



Minutes  
Essex County Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
February 3, 2026

A regular meeting of the Essex County Planning Commission was held on February 3, 2026, at the Essex County School Board Office, Tappahannock, Virginia.

Present:

David Jones – Chairman  
Angelo Stevens, Jr – Vice Chairman  
Bobbie Todd  
Stephen Walters  
Lou Spencer

Absent:

Wright Andrews on Zoom but never answered to roll call and never voted. His audio was not working.

Also present:

Brian Barnes – Director of Building & Zoning  
Kelly McKnight – Building and Zoning Office Manager  
Tim Smith

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman David Jones called the Essex County Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Jones asked Ms. McKnight to call the roll. A quorum was met.

**MEETING AGENDA**

Chairman Jones asked if any changes needed to be made to the agenda? Commissioner Lou Spencer made a motion that the agenda be accepted as presented. Commissioner Bobbie Todd seconded. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Jones asked if there were any additions or corrections that needed to be made to the January 6, 2026, minutes? Commissioner Stephen Walters said that on page 4 of the minutes should be M & L and not M & M. Commissioner Spencer made a motion that we adopt and approve the minutes as amended of the January 6, 2026 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

### PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments made

### PUBLIC HEARING

1. A public hearing for the consideration of ordinance amendment to the **Essex County Zoning Ordinance**, Article VI, Division 7, Section 36.400, *Broadcasting or Communication Tower*, increasing the tower height limit currently at 125' to a maximum height of 200' or higher height if approved by Conditional Use Permit (Section 36.400(d)) a text amendment allowing the positioning of a tower between the primary structure and the street if approved by the Board of Supervisors in Conditional Use Permit process (Section 36.400(f)(3)) and a text amendment to amend the bond language requiring Board of Supervisors and county attorney approval (Section 36.400 (p)).

Chairman David Jones said that he spoke with Brian Barnes and since the office was closed several days due to the snow and ice there might be people who would like to come to the public hearings and couldn't come out due to the weather.

Mr. Barnes said that he made the corrections that the Planning Commission requested. Highlighted in green are the corrections.

- (d) The maximum height of any Broadcasting and Communication Tower shall be made a condition of the conditional use permit. No facility shall be greater than ~~125 feet~~ 200 feet. A higher height may only be approved by the Board of Supervisors in Conditional Use permit process. Exceptions provided when included in a church steeple, bell tower, water tower, light pole, or other similar architecturally compatible structure.
- (p) A bond, whose amount shall be approved by the ~~Zoning Administrator~~ Board of Supervisors and the county attorney shall be required to assure the removal of an abandoned telecommunications facility. All towers and associated facilities shall be removed within six months of the cessation of operations at the site unless a time extension is approved by the ~~Zoning Administrator~~ Board of Supervisors. In the event that a tower is not removed within six months of the cessation of operations at a site, the tower and associated facilities may be removed by the County, utilizing the bond and any remaining costs of removal assessed against the owner of the tower or the landowner. The estimated cost of removal and restoration shall be guaranteed by the deposit of funds in an amount equal to the estimated cost in an escrow account at a federally insured financial institution approved by the County.

(4.) The owner or occupant shall recalculate the estimated cost of decommissioning every five years and provide evidence of this recalculation in a report to county staff. If the recalculated estimated cost of removal exceeds the original estimated cost of removal by ten percent (10%), the owner or occupant shall deposit additional funds into the escrow account to meet the new cost estimate. If the recalculated estimated cost of removal is less than ninety percent (90%) of the original estimated cost of removal, then the County may approve reducing the amount of the escrow account to the recalculated estimate of removal cost. Failure to provide a five-year update and recalculation may result in revocation of the conditional use permit.

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to open up the public hearing portion of the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

No one commented.

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to come out of the public hearing portion of the hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

2. Edit and Update to Section Six of the **Essex County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation**, as required by § 15.2-2230, Code of Virginia. Consideration of a recommendation for approval and adoption of the edits into the Essex County Comprehensive Plan, which is found within the static text document together with the interpretive tool, *Story Map, Transportation*, featuring maps and links intended to take the reader into further resources for informational purposes.

Mr. Barnes said that the Planning Commission wanted to have a little more explicit language regarding Howerton's Road intersection.

Commissioner Spencer asked Mr. Barnes if he had to make a recommendation on this would he make it based on what is in front of them?

Mr. Barnes said that he feels comfortable with it.

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to open public input. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

No comments made.

Commissioner Todd made a motion to come out of the public input part of the hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Spencer. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

On public hearing number one Commissioner Spencer made a motion to table this due to the weather until next month. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

On public hearing number two Commissioner Spencer made a motion to table that to next months meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**a. Review and discussion of possible edits to the Essex County Comprehensive Plan**

No remarks

**b. Continuing review of recommendation for Essex County Industrial Park Infrastructure**

Mr. Brian Barnes said no more information on the Industrial Park. Part of the reason for holding off has been the work with the EDA. Mr. Barnes passed out a paper for everyone to put their email addresses on so each member not at the same time can have a meeting with the EDA.

**c. Review of possible upcoming ordinance updates and edits**

Mr. Barnes said that will be the Chesapeake Bay Act ordinance update. Mr. Barnes said that he had a meeting with DEQ liaison and told them we haven't even begun the process yet. Mr. Barnes said that maybe April, May or June he will begin showing it to the Planning Commission. There is another edit regarding flood zone that has to happen first.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Barnes said the only other information he had for them is that next month a rezoning will be coming before them. Mr. Tim McKinley would like to rezone from B-1 to R-3.

Commissioner Spencer wanted to make sure that he didn't have a conflict of interest with the Planning Commission because he was pursuing an opportunity with the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor Management Association. He would be registering for this agency as a lobbyist. He said that he will speak with April to see if it is a conflict.

**ADJOURN**

Vice Chairman Stevens made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Commissioner Todd. AYES : 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 1 Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

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David Jones – Chairman

\*This meeting has been recorded and is available for more in-depth details.