



**Town of Fairview
Planning Board Meeting
March 17, 2026**

1. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum --- Chairman Buchanan

The following Planning Board members were present: Doug Buchanan, Sharon Clontz, Mike Medlin, Fred Rogers, Josh Presley, Alex Karakosta, and Natalie Smith (Alt.).

Absent: Christie Black, Rodney Stephens

Others present: Jim King, Town Administrator, Ed Humphries, Land Use Administrator and Spencer Cox, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Buchanan called the meeting to order and conducted roll call. The board welcomed new member Natalie Smith, who was introduced as an addition to the board following Alex's promotion to regular voting status. Bill Thomas had resigned from his position.

2. Public Comments

3. Items of Business:

3.A. Continue Discussion on Land Use Plan. Will Receive Comp Plan to Review

Michael Harvey, the town's planner with NFocus, presented the comprehensive land use master plan draft document. Before beginning his presentation, Chairman Buchanan inquired about federal legislation regarding housing that could potentially reduce the power of zoning.

Michael Harvey explained there are several bills at the federal level designed to establish federal minimum policies on housing classifications. While these don't currently mandate allowing multifamily in single-family zones, they aim to ensure uniformity between communities. He noted that North Carolina's comprehensive watershed policy, which establishes density limits based on watershed designations, has complicated state-level efforts. Mr. Harvey mentioned the home builders lobby's influence both in Raleigh and Washington pushing this agenda, but indicated there wasn't immediate cause for concern while advising the board to keep track of developments.

Michael Harvey presented the draft comprehensive plan, highlighting key community profile statistics from the US Census Bureau and American Community Survey. He noted the town's median household income of approximately \$3,000 higher than Union County and above the state average, with lower poverty rates than both the county and state. The community has 59 total public schools in Union County with one school in Fairview's jurisdiction.

Mr. Harvey presented survey results beginning on page 38, summarizing what residents value most about Fairview: its slow-paced and quiet nature, small town feel, family-friendly atmosphere with low crime

rates, and sense of community. Notably, 78 percent of respondents said there was nothing they disliked about their community, which Mr. Harvey characterized as "a little rare."

For future wishes, residents wanted to retain residential development and maintain the residential community character, with some identifying needs for more recreational opportunities, restaurants, and improved appearance. Regarding fears, over 80 percent expressed concern about loss of small town appeal, with too much commercial development being a distant second at over 60 percent. The overwhelming priority moving forward was to "retain our character."

Michael Harvey outlined several key policy goals based on community input and staff discussions:

Infrastructure Maintenance and Enhancement: The plan establishes three guiding principles: First, Fairview will not assume responsibility for developing water treatment or wastewater systems due to cost and environmental constraints, preferring regional partnerships. Second, development will rely predominantly on individual wells and septic systems, encouraging low-density development consistent with community desires. Third, the town will not develop its own public works department, requiring subdivisions to work with the Department of Transportation for road maintenance rather than expecting the town to assume responsibility.

Storm Water Management: The town will continue relying on North Carolina's stormwater program rather than assuming that responsibility, though the UDO will establish appropriate thresholds for developers working with the state.

Pedestrian Access: While the town will plan comprehensively for potential sidewalks and bicycle lanes, especially connecting with Fairview Park and adjacent communities, maintenance responsibility will remain developer-driven rather than town-managed.

Michael Harvey emphasized that any project inconsistent with the comprehensive plan would not be promoted by the town. The plan directs growth to areas identified as serving community needs while preserving existing commercial areas. He stressed that applicants must go through the legitimate public hearing process for zoning changes, and development activity must be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The plan identifies attracting business and improving downtown as a goal, with land use regulations promoting downtown development. However, Mr. Harvey clarified that if someone proposed a ten-story building requiring water and sewer extensions, the town's response would be that such proposals are inconsistent with other comp plan goals and policies.

Mr. Harvey presented maps on pages 74-76 showing potential areas for further study, including existing employment/manufacturing zones and commercial development near 601 and Brief Road. He specifically requested board feedback on whether these areas should be considered as nodes for additional expansion, noting the town's previous position against mass commercial development along 601. He also mentioned an intersection at East Highway 218 that staff had identified as potentially dangerous for development.

The plan addresses fostering local craft businesses through home occupations and encouraging reasonable commercial activities meeting home occupation standards. It includes goals for providing more natural areas and recreational opportunities through a master park and recreation plan.

Mr. Harvey explained the plan's approach to data centers, noting they would be specifically listed in the ordinance table as not allowed in any district. He described the infrastructure challenges data centers present, requiring large amounts of power and water, and the complications they can create for communities not adequately planned for them.

Board members asked several questions during the presentation. Fred Rogers inquired about data centers, leading to Harvey's explanation of their prohibition. There was discussion about the federal housing legislation and its potential impacts.

Regarding the maps and color coding, Chairman Buchanan asked about the green areas, in which Harvey explained represented either farm or environmentally sensitive areas from Union County GIS data.

Ed Humphries discussed intersection safety concerns and suggested increasing curb cut separations beyond DOT requirements to encourage internal connectivity, though Mr. Harvey noted DOT typically maintains authority over their roads.

The conversation addressed package treatment plants, with Chairman Buchanan asking about requiring bonds for maintenance throughout development life. Mr. Harvey indicated he would need to research state administrative code requirements but noted the challenges with bonding regulations that now only allow 125 percent performance guarantees and accept lines of credit rather than cash bonds.

Mr. Harvey concluded by emphasizing this was the starting point for board feedback, noting he had put something on paper that achieved much of what they were looking for but needed their help to ensure he was representing their interests properly.

Mr. Harvey assigned the board to read the 88-page document and provide feedback, with particular focus on pages 74-76 regarding growth areas. He emphasized that this document would guide all future land use decisions and serve as the foundation for the Unified Development Ordinance.

4. Approval of Minutes:

Fred Rogers made a motion to approve the February 17, 2026 minutes. Mike Medlin seconded the motion. Board members Buchanan, Clontz, Medlin, Presley, Rogers, Karakosta, Smith (Alt), voted yes (7-0).

5. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Spencer Cox
Administrative Assistant

Doug Buchanan
Chairman

Approved this 21 day of April 2026