2026 Board of Commissioners meeting. In light of that adoption, a board member requested that the Board reconsider adding a reference to this map in the Land Use Plan—specifically in Chapter 3 (maps) and Chapter 4 (with reference to legislation and planning tools that can assist the City). The Board had previously declined to add the reference pending the City's formal adoption. Members agreed that the objection was now resolved and indicated support for incorporating the reference as described.

Mr. Van der Vossen made a motion to include the NCEM Advisory Flood Data Website in Chapter 4 of the LUP and to include a copy of the NCEM Advisory Flood Data map (1% annual chance) in Chapter 3 of the 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, seconded by Ms. Zakszeski. ***Vote 5-0; Motion carried.***

10. Other Business Update on UDO Enforcement – Major Site Plan Violation Notice

Staff reported that a Notice of Violation had been issued to the property owners of a large parcel (totaling approximately 100 acres across two original parcels, since subdivided into three) for failure to submit development plans within the required 24-month period following issuance of a clearing permit. Staff noted that a major site plan application and concept sketch had been received but did not constitute compliant submittal documents under the UDO, as a full plan set incorporating all UDO requirements was not provided. Property owners were notified and have 30 days from the date of the notice to appeal the violation to the Board of Adjustment.

11. Announcements

Staff requested that the Board consider rescheduling the October meeting from the normally scheduled date of Tuesday, October 13 to Tuesday, October 20, as staff would be out of town for a work commitment in Asheville that week. Board members confirmed availability for October 20.

Staff previewed a potentially full agenda for the October meeting, which may include:

- A rezoning request (from R-2 to C-1) for a property on North Shore Drive where one adjacent lot is already zoned C-1;
- A text amendment regarding carports.
- The 50 Lakes Business Park major site plan, which involves a proposed development including offices, storage, and a potential drive-through use.

There being no further business or discussion, Chair Launderville requested a motion to adjourn. So moved by Mr. Van der Vossen and seconded by Ms. Hanson. ***Vote 5-0; Motion carried.***

Adjournment –8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tanya Shannon, City Clerk.