

**TOWN OF COATS
Planning Board
Thursday, September 4, 2025
Official Minutes**

The Town of Coats Planning Board met in regular session on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present: Chair Hazel Stephenson, Vice Chair Misty Gil, Lawrence Denning, Mitchell Pope, Clint Latham, Don Plessinger, Ally Fouts

Staff Present: Mayor Chris Coats, Town Manager Barbara Hollerand

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hazel Stephenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum being present.

A. Invocation & Pledge

Chair Stephenson asked Lawrence Denning to deliver the invocation and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Approval of Agenda

RESOLVED, to approve Agenda.

MOTION BY: Misty Gil, **SECOND BY:** Clint Latham

APPROVED: 7-0, unanimously approved

C. Approval of Minutes – August 7, 2025

RESOLVED, to approve minutes.

MOTION BY: Don Plessinger, **SECOND BY:** Misty Gil

APPROVED: 7-0, unanimously approved

II. New Business

A. Public Comment Policy

Ms. Hollerand explained that the policy was adopted on August 14, 2025 by the Town Board and fixed a time at three minutes per speaker, along with other guidelines.

RESOLVED, to adopt the Public Comment Policy with the changes to replace Town Board with Planning Board, Mayor with Chair and change the date and time to reflect the Planning Board's meeting schedule.

MOTION BY: Misty Gil, **SECOND BY:** Clint Latham

APPROVED: 7-0, unanimously approved

B. RZ 25-02 Rezoning – 126 E. Jay Street

Ms. Hollerand explained that the request was due to zoning maps from 2017-2019 classifying the parcel as R20 residential, which allowed a church use. However, in July 2022 when the map was updated and R20 zoning was eliminated, it changed the zoning to RMST which did not allow a church use.

RESOLVED, to approve the application as presented.

MOTION BY: Clint Latham, SECOND BY: Lawrence Denning

APPROVED: 7-0, unanimously approved

III. Old Business

A. RZ 25-01 Rezoning & Development Agreement – 1380 Abattoir Road

Ms. Hollerand gave some background on the item, saying the request was to change the zoning from AG to SRF3 with a TNDU, and to consider the development agreement. She mentioned that this was brought before the Board in April of last year with 198 homes and was denied. She explained the applicant had reduced the plan by 63 lots.

Mr. Goracke also gave some background and introduced Randy Kemp with RFK Engineering. Four topics were discussed: general plan highlights, added elements for existing continuous uses, traffic, and positive impact for the Town. He explained that the new plan was for more of a transitional community rather than a heavily gridded curb and gutter sidewalk community on the outskirts of town. He brought up the onsite cemetery and said it would not be relocated, the large Magnolia tree would be retained as well as an acre and a half gathering area for the community. Mr. Goracke also mentioned the development agreement would outline that this would be an HOA controlled community, and a disclosure would be included prior to the first sale regarding the operating farm and shooting range properties. Mr. Kemp discussed traffic, saying that they reached out to NCDOT who said there was not enough traffic to require a traffic impact analysis. The accident report explained that accidents typically occurred during early mornings or late at night, with DWI's and running off the road being the two most common reasons for night time accidents and hitting animals mainly caused morning accidents. NCDOT also reported adequate sight distance. As far as benefits to the Town, he mentioned increasing the tax base by more than 50 million dollars, and generating \$68,000 over the life of the project for the Parks and Recreation department. He reiterated that this would provide housing for hard working citizens who want to own a home and raise a family.

Vice Chair Misty Gil asked about moving the driveway to maintain the 100 foot buffer in that area. Mr. Goracke was agreeable to looking at softening the curb and potentially moving it.

Board Member Ally Fouts questioned why the driveway was moved from where it was in the original plan. Mr. Goracke responded that it was originally farther south but was moved north to balance the sight distance but there would be potential in construction drawings to move that further down.

Vice Chair Gil asked Mr. Goracke about using native plants and he was agreeable. She asked about maintaining the four ponds in the future and he was agreeable, and said he would work with the Town Attorney on any language he would deem appropriate.

Board Member Ally Fouts questioned if there had been consideration to change to SFR2 rather than SFR3, to which Mr. Goracke responded he would be willing to amend if it was appropriate.

Board Member Lawrence Denning mentioned concern with the traffic coming from Abattoir Road to Highway 27. Mr. Kemp explained that although they weren't required to look at that area, they did. They confirmed that the level of service wouldn't change.

Board Member Clint Latham asked about the preliminary concept approval with HRW for increasing the pump station. Mr. Goracke responded that Dillon Phillips had done a sewer study, and the improvements expected to be made were a new pump and impeller, possibly just a new impeller, but there needed to be more studying. Mr. Latham confirmed that any improvements/increases made would financially be on the developer and Mr. Goracke agreed.

Board Member Fouts asked about maintaining the roadway and Ms. Hollerand clarified that the road is in the ETJ, and not in town limits. Mr. Goracke clarified that it is a State road and maintained by NCDOT.

