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Area

Dividing lines drawn on land use

Sunday, May 11, 2008 12:26 AM

By **Jessie Burchette**

Salisbury Post

The final draft of a land-use plan for west Rowan appears to be setting up a clash among the 10-member committee.

The original 26-page draft has been cut to a 10-page document dealing with basic development issues.

The issues of farmland preservation, transportation and schools dominated discussion at recent meetings. But they have been taken out of the main document and put in an appendix.

The committee will meet at 7 p.m. Monday in the Cohen Administrative Building, 130 W. Innes St.

Ed Muire, county planning director, provided members with copies of the revamped plan last week. Muire included a property rights element in the land-use plan.

Jeff Morris, one of the most outspoken members of the committee, sent an e-mail to all members calling for items that are non-land use to be eliminated, contending the panel will be "vastly exceeding" its advisory role, and the recommendations will "likely be unwelcome by the Board of Commissioners."

Morris also took aim at the proposals to direct tax dollars to preserve farms. He pointed to several large landowners on the land use committee, writing, "the stench of self-interest that permeates the 'strategic appendix' is untenable. I believe it must go."

Morris wrote that he is seeking support from the committee to perform a "strategic appendectomy" to remove the appendix from the land-use plan.

Morris, who is chairman of the Spencer Zoning Board of Adjustments, has advocated the county enact an impact fee or Adequate Public Facilities Fee. The per-lot fee for developers recommendation is not part of the land-use plan or the appendix.

Morris previously provided the committee with his own re-write of the plan labeled a minority report. He also provided a multi-page form to vote for or against around 100 provisions in the draft.

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Steve Poteat, the most outspoken property rights advocate on the committee, responded that the land-use plan "will be a living, breathing document — susceptible to manipulation by a future county commission. No matter how conservative, or liberal, its makeup may be, I see no checks or balances built into the plan that would prevent future usurpations of government power over individuals and their property."

Committee members include Artie Watson, Ben Knox, Eric Pence, James Rollans, Wendy Wilson, all with ties to farming. Other members include Richard Shaver, Steve Poteat, Paula Holte and Melanie Earle, a representative of the planning board.

Cohen and Holte are co-chairman. Holte, the China Grove Township representative, has missed three of the last four meetings. She previously cited a medical problem.

For copy of the general study report and strategic appendix, contact the planning department at 704-216-8588.

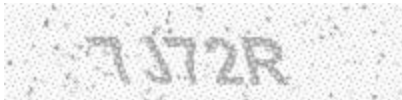
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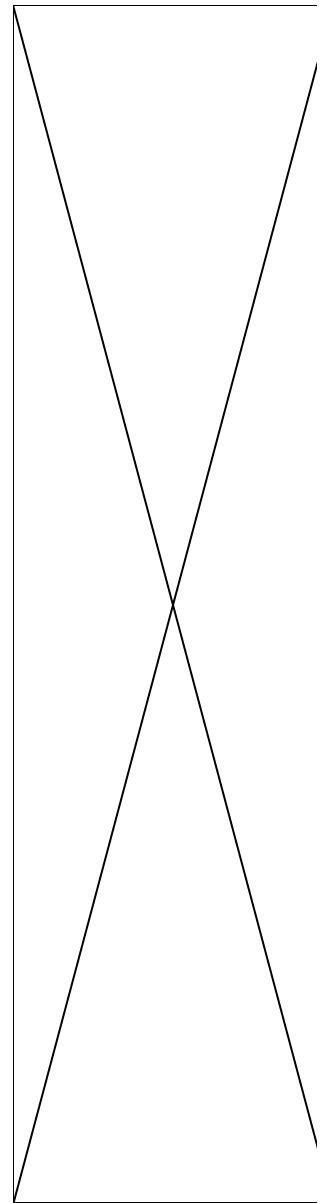
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