



Town of Clayton  
Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, April 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers, Town Hall  
111 E. Second Street

Pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 143-318.10(e), these minutes provide a general summary of the Town Council meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript. A complete video recording of this meeting is available for public access on the Town of Clayton's official YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TownofClaytonNC>.

**Council Present:**

Mayor Jody McLeod  
Mayor Pro Tem Andria Archer  
Council Member Ruth Anderson  
Council Member Porter Casey  
Council Member Amanda Underwood  
Council Member Gretchen Williams

**Staff Present:**

Rich Cappola, Town Manager  
Jim Cauley, Town Attorney  
Heidi Holland, Town Clerk  
David Ranes, Fire Chief  
Robert McKie, Finance Director  
Nathanael Shelton, Communication Director  
Conrad Olmedo, Planning Director  
Jonathan Ham, Engineering Director  
Amy Shearin, Community Events & Engagement Coordinator

**Council Absent:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- a. Call to Order

Mayor McLeod called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- b. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor McLeod provided the Pledge of Allegiance.

- c. Invocation

Mayor McLeod led the Invocation.

**2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA**

- a. Adopt or Adjust the Agenda

Mr. Cappola adjusted the agenda to add 4b. Communication + Outreach Awards.

**Adoption of Adjusted Agenda**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b>   | Passed 5-0  |
| <b>Mover:</b>    | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Secunder:</b> | Porter Casey  |
| <b>Yes:</b>      | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| <b>No:</b>     | None |
| <b>Absent:</b> |      |

### 3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Resolution to Acquire Real Property – 480 E. Main Street  
**Presenter:**  
 Joe Stallings, Economic Development Director

#### Adoption of Consent Agenda as Presented

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b>   | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>    | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Secunder:</b> | Ruth Anderson   |
| <b>Yes:</b>      | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>       | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b>   |   |

### 4. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

- a. Clayton4U  
 Agenda Information & Access  
**Presenter:**  
 Nathanael Shelton, Communication Director

Mr. Shelton shared this meeting's episode which featured information on accessing the Council meeting agendas.

- b. Communication + Outreach Awards  
**Presenter:**  
 Mayor Jody McLeod

Mayor McLeod recognized the Communication and Outreach Department. On April 9, 2026 at the NC3C Excellence in Communications Awards, the team brought home 7 awards.

- First Place for Best Use of Humor (Small Population category): Blind Date with a Book
- First Place for Promotional Video (Small Population category): Water Resources Department Job Openings
- First Place for Most Creative with Least Dollars Spent: 2025 Fire Prevention Week Series
- First Place for the Digital Employee Newsletter: The Clayton Collective
- Second Place for Brochure Design (Small Population category): 2025-2026 Sculpture Trail Brochure

- Second Place for Regular Programming: Clayton4U, Season 2
- Third Place for Campaigns (Small Population category): Black History Month

He stated what is impressive is the variety of the awards received. He stated this team continues to make Clayton look smart, approachable, and every now and then a little funny. Mr. Shelton stated he is very proud of his team.

## 5. INTRODUCTIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

- Administrative Professionals Day Proclamation  
**Presenter:**  
 Council Member Underwood

Council Member Underwood read the proclamation into the record and presented to our Administrative staff.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 2025-41-CZM Arbors at East Village Ph II: Type 3 Conditional Rezoning  
*(Continued from the March 16, 2026 Meeting)*  
**Presenter:**  
 Conrad Olmedo, Planning Director

Mr. Olmedo stated tonight's request is for a Type III Conditional Rezoning request to rezone approximately 4.19 acres from Planned Development Residential (PD-R) to Conditional Residential Zoning (CZR). He stated the property is located on the north side of East Front Street, is currently wooded and undeveloped, and was originally included in the East Village Master Plan approved in 2012. The property was rezoned in 2015 from B-2 to PD-R, at which time the master plan allowed development of up to three multi-family buildings.