IV. Public Forum

Sharon Stevens, 3701 Abattoir Rd, asked for consideration in denying the request due to traffic concerns.

Dena Kline, 1845 Abattoir Rd, discussed traffic and safety concerns.

Joan Harmon, 1390 Abattoir Rd, discussed traffic and road condition concerns.

Bennie Harmon, 1390 Abattoir Rd, discussed citizens' input throughout the process.

Beth Cole, 1420 Abattoir Rd, discussed rapid growth, schools being at capacity, and Town resources.

Andy Cole, 1420 Abattoir Rd, discussed high density housing and homes not being spread out.

Wiley Pope, an attorney speaking on behalf of John Pope and BW Pope Inc., discussed the plan being inconsistent with the Coats Land Use Plan and losing the agricultural nature of the property if it were to be rezoned.

Will Pope, 557 Johnson Rd, discussed high density development becoming the standard and potential lawsuits against the shooting range.

Hearing no one else, the Public Forum was closed.

Board Member Latham asked Mr. Pope about a comment he made regarding two exits for emergency access. Mr. Pope responded that it was from item number TM4 from page 44 in the Coats Land Use Plan.

Mr. Goracke responded to a few points made, reiterating that NCDOT had analyzed the road, as well as Lee Hines, District Engineer and Travis Salazar, Assistant District Engineer. He explained there was open space and buffers in place, and no wetlands impact. He also discussed spot rezoning and said it was well within the distances of the North Carolina General Statutes for annexation and rezoning. Lastly, he

explained that the divided entrance would be considered an additional safety measure in many other municipalities.

RESOLVED, to continue the meeting in compliance with 5.3-2C until September 11 at 6:00 p.m. so the Planning Board can further review items addressed for consideration of the rezoning and development agreement for 1380 Abattoir Rd.

MOTION BY: Clint Latham, SECOND BY: Mitchell Pope

APPROVED: 7-0, unanimously approved

The Town of Coats Planning Board reconvened on Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present: Chair Hazel Stephenson, Vice Chair Misty Gil, Lawrence Denning, Mitchell Pope, Clint Latham, Don Plessinger

Members Absent: Ally Fouts

Staff Present: Town Manager Barbara Hollerand, Town Attorney Alton Bain

Chair Stephenson began by saying they were there to get more configurations and facts prior to making their determination. She explained there would be no public comment, as there was public comment on September 4 and they were continuing that meeting.

Board Member Don Plessinger asked the developer if the plan was to put in ditches, to which Mr. David Goracke responded yes. Board Member Plessinger asked why not curb and gutter and Mr. Goracke asked Michael Birch, with Longleaf Law Partners, to help explain. Mr. Birch explained that a TNDO section requires a development agreement, and it could have standards that differ. He referred to the street cross section that was on the plan and incorporated into the agreement. Mr. Goracke added that NCDOT would be responsible for keeping the road up to standard, testing, etc.

Vice Chair Gil mentioned that she would like to see a hundred foot buffer on the north side, as there was currently a small buffer there. Mr. Birch referenced the entranceway, explaining there is a standard to enter at about a 90 degree angle. He mentioned that they had had conversations with NCDOT, and they said there was some flexibility; although they couldn't commit to 100 feet. The 90 degree angle could be amended to a 75 degree angle. Board Member Plessinger asked what it was currently and Mr. Goracke responded it was 35-40 feet at the tightest point. Board Member Plessinger asked how many more feet could be added to which Mr. Goracke responded maybe 30 feet more.

Board Member Latham pointed out that in the agreement it was stated the developer would create a 100 foot buffer. Mr. Goracke responded that that was referring to the Northern line, and the application comes with a plan to see that. Mr. Latham asked if Mr. Goracke would be agreeable to a 100 foot buffer, to which he responded if NCDOT agreed and said it would be safe, he would be.

Board Member Latham then mentioned that in the current Land Use Plan, this lot was zoned as SFR-3. He asked Mr. Goracke if he would be willing to change that to SFR-2 before the next council meeting. Ms. Hollerand replied that she would see if that could be done. Attorney Alton Bain informed Board Member Latham that the Planning Board could include that in their recommendation.

RESOLVED, to recommend approving rezoning as SFR3 to the Town Council and approval of the development agreement as currently written, however the Board noted that it would be in the best interests to uphold the hundred foot buffer as it is outlined in the development obligations of the development agreement, and that this rezoning be amended to be SFR2 on the application.

MOTION BY: Clint Latham, **SECOND BY:** Don Plessinger


APPROVED: Ayes (5) Hazel Stephenson, Misty Gil, Clint Latham, Don Plessinger, Mitchell Pope, Noes (1) Lawrence Denning

RESOLVED, to adjourn.

MOTION BY: Clint Latham, **SECOND BY:** Misty Gil

APPROVED: 6-0, unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.


Mikayla Johnson, Deputy Clerk


Hazel Stephenson, Chair