



Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and  
Rolesville Downtown Development Association (RDDA)  
Joint Meeting  
**November 18, 2025**

**5:00 PM**

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Present:</b> Mayor Ronnie Currin           | Town Attorney Dave Neill          |
| Mayor Pro Tem April Sneed                     | Town Manager Eric Marsh           |
| Commissioner Dan Alston                       | Town Clerk Christy Ynclan Frazier |
| Commissioner Lenwood Long                     | Police Captain Richard Haynes     |
| Commissioner Michael Paul                     | Planning Board Donnie Lawrence    |
| Commissioner Paul Vilga                       | Planning Board Frank Pearce       |
| Planning Board Mike Moss                      | Planning Jim Schwartz             |
| Planning Board Derek Versteegen               | RDDA Sheilah Sutton               |
| RDDA Lisa Kane                                | RDDA Jenn Bernat                  |
| RDDA Jacky Wilson                             | RDDA Billy Perry                  |
| RDDS Lisa Harris                              | RDDA Toni Kenion                  |
| Assistant Town Manager Steven Pearson         |                                   |
| Economic Development Director Mical McFarland |                                   |
| Interim Planning Director Michael Elabarger   |                                   |

## MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Ronnie Currin called the special joint meeting to order at 5:15 PM on November 18, 2025. He welcomed all attendees, including the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Board, and the Rolesville Downtown Development Association (RDDA). He expressed gratitude to Sheila for mobilizing RDDA attendance and noted that the evening's agenda focused on a single item - the Joint Meeting Presentation.

### 2. Consideration of Agenda

**Motion by Commissioner Michael Paul, seconded by Commissioner Paul Vilga, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**

### 3. Joint Meeting – Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and Rolesville Downtown Development Association

Town Manager Eric Marsh opened with an extended introduction, sharing his four-year journey with Rolesville, having started as assistant town manager before transitioning to town manager when Kelly moved to Goldsboro. He expressed his love for the community, comparing it to his hometown of Roxboro, North Carolina, but noting that Rolesville's vitality is superior.

Marsh contextualized the meeting as one of four strategic gatherings, following a recent Board retreat and an all-staff meeting focused on departmental collaboration. He emphasized that department heads had conducted a deep dive into the 2024 strategic plan and developed departmental work plans to support it.

The Town Manager detailed how the strategic plan's vision emerged from extensive community engagement through community cafés, interactive fire station meetings, board sessions, and internal staff meetings. He highlighted Rolesville's vision as "a dynamic, tight-knit community that fosters genuine connections and embraces change while maintaining unique local character," with a mission to "provide the highest quality of service in an efficient, cost-effective, and courteous manner, focusing on a safe, livable, sustainable community with a strong sense of belonging."

Marsh outlined the plan's core values - accountable, collaborative, ethical, excellent, inclusive, and transparent - and emphasized how this drives all town initiatives, from fire and police station construction to CIP projects. He noted that residents particularly value small-town quality of life, housing affordability, housing diversity, and navigating growth while preserving character.

He stressed how the Board holds staff accountable to four key areas: connected communities, abundant amenities, intentional growth ("growth happening for us, not to us"), and promoting a strong organization. Recent grant pursuits exemplified this commitment, including a pitch to the Raleigh Visitors Bureau for \$3.6 million toward "the farm" - a hotel sports complex on the other side of Highway 401. When asked whether they could provide more funding, Marsh boldly suggested funding the entire \$.6 million project.

Marsh clarified that the evening wasn't about shifting vision but rather enhancing collaboration among boards and organizations. The meeting format intentionally created a "flat" environment in which titles were set aside to focus on a shared commitment to Rolesville. He introduced Fountain Works consultants Bo Mills and Danielle Badaki as "extended Rolesville family" who had facilitated both the strategic plan refresh and complete revamp.

- Overview of Strategic Planning

Bo Mills, who recently retired from the League of Municipalities after a career spanning state, local, and federal government, expressed honor at working with "the team that's going to make downtown Rolesville what it can be and what you want it to be." He outlined the evening's interactive agenda, emphasizing strategic planning as an organizational management tool for bringing different groups together.

Mills explained that strategic planning helps set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure employees and stakeholders work toward

common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes, and assess and adjust direction in response to changing environments. He stressed the importance of active listening, helping teammates organize their thoughts, and staying engaged throughout the session.

