TOWN OF ST. JAMES
PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 6, 2026

The St. James Planning Board held a Meeting on October 6, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the Earl Dye Council Chamber at Town Hall.

Board Members Present: Chairman Bill Kozub, Vice-Chairman Marc Fields, Regular Board Members Duane Stewart, Richard Ishler, Trent Pohlar, and 1st Alternate Barry Fulton and 2nd Alternate Robert Arthur.

Others Present: Town Manager Jeff Repp, Wes MacLeod with Anchorpoint Planning, Town Council Representative Jim Board, and Assistant Zoning Administrator Jamie Burns

Excused: Regular Board Member Trent Pohlar and 1st Alternate Barry Fulton

Absent: 2nd Alternate Robert Arthur

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairman Bill Kozub called the Planning Board meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. A quorum was confirmed present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Kozub requested a motion to approve the agenda as distributed. A motion was made by Member Richard Ishler to approve the agenda as submitted and seconded by Vice Chairman Marc Fields. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Kozub noted that the consent agenda primarily consisted of the minutes from the September 1, 2026 meeting and requested a motion to approve. Member Richard Ishler made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented and was seconded by Vice Chairman Marc Fields. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

a. Review Article 7 – Draft Zoning Districts & Article 8 – Prescribed Conditions/ Supplemental Development Standards for Certain Uses

Chairman Kozub turned the meeting over to Consultant Wes MacLeod who led the Board through a page-by-page review of Draft Articles 7 and 8 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). He noted that he would add clarifying language on accessory structure size when the board reached Article 8.

Article 7 – Zoning Districts

Mr. MacLeod explained that the changes to Article 7 consolidated all dimensional standards in one place and removed repetitive text, such as repeated references to permitted uses. There was a discussion regarding the SBR-6000 and SBR-7500 zoning districts. Town Manager Jeff Repp explained that roughly 234 acres were annexed in 2017 contingent on a development agreement

that assigned zoning to specific parcels. Land that was not designated for commercial or residential development was never formally rezoned, yet an SBR-7500 designation appears on the town's official zoning map. No such district exists in the zoning code. Mr. Repp noted that the land was R-7500 in county zoning before annexation. Mr. MacLeod noted that the designation was likely entered inadvertently through GIS mapping. Rezoning requires a legislative process so he did not believe the legal zoning map had actually changed. Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Repp noted they had spent the prior month and a half attempting to resolve this issue. Staff will continue researching and will bring a clean, corrected zoning map forward for formal adoption by the Council once the matter is resolved.

Council liaison Jim Board observed that the last unstruck paragraph on page 78 did not make sense. Mr. MacLeod agreed that it should read that "the character of these residential areas shall be preserved."

A question was raised as to whether the town maintains too many commercial districts given the limited commercial land along NC-211. Mr. MacLeod thought it was probably fine, noting there are distinct differences between the Commercial Neighborhood (CN), Commercial Intensive (CI), and related districts. He confirmed for Vice Chairman Marc Fields that NC-211 would be considered a "major highway" for the purposes of the Commercial Intensive district description.

Chairman Kozub noted that Section 7.15, on Creative Zoning Conditional District, is where the "wish list" Vice Chairman Fields wanted to present to developers could be implemented, addressing items such as accessibility, recreational facilities, traffic patterns, and screening. Mr. Repp explained that the CZ district, added in 2023, was created by the Council in the attempt to obtain extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) along NC 211. Mr. MacLeod noted that it was ultimately used as a part of St. James North to get some things that were beneficial to the town.

Mr. MacLeod reminded the Board that under North Carolina law, tracts larger than 25 acres contemplated for multi-phase development carry automatic vesting for a period of seven years.

Regarding the Table of Uses, Mr. MacLeod noted that the Table of Uses had been consolidated and cleaned up, not completely redone. Mr. Board confirmed that the codes run from least to most restrictive.

The Board reviewed the consolidated Table of Uses and directed the following changes:

- Convenience Stores with Gasoline / Restaurants with Drive-Throughs / Service Stations: Council Liaison Jim Board requested that all such uses be designated as Special Use (SC) across all applicable zoning districts, citing the town's location above an aquifer. The Board was in agreement. Mr. MacLeod noted that petroleum storage provisions had been added.
- Wineries: Member Richard Ishler raised the absence of wineries from the Table of Uses. After discussion—noting that breweries and taprooms are already included as closely related uses—the Board was in consensus that Mr. MacLeod should add wineries as an SC use, likely in the Commercial Intensive (CI) district given the manufacturing component.

- Wind Turbines: Confirmed as struck from the table, as the use had not been identified as permissible anywhere in the code.

There was a discussion regarding water and wastewater treatment plants and private package plants. It was agreed to leave wastewater/package plants unaddressed for now since the county and state would be involved.

Board member Ishler asked whether the fire department has input on the 10-foot building separation in 7.18.4. Mr. MacLeod believed the fire code generally allows for a 7-foot separation. The Board discussed fire separation and fall-zone requirements of 1.5 times building height. Chairman Kozub pointed to Section 7.18.9.D, which requires fire department approval for additional height.

Article 8 – Prescribed Conditions/Standards for Certain Uses
Chairman Kozub requested that Mr. Repp and Mr. MacLeod review uses lacking acreage minimums, such as outdoor recreational facilities, and determine whether limits should be imposed.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): Mr. MacLeod flagged a need for clarification distinguishing ADU height and floor area standards from those applicable to standard accessory structures. ADUs may not exceed 50 percent of the principal dwelling floor area or 700 square feet. They may not exceed the principal structure's height whereas general accessory structures are limited to 50 percent of the principal building's height. There was consensus that clarifying language be added to make these distinctions explicit. The existing ADU definition references a 3-foot separation from the principal structure, which was deemed peculiar. The Board requested the definition be revised and revisited.

Automobile Renting or Leasing (8.7): The Board found the existing cap of 10 vehicles at any one time to be overly restrictive for a viable rental operation. Rather than striking the provision outright, the consensus was to modify it so that no more than 10 vehicles may be displayed in the front yard or visible area with the remainder to be located behind the building. Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Repp were directed to evaluate and add appropriate acreage minimums for this and several other uses where none currently exist.

Automobile and Truck Repair (8.8): Council Liaison Board noted the absence of a time limit on outdoor storage of vehicles being repaired. Mr. Repp pointed out that 8.8.1 already prohibits storage of unlicensed or junk vehicles for 10 days or more. The Board further directed that the screening wall height for outdoor storage areas be increased from 6 feet to 8 feet.

Boat Repair (8.16): Council Liaison Board raised concern about VOC (volatile organic compound) emissions from boat repair operations. Vice Chairman Fields noted such materials fall under hazardous materials regulations at the county, state, and federal levels. By consensus, screening was increased to 8 feet.

Convenience Stores with Gasoline (8.27): Mr. Board asked how a "gasoline pump" is defined relative to the limit of two islands with four pumps per island. The Board noted that modern pump configurations (back-to-back pumps per island) create some ambiguity. After discussion, the

Board was comfortable retaining the existing limits as a means of keeping the use appropriately scaled for a small convenience store, not a large fuel retailer. Member Duane Stuart raised the question about including screening of above ground tanks. Mr. MacLeod noted there is an overall comment to be added about screening.

Drive-Through Facilities (8.30): Mr. Repp inquired about drive-through facilities by use, noting long vehicle queues at coffee shops. Mr. MacLeod said stacking requirements are in Article 9 and would be reviewed.

Emergency Shelters (8.33): Mr. MacLeod suggested exempting government shelters. Mr. Repp noted that some church-based shelters operate under county agreements. By consensus, the emergency shelter section was deleted.

Fire/EMS Stations (8.38): Vice Chairman Fields raised the distinction between fire stations and EMS stations in light of possible future standalone EMS facilities. The Board agreed to keep a two-acre minimum for fire stations and clarify that EMS stations are not subject to acreage limits. The setback reduction provision was struck.

Government Offices (8.47): Mr. Repp suggested removing the conditions on government offices, including the one-acre minimum, so that a post office would not be deterred. Members were in agreement.

Houses of Worship (8.47): Discussion arose regarding the 3-acre minimum site area for houses of worship. A separate issue regarding Generations Church's reported acquisition of 2-3 acres adjacent to its property for a satellite parking lot was raised. Mr. MacLeod agreed to add clarifying language specifying that off-site parking facilities accessory to a house of worship are not subject to the 3-acre minimum but remain subject to the existing 2,000-foot proximity requirement.

Landscaping Services (8.53): Chairman Kozub requested that he would like to examine acreage, due to items such as storage containers and trailers. Mr. MacLeod will add a setback requirement from the street.

Manufactured Homes (8.57): Board Member Stuart noted a discrepancy between the text and the Table of Uses regarding manufactured homes in the R-20 district. Mr. MacLeod acknowledged an oversight and will add clarifying language that manufactured homes are permitted only within approved manufactured home parks. Mr. Repp noted that Brunswick County had recently faced litigation over manufactured home provisions tied to the date of manufacture. Mr. MacLeod confirmed that local governments cannot impose manufacture-date restrictions.

Manufacturing and Industrial Uses (8.58–8.59): Council Liaison Board moved that no VOC emissions be permitted from manufacturing and industrial operations, regardless of whether permitted by NC DEQ. Mr. MacLeod agreed to add such language while warning that he has seen pushback on similar provisions.

Parks, Active with Recreational Facilities (8.73): The Board discussed whether the 3-acre minimum and screening requirements are appropriate, particularly given existing facilities such as

the Woodlands Recreation Pavilion. Mr. MacLeod noted that he would review whether the standards would inadvertently restrict subdivision-associated parks and to clarify applicability.

Service Stations – Gasoline (8.80): A broader policy discussion arose regarding the practical effect of requiring above-ground fuel storage tanks—a provision that effectively prevents modern, large-format fuel retailers (such as Sheetz) from locating in St. James. Chairman Kozub noted that zoning inherently limits uses and that these are policy considerations. No final change was directed at this session beyond the directive that a 3,000-square-foot cap be applied consistently across any retail element associated with a service station, for consistency with the convenience store limit. Mr. Stuart noted a 50-foot fuel pump setback in this section not mirrored for convenience stores.

Solar Energy (8.84): The Board endorsed the restructured provisions and specifically noted that surety bonds for decommissioning and abandonment should require annual updates.

Veterinary Services (8.96): Mr. MacLeod will clarify whether outdoor runs are a separate use, consistent with kennel provisions, and that the standards be made consistent across both uses. Overnight boarding by veterinary clinics was acknowledged as common and should be accommodated.

The Board additionally discussed and generally supported the following revisions or follow-up items:

- Board consensus was to leave in Bed and Breakfasts
- Board consensus was to strike Bingo Halls
- Dance Halls was indicated to be a formatting error and was noted for deletion
- It was agreed that the hours of operation for flea markets be changed to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- The requirement that fencing in dog parks extend 6 inches below the surface was agreed upon to be struck as impractical and unnecessary given the presumed presence of owners.
- Mr. MacLeod indicated that he would confirm buffer provisions for motor vehicle sales.
- Board consensus was to change the opening hours of Laundry and Dry Cleaning from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- Board agreed that the 5,000-square foot cap on restaurants in the Commercial Neighborhood district be stricken, as restaurants are a desirable use and size restrictions are unnecessary
- Moving and storage services, outdoor services and landscaping were areas flagged for acreage review.

b. Review New Table of Use Definitions

The new Table of Use Definitions was acknowledged in the context of Article 8 review. Specific definitional items addressed included:

- *Accessory Dwelling Unit*: The Board requested that a clearer definition be added specifying minimum facilities (living area, sleeping area, kitchen/cooking facilities, bathroom, and private entrance).

- *Specialty Beverages*: Confirmed as referring to non-alcoholic prepared beverages such as juices and smoothies, distinct from alcoholic beverage uses.
- *Service Areas (Athletic Fields)*: Mr. MacLeod agreed to clarify the text ordinance as restrooms, concession areas, and maintenance areas.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment the board briefly discussed the schedule for the November meeting, noting that the scheduled November 3 date falls on Election Day and cannot be used. Chairman Kozub suggested staff should circulate alternative dates in November for Board consensus. Mr. MacLeod suggested the date of Thursday, November 5.

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chairman Marc Fields. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Burns
(Asst. Zoning Admin. / Clerk)

Approved,

William Kozub
(Chair)