

May Planning Board Meeting

Meeting minutes

The Planning Board of the Town of Unionville met on Monday, May 5, 2025, at Unionville Town Hall, 1102 Unionville Church Road, Monroe, NC. Board members Steve Outen, Lana Kirkpatrick, Will Crook, Devin Clontz, JR Hayes, Doug Helms and Alternates Jerry Adams and Annette Harris were present. Matt Price was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag was recited.

Invocation

The invocation was delivered.

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Steve Outen called the meeting to order and welcomed all guests and members in attendance. He noted they were short one member and asked Alternate Jerry Adams to come forward to serve on the board for the meeting. Prior to this, Town Clerk Sonya Gaddy administered the oath of office to Annette Harris as a Planning Board alternate.

Approval of minutes of the April 7, 2025, regular meeting

Chairman Outen asked if there was any discussion on the minutes from the April 7, 2025, regular meeting.

Jerry Adams made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Doug Helms seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Outen requested that board members raise their hands for a few seconds when voting on motions to ensure an accurate count.

Consideration of Text Amendment #TC-25-01, addressing backyard chickens in RA40 zoning

Deputy Clerk Melody Braswell presented the proposed text amendment TC-25-01, which addresses backyard chickens in RA-40 zoning. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes. She explained that the amendment was prepared at the direction of the Town Council to update Section 175 of the zoning ordinance.

Braswell noted that the current ordinance prohibits keeping livestock or poultry within 150 feet of any lot line unless on a bona fide farm, which effectively prohibits chickens on many residential RA-40 zoned lots. She mentioned that the town has received several signed written complaints regarding residents keeping chickens in violation of this setback requirement.

Braswell explained that staff reviewed several similar ordinances in rural municipalities across North Carolina and worked with backup land use administrator Michael Harvey from N-Focus to develop the proposed amendment. The amendment would reduce the setback requirement from 150 feet to 50 feet from any property

owned by another property owner, considering that the minimum lot width at building line is approximately 120 feet.

The proposed amendment included specific requirements such as:

- Up to 15 chickens and no more than one rooster allowed
- Chickens must be enclosed in a coop or pen
- Chickens cannot be housed in a residential or human occupied structure
- Enclosures must be placed in the rear yard behind the rear wall of the residential structure
- A 50-foot setback from rear and side property lines
- Clarification that HOA rules supersede town ordinance requirements

Doug Helms asked if this was more of a neighborhood issue than a rural issue, suggesting that HOA rules should handle these matters. Melody Braswell and Sonya Gaddy clarified that many areas like East CJ Thomas Road have 1-acre lots with no HOAs, and there are very few neighborhoods with active HOAs in Unionville.

JR Hayes inquired about adding language requiring chicken coops to be closer to the owner's residence than to neighbors' homes. Melody Braswell explained that this was considered but removed from the final proposal because it would be difficult to regulate and measure, especially if new homes were built later.

Jerry Adams mentioned chicken tractors and mobile coops, and Braswell explained that these were also removed from the proposal, assuming that as long as they were within the 50-foot setbacks, they would be permissible.

Devin Clontz raised concerns from constituents about the limitation on chickens and roosters, particularly for situations like 4-H projects where children might hatch multiple roosters. He also suggested potentially graduating the number of birds allowed based on acreage.

After discussion, board members agreed to amend the proposal to:

- Apply the 50-foot setback and other requirements to properties of 2 acres or less
- Change "no more than 1 rooster" to "no more than 1 mature rooster" to accommodate young birds being raised
- Maintain the existing 150-foot setback requirement for properties larger than 2 acres

Chairman Outen reminded the board that their motion needed to include a statement of reasonableness and consistency, and noted that the public would have an opportunity to comment at a hearing to be set at the next Town Council meeting.

Will Crook made a motion to find that the text amendment as submitted, with the amendment of applying to properties of 2 acres or less and specifying "mature rooster," is reasonable and in the public interest and is consistent with the town's land use plan adopted June 20, 2022. JR Hayes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other business

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

With all agenda items covered, Chairman Outen adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Melody Braswell, Deputy Clerk

Note: These minutes were drafted with the assistance of Clerk Minutes by HeyGov. All content was reviewed and approved by the Deputy Clerk prior to submission.