The strategic planning framework requires establishing a vision first, followed by a mission, goals, performance measures, and, finally, action plans with specific strategies and tactics. Mills emphasized the critical importance of including input from key partners, stakeholders, the represented community, businesses, and the broader region.

- Visioning Forward

Mills initiated introductions, asking participants to share their name, affiliation, and one word describing their hope for downtown Rolesville:

- Tim Schwartz (Planning Board): "Community."
- Mayor Ronnie Currin (Mayor): "Parking."
- Donnie Lawrence (Planning Board): "Beautification."
- Frank Ferrell (Planning Board): "Quaint."
- Michael Paul (Commissioner): "Vibrant."
- Jackie Wilson (RDDA): "Peace."
- April Sneed (Commissioner): "Togetherness."
- Lisa Harris (RDDA): "Gathering."
- Lisa King (RDDA): "Thriving."
- Dan Alston (Town Board): "Engagement."
- Billy Perry (RDDA): "Charm."
- Sheilah Sutton (RDDA): "Walkable, beautiful downtown Rolesville with restaurants, retail places, and thriving, successful businesses" (acknowledging she exceeded the one-word limit)
- Lenwood Long (Commissioner): "Modernization" (after joking that Sheila had taken all his words)
- Jenn Bernat (newly elected but unsworn council member, RDDA subcommittee): "Community engagement."
- Derek (Planning Board): "Safety."
- Paul Vilga (Commissioner): "Families."
- Tyisha Lowe (Planning Board): "Thriving."
- Tony (RDDA): "Equitable."

Mills noted the clear theme of people coming together downtown, making it the heart and soul.

Michael McFarland, Economic Development Director, presented comprehensive data about Rolesville's economic landscape. He began by referencing the 2018 Main

Street Vision Plan that sparked the current \$23 million construction project, highlighting its five goals: create an equitable Main Street for all transportation modes; promote a diverse housing stock; celebrate the town with transparent gateways; reestablish a town center; and retain a small-town feel.

McFarland shared survey results from the recent comprehensive plan, where 236 participants identified their top concerns. While preserving the natural environment ranked first at 59%, maintaining or creating a vibrant Main Street/downtown area ranked second at 51%, consistent with other feedback indicating that downtown health is critical to overall community health. Participants expressed a desire for more restaurants and shopping options, noting they currently leave Rolesville to access amenities in Wake Forest or Raleigh.

He traced Main Street's evolution from US Highway 401 - primarily accommodating regional automotive traffic with highway-oriented businesses - to its transformation following the 2016 bypass completion, which enabled reclaiming Main Street for an authentic downtown experience. The current project reflects overwhelming community support from 2018 to create a destination that promotes walkability, bike-ability, and downtown revitalization, with completion anticipated in the spring.

Population data showed Rolesville's advantageous position in the Greater Triangle region - "location, location, location" - while maintaining a more minor genuine community character. The town has grown by 202% over 15 years to just over 12,000 residents, with demographics showing higher-than-average median income, home values, and educational attainment.

McFarland detailed the residential growth pipeline: over 5,500 new housing units approved and at various stages of plan review or construction over the next 5-10 years. This expected population doubling would translate into "manifold increase in demand for commercial products and services" - twice as many gas stations, restaurants ("all those extra teeth" needing dentists), storage units, and school seats.

He emphasized Rolesville's lagging commercial development, with a current tax base of 91% residential and 9% commercial, compared with the ideal 70-30 or even 60-40 ratio recommended by Wake County tax officials. Commercial development provides greater value per tax dollar as it requires fewer municipal services than residential development.

Major commercial projects on Main Street include:

- Cobblestone Village: \$80 million investment, 50,000 square feet retail/restaurant, 188 apartments
- Wallbrook (Publix location): \$120 million, 265,000 square feet retail/restaurant/office
- Glow on Main (old Pine Blow site): \$12 million, 64,000 square feet indoor recreational space

These developments, plus smaller projects (Learning Express, Scooter's Coffee, unnamed restaurants near Granite Falls Boulevard, North Wake Eye Care), would add approximately 25 businesses - a 20% increase compared to the typical 3-5 annual openings.

McFarland identified Rolesville as "land poor and demand rich," with virtually all commercially zoned land concentrated along Main Street. Burlington Mills Road and Jonesville Road have essentially no commercial zoning. For comprehensive plan estimations, 2025 demand is for 216,000 square feet of office space, 290,000 square feet of retail, and 511,000 square feet of industrial, with only 159,000 square feet currently in the development pipeline.

He highlighted the Gateway 401 parcels on southern Main Street as having key development potential, questioned whether this area qualifies as downtown, and emphasized their importance for the commercial growth opportunities identified in the comprehensive plan.

Following McFarland's presentation, Commissioner-Elect Jenn Bernat questioned why not develop commercially on the bypass rather than off Business 401/Main Street. McFarland outlined several constraints: NCDOT restrictions on new access points (limiting development to existing intersections at Jonesville, Young Street, and Rolesville Road); the Pointe development's 800+ homes consuming potential commercial land; challenging topography with gullies and hills that increase development costs; and landowners' unwillingness to sell. He suggested considering future land designation, purchase, and rezoning for commercial/industrial use.

The group then engaged in a vision board exercise led by Danielle Badaki. Participants created collages representing their vision for downtown Rolesville, with each table presenting their results:

Planning Board Table (presented by Tim Schwartz): Their literal interpretation included gathering places, varied office spaces (tall buildings for lawyers, doctors, accountants, PTAs), commercial spaces potentially including museums as destinations, gateway identification welcoming people to Rolesville, recreation facilities (parks, soccer fields, dog parks), and fireworks venues with adequate parking.

Commissioners Table (presented by Lenwood Long): Their collaborative vision featured nice restaurants with cloth napkins requiring actual utensils, social spaces for hanging out, safe harbor balancing safety with entertainment, embracing AI and technology advancement, diversity represented by "granny squares" encompassing all ages, family focus, local feel and shops, holiday town identity building on Rolesville's long-standing Christmas parade tradition, excellent public service from fire and police departments, love for their town, and emphatic desire for quality, fresh, delicious, hearty food options beyond current fast-food offerings. Long concluded with "we want to say thank you for coming to Rolesville and come back and see us again."

RDDA Table (presented by Sheilah Sutton): Their vision emphasized commitment to quality businesses, focus on retail and activities (acknowledging potential gender bias from three women at the table wanting shopping options), recognition that restaurants alone don't provide all-day engagement, family activities beyond just children's programming including options for grandparents and older generations, maintaining hometown charm with mom-and-pop stores, biking and walking paths, and sweet treats (represented by a donut). Sutton summarized: "fun for everyone, not just a focus on restaurants... What's going to keep people here? What's going to help others realize the charm that we do have in Rolesville?"

- Addressing Barriers + Bold Moves

Mills facilitated a gap analysis exercise in which participants individually brainstormed on sticky notes, answering three questions: Where are we now? What are we doing well? What's our ideal goal for downtown Rolesville? What do we need to do to get there?

Town Manager Marsh interjected, humorously banning "traffic" as an answer since it's already well known. He challenged participants to think beyond obvious concerns (traffic, walkability, greenway) that staff already hear through Facebook groups and regular feedback. "What's your 6?" he asked, encouraging deeper, less visible insights that staff might miss.

After individual reflection, tables shared and reached consensus on group answers:

Planning Board Results (presented by Tim Schwartz):

Where we are now/doing well:

- Growing well after being tiny for so long
- Planning developments with purpose, not haphazardly
- At a transformation from crossroads to destination
- Attracting growth, almost too much, with more demand than space

Ideal goal - "Stickability":

- Variety of places and activities (restaurants, theaters, sports complex, shops, museums)
- Multiple attractions keep people 3-6 hours
- Post-parade retention (contrasting current rapid departure with new Cobblestone shopping)
- Walkability connecting activities without requiring car travel

How to get there:

- Pursue economic growth, attracting variety beyond standard chains (Chick-fil-A, Chipotle, Jersey Mike's)
- Unique retail, like specialty cooking schools, spice shops with classes, meal prep facilities, bakeries
- Balance commercial development

Commissioners' Table (presented by Lenwood Long):

What we're doing now:

- Planning
- Community/staff/commission/board engagement
- Residential growth

Doing well:

- Locally owned businesses
- Mixed-use development

- Subject matter expert hiring ("We hire good folks, and they know what they're doing")

Ideal goals:

- Consistency in curated curb appeal (lighting, color, materials)
- Downtown zoning policy
- Thriving businesses through being welcoming, safe, walkable, charming yet modern
- 24-hour social district (not just evenings)
- Event spaces, halls, breweries, and venues for gatherings beyond shopping

How to get there:

- Specificity in downtown policies
- Unified plan and message
- Larger marketing campaign telling Rolesville's story beyond residents
- Alignment on messaging
- Modernization of marketing materials and attraction methods
- Addressing resident concerns immediately rather than "kicking the can down the road."
- Better communications
- Promoting engagement through visible board/commission openings
- Creating a community academy teaching decision-making complexity

RDDA Table (presented by April Sneed):

Current state - "Growing Pains":

- Business and residential growth (acknowledging pains as necessary problem identifiers)
- Getting things done ("we want something, we get it done. We approve it")

Doing well:

- Adding public space
- Unique offerings
- Great community events (July 4th, Fall Fun Festival, Christmas parade), attracting crowds but lacking retention activities

Ideal downtown:

- Destination with extended stays
- Welcoming, engaging, quality experience
- Gateway presence making downtown recognizable
- Property maintenance enforcement addressing overgrown establishments
- Unique Rolesville identity distinct from surrounding towns

- Balance between chains and small businesses
- Accessible housing/employment ("if they can't live here, can they work here? If they can't drive here, can they get here to work?")
- Place to live, work, eat, and play

How to get there:

- Compromise
- Balance and inclusion
- Parking garage to address land constraints ("We have land issues...when you don't have any more land, where else are you going to go? You've got to go up")
- More open space
- Stick to strategic plans developed through meetings

- Prioritizing Our Ideas

Town Manager Marsh provided context on staff's use of prioritization frameworks, leveraging his subject-matter expertise, including his Six Sigma Black Belt certification. He explained how ideas fall into four categories that drive CIP and project decisions:

- Quick Wins: High-impact, low-effort initiatives providing immediate progress
- Major Projects: High impact, high effort requiring significant resources, policy shifts, or legislative lobbying
- Fill-ins: Low-impact, low-effort tasks that are easy but less significant
- Rethink: Items requiring significant resources with minimal impact that should be reconsidered

Marsh shared examples of real-time flexibility, such as reallocating funds when projects like license plate readers get delayed, pivoting that \$15,000 to other quick wins within departmental budgets. He cited the accumulation of several small, delayed items to fund a \$230,000 compactor truck as demonstrating nimble resource management.

He emphasized the complexity of seemingly simple requests, noting that ideas classified as "major projects" may appear straightforward but face legislative barriers. Using car dealership regulations as an example in which state law creates a three-year moratorium, he described actively lobbying the General Assembly to find workarounds.

Marsh stressed the importance of understanding these frameworks, noting that many meeting attendees use similar tools in their workplaces. He emphasized the staff's role as "the machine of Rolesville government," looking to boards for direction on priorities and resource allocation.

Following Marsh's explanation, participants engaged in dot voting to identify quick wins (green dots) and major projects (blue dots) from the gap analysis ideas. Bo

Mills acknowledged that while staff would need to determine actual effort levels for implementation, the exercise provided immediate feedback on perceived priorities.

- **Aligning for Action**

Mills presented the roles and responsibilities framework for the three bodies:

**Board of Commissioners:** Legislative and policy-setting body that reviews and approves major items (annexations, zoning map amendments, text amendments, development agreements), adopts budgets and strategic direction, provides oversight of the town manager and staff, and makes final decisions on land use and development matters.

**Planning Board:** Advisory board appointed by and serving at the pleasure of commissioners, with legislated mandates to review various planning matters, prepare and maintain comprehensive plans, review and recommend zoning amendments, serve as subject matter experts and community voices vetting applicant proposals.

**Rolesville Downtown Development Association (RDDA):** A 501(c)(3) nonprofit created within the last year or two, focusing on downtown revitalization, attracting businesses, supporting existing businesses, and promoting downtown. They initiate programs to improve downtown appearance, collaborate with the town government and stakeholders, and organize special events.

Discussion arose about RDDA's specific role versus the Chamber of Commerce. Jenn Bernat clarified that while some of the presented definitions overlap with Chamber functions, RDDA focuses explicitly on commercial development in the downtown core and on developing relationships with developers to bring commercial businesses to Rolesville, rather than on providing granular business support workshops or marketing that the Chamber handles.

Michael McFarland raised an important process question about when and how different groups can weigh in on development proposals. He presented a hypothetical scenario: staff work with a real estate agent representing an unknown burger joint that proposes to locate across from McDonald's. By the time the required neighborhood meeting takes place and the entity is revealed as Burger King, leadership may question how far the process has progressed without broader input. Staff focused on attracting commercial development may not know when to discourage certain businesses.

Mayor Currin defended the current process as "clumsy, but it works," noting that neighborhood meetings serve their intended purpose of providing community input. Eric Marsh reinforced that neighborhood meetings are designed for precisely this feedback - "that's when it's supposed to happen" - explaining developers often work multiple deals simultaneously with empty boxes on their sites.

Dave Neill, Town Attorney, provided legal context: neighborhood meetings are a Rolesville creation, not a requirement under state law, as written into the Land Development Ordinance. They serve an informal purpose, with no requirement for the developer or the town to act on the feedback. State law mandates public hearing notices, and Rolesville exceeds the minimum requirements. The notice burden shifted to developers due to the cost when local governments expanded notification

radii. Neill suggested a potential compromise: developers prepare the notices, but town staff sends them, providing better accountability.

Mills introduced the RACI framework (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) as a tool to clarify roles and reduce conflict when tackling initiatives, encouraging the group to consider who fits each category for various downtown efforts.

- Drafting Vision Statements

Danielle Badaki presented three draft vision statements for downtown Rolesville based on themes from earlier exercises:

- "Downtown Rolesville will serve as the gathering space for residents and visitors from all walks of life to enjoy engaging activities, local stores and boutiques, and the quality charm of Rolesville."
- "Downtown Rolesville will attract residents and visitors through a diverse range of activities, including quality restaurants, unique local shops, and engaging social places to invite all to celebrate our small-town charm."
- "Downtown Rolesville will be a welcoming social hub where residents and visitors come together to enjoy engaging activities, unique local shops, and quality restaurants celebrating our small-town charm."

An extensive discussion followed, with participants debating word choices and concepts. Key points included preferences for "destination" over "gathering space," inclusion of "walkable" or "pedestrian-friendly," debates about "charm" versus "character," and whether to include specific amenities. The group ultimately moved toward combining elements that emphasize downtown as a "walkable destination" and "welcoming social hub," while celebrating small-town character.

- Next Steps

Jenn Bernat thanked everyone for the opportunity to collaborate and emphasized the importance of continuing this high-level cooperation. She specifically requested advance notice of upcoming text amendments regarding downtown townhomes scheduled for the January discussion.

Mayor Currin provided an extensive update on town achievements and future goals. He highlighted accomplishments, including the approval of the comprehensive plan, the establishment of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, the hiring of a general manager for the community center, the 2018 opening of Cobblestone Village after 7 years, and the current Main Street project, despite negative comments about disruption.

The Mayor outlined twelve priorities across four categories for the next two years:

Board Achievements:

- Senior citizen center inclusion in CIP (noting Rolesville as possibly the only Wake County town without one)
- Watershed modifications (acknowledging the complexity and long history of effort)

Town Services:

- Speed enforcement improvements ("We've been dismal on speed enforcement")
- Local veteran services office (addressing veterans currently traveling to Raleigh)
- Accessible/low-cost mental health services ("that's been a push of mine for several years")

Economic Development:

- Recruiting a hotel ("biggest one on there...big deal for us")
- Theater attraction
- Professional services center for attorneys, CPAs, and professional offices

Staff Priorities:

- Town campus master plan, including the fire department, police department, and veterans park
- Sports complex activation with \$12 million budgeted ("we want that activated in the next two years")
- Community center location and design finalization (acknowledging previous deal failures)

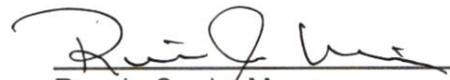
The discussion continued with the community center concept, with comparisons to Wake Forest's Renaissance Center, which can host 150-200 people for revenue-generating events. Participants debated public versus potential public-private partnership models.

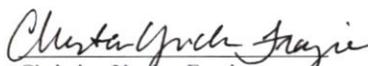
4. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned with renewed commitment to collaboration and improved community engagement, with no opposition.



Attest:

  
Ronnie Currin, Mayor

  
Christina Yncian Frazier