The applicant is proposing a change in product type to allow 45 rental apartment units in a townhome-style configuration. He noted following Town Council discussion, enhanced buffering had been discussed, and staff determined the request is consistent with the Downtown Support designation of the 2045 Comprehensive Growth Plan. He reviewed the conditions of approval, including multiple modifications to the Unified Development Ordinance, and noted the Planning Board had recommended approval, with comments related to guest parking, private streets, wetlands, and screening along East Front Street. Mr. Olmedo stated if approved, the concept plan and conditions would be tied to the land in accordance with state law and that Motion 1 on the consistency statement found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Growth Plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Archer asked why architectural elevations were not included with the rezoning request. Mr. Olmedo explained for a Type III Conditional Rezoning, architectural design requirements are typically captured through conditions of approval rather than detailed elevations. Council Member Casey asked whether the project should be considered single-family detached or multi-family. Mr. Olmedo stated because the units would remain under common ownership and not be subdivided for sale, the development is considered multi-family.

Council Member Casey also asked about driveway spacing and garage façade conditions; Mr. Olmedo explained these were addressed through specific UDO modifications tied to the site layout. Council Member Williams requested clarification on the range of housing types, Mr. Olmedo explained while the product resembles single-family townhomes, it functions as a multi-

family rental development. She also asked about Condition 16 regarding existing vegetation credits, Mr. Olmedo stated the intent was to preserve mature trees; however, no specific tree count was available at this stage.

Applicant Thomas Taft stated the proposed development addressed a “missing middle” housing need and had been down-densified from the originally approved 72 units to 45 units to achieve a more aesthetically pleasing product. He stated the development team is willing to share examples of similar projects they have completed.

Cole Jordan presented detailed information on the project, noting the development team has previous projects in Clayton, including The Arbors at East Village and Spinning Mill Lofts. He reviewed the conceptual site plan and summarized concerns raised by staff, the Planning Board, Council, and the public, including parking, wetlands, vegetation, private streets, traffic, and screening.

Mr. Jordan stated the project would provide over 164 parking spaces, significantly exceeding UDO requirements, and lease provisions would require garages to be used primarily for vehicle parking. He stated a wetlands delineation identified one jurisdictional wetland, which would not be impacted by development, and a certified tree survey and Tree Save Plan would be prepared in accordance with Condition 16. He explained private streets would be constructed and maintained to Town standards.

Mr. Jordan stated a traffic study was not required due to low projected trip volumes, with all site traffic routed through Bent Branch Loop and a roundabout prior to entering public streets. Regarding screening, he stated the applicant is proposing enhanced evergreen screening along East Front Street.

Mr. Jordan further described commitments to a higher standard of development, including enhanced landscaping, Energy Star appliances, smart home features, one-gigabit internet service included in rent, EV-capable outlets in garages, architectural variation, and shared access to amenities within Phase 1 of The Arbors at East Village.

Council Member Casey asked about stormwater capacity, Mr. Jordan stated the existing Phase 1 stormwater pond was designed to accommodate Phase 2. He confirmed the project would provide EV-ready outlets rather than installed chargers. Mr. Taft stated parking and maintenance restrictions would be enforced through recorded covenants and lease agreements that would run with the land.

Additional Council discussion included driveway spacing, trash management through a shared compactor, limitations on garage façade width, and concerns about the development’s visual impact as a gateway into downtown Clayton. Discussion continued regarding building orientation along East Front Street, sidewalk connectivity, package delivery logistics, fire protection access, screening effectiveness, tree size and maturity, potential fencing, and long-term aesthetics. Chief Ranes explained emergency responses would not be hindered by addressing or screening and internal access and dual-side access supports fire operations.

Mayor McLeod stated this has been noted as a public hearing and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

David Stamp, 465 Rolling Meadows, shared his concerns of watching cars drive by on Front

Street from his patio.

John Scarpa, 1304 Neuse Ridge Drive, spoke about the size of the proposed driveways and wetlands.

Tanessa Zort, Property Manager at Arbor at East Village spoke in favor of this project. She stated she currently walks the property daily to ensure there are no violations in the community.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor McLeod closed the public hearing and turned it over to Council for their deliberation.

Council members expressed continued concerns regarding building orientation, architectural design, gateway aesthetics, and the need for additional information, including elevations. Council indicated they were not prepared to make a decision at this time.

At the applicant's request, the rezoning request was continued to the May 18, 2026 Council meeting to allow time for him to gather elevation examples.

**Motion To Continue to May 18, 2026 Meeting**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b>   | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>    | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Seconder:</b> | Ruth Anderson   |
| <b>Yes:</b>      | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>       | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b>   |   |

- b. 2026-027-ANX Southwest Public Safety Center Annexation Petition

**Presenter:**

Conrad Olmedo, Planning Director

Mr. Olmedo stated this is a three-annexation request, Town staff initiated. He stated for the two non-contiguous annexations, Jack Road and Corbett Road, the correct state statute is 160A-58.1.

The total acreage for all three annexations is 144.70 acres. Regarding annexation 2026-27-ANX Southwest Public Safety Center, this is contiguous and located in the ETJ. The surveyor extended the right-of-way to bring it to the Town limit as well. This annexation is 1.08 acres as well as 1.21 included in the right-of-way.

For the Jack Road non-contiguous annexation, this property is 34.73 acres, located outside the Town's ETJ but is owned by the Town. The effective date on this annexation would be at a later date so it could be included in a Town wide rezoning of other properties.

Corbett Road, a non-contiguous annexation adjacent to Jack Road property and is 108.53

acres.

The annexations were reviewed by the Town's Technical Review Committee and, if approved, fire, police, water, and sewer services would be provided to the parcels. Staff recommended approval with the effective dates as follows:

- 2026-27-ANX Southwest Public Safety Center: April 20, 2026
- 2026-32-ANX TOC Jack Road: June 30, 2026
- 2026-33-ANX TOC Corbett Road: April 20, 2026

Mayor McLeod stated this has been noted as a public hearing on all three annexations and asked if anyone wished to speak on any of the three annexations. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed and turned over to council for deliberation.

**Adoption of Ordinance #2026-04-02**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b>   | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>    | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Seconder:</b> | Porter Casey  |
| <b>Yes:</b>      | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>       | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b>   |   |

- c. 2026-033-ANX TOC Corbett Road Annexation Petition  
**Presenter:**  
Conrad Olmedo, Planning Director

All three annexations were presented together. See minute discussion under item 2026-027-ANX Southwest Public Safety Center Annexation Petition.

**Adoption of Ordinance #2026-04-04**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b>   | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>    | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Seconder:</b> | Gretchen Williams   |
| <b>Yes:</b>      | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>       | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b>   |   |

- d. 2026-032-ANX TOC Jack Road Annexation Petition

**Presenter:**

Conrad Olmedo, Planning Director

All three annexations were presented together. See minute discussion under item 2026-027-ANX Southwest Public Safety Center Annexation Petition.

**Adoption of Ordinance #2026-04-03**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b> | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>  | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Second:</b> | Amanda Underwood  |
| <b>Yes:</b>    | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>     | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b> |   |

**7. QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS**

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

David Stamp, 465 Rolling Meadows, thanked Town administrative staff for their great work that keeps the Town running. He stated all have been helpful and pleasant.

John Scarpa, 1304 Neuse Ridge Drive, discussed an irrigation system that he purchased. He stated he is not able to install it without a permit. He complimented Town staff member Desiree Coira, but she was not able to provide an answer. He stated he would like to know how much it would cost to install a meter. He stated the Town should have a staff member whose responsibility is handling the calls, like a help desk.

Martha Newberry, 537 Winding Wood Drive, Moss Creek neighborhood, addressed Council regarding a proposed 145-foot cellular tower planned at 487 Guy Road, directly across from Clayton Middle School. The property is leased by Vertical Bridge from Hope Church and is zoned Office Institutional. She expressed concern that the proposed tower site is located within a wooded buffer and wetlands area and abuts multiple residential neighborhoods, including Winding Wood Drive, Pinecroft Drive, and Laurel Ridge Drive. She stated residents were advised at the time of purchasing their homes that development would not occur within the wetlands area.

She stated she began observing significant tree clearing beginning March 9, 2026, and stated when Town staff were contacted, no permit record could initially be located. She stated Town staff later issued a stop-work order after determining no logging permit had been issued, but alleged the contractor ignored the order until law enforcement intervened. She stated additional

clearing activity resumed on April 8, 2026, causing continued concern among nearby residents.

She described concerns regarding flooding, drainage impacts, environmental disruption, and wildlife habitat disturbance resulting from the tree removal within the wetland area. She further stated residents received limited information due to staff turnover and difficulties locating records related to the original cell tower application. She requested Council investigate the project, halt further work, require remediation of disturbed areas, and direct the applicant to relocate the proposed cell tower to an alternative site, citing potential negative impacts on residents' quality of life.

Ann Bitner, 585 Winding Wood Drive, addressed Council regarding the proposed cellular tower project at 487 Guy Road. She stated she and other nearby residents received various notices beginning in June 2022 related to simulation materials and anticipated permitting requirements. Ms. Bitner stated she was informed at that time a neighborhood meeting and public hearing would be required; however, she indicated she did not receive notice of any such meetings.

She stated she and another resident participated in a virtual meeting held in March 2023 and later received materials indicating an application for the tower would soon be submitted to the Town. She stated no additional communication was received after March 2023 and residents were unaware of any further developments until tree clearing activity began at the site.

She expressed concern regarding the notification and review process related to the project.

Mr. Cappola spoke regarding the status of the cellular tower project at 487 Guy Road. He stated the project was approved under the Town's former Unified Development Code. At the time of the original application, an unconcealed cell tower would have required a Special Use Permit, including a neighborhood meeting and public hearing before Council. However, the former code allowed concealed towers to be approved administratively without the same public process. The applicant revised the project scope to a concealed tower, designed to resemble a tree, qualifying for administrative approval under the prior code.

He stated the current Unified Development Ordinance would not permit approval of such a project in this manner; however, the approval predates adoption of the current ordinance and is therefore grandfathered. The applicant obtained required state and federal permits to allow wetland disturbance.

Mr. Cappola verified the scope of land disturbance falls below the threshold requiring a Town land-disturbance permit. He stated the time gap between earlier communications and current construction activity is consistent with the length of the environmental permitting process. He stated this was the most current information available, subject to confirmation by planning and engineering staff.

Mr. Ham, Engineering Director, confirmed the information previously stated by Mr. Cappola. He noted there are discrepancies between the approved plans and existing conditions in the field related to the placement of silt fencing. He stated Town inspectors have been on site regularly and staff are working with the contractor to correct the issues and bring the site into compliance.

Mr. Cappola stated staff are working to ensure the project limits any additional impact beyond what was previously approved. He acknowledged the concerns raised and stated the former UDC allowed circumstances such as this to occur, which was a contributing reason for adoption

of the current UDO. He explained staff turnover required additional time to reconstruct the project history and confirmed the applicant initially pursued an unconcealed tower that would have required a more extensive review process before revising the proposal to a concealed tower permitted administratively under the former code. He stated staff are currently working with the cell tower company to minimize impacts to neighboring properties.

Ms. Newberry reiterated concerns regarding drainage and flooding impacts, stating her neighborhood lies downslope from the project area and already experiences flooding during heavy rain events. She expressed concern that the removal of trees and underbrush has further reduced natural stormwater mitigation and stability. She stated the cleared area had significantly altered visual conditions, noting increased visibility of Guy Road from her property. She expressed frustration with the location of the project, the loss of wooded buffer areas enjoyed by residents, repeated violations of stop-work orders, and perceived lack of good faith by the contractor. She urged the Town to closely monitor the project, enforce compliance, and consider the long-term environmental and quality-of-life impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and wildlife habitat.

Council Member Anderson asked if the developer was responsible for erosion control that affects the area homes, Mr. Cappola stated yes. He explained any land-disturbing activity is required to comply with applicable state regulations as well as the Town's UDO and engineering standards. He stated while erosion and sediment control measures such as silt fencing and stabilized construction entrances are always required, a formal Town land-disturbance permit and plan review are only triggered when disturbance exceeds certain thresholds. He stated the subject project remains below that threshold.

He stated Town staff have inspected the site multiple times and are maintaining communication with the contractor.

He stated staff are reviewing the current UDO to ensure similar situations cannot occur in the future. Under the former code, antenna setbacks were measured at the break point of the structure rather than total height, which may have allowed the tower to be located closer to property lines. He reiterated although the current ordinance is more restrictive, the Town is legally required to honor previously granted entitlements. He stated staff would continue monitoring the site to ensure compliance with approved permits and erosion control requirements.

## **11. STAFF REPORTS**

### **a. Town Manager**

Mr. Cappola addressed Mr. Scarpa's concerns. He stated in the budget there is a request for a person that would answer the phones for the Community Development team - Planning, Engineering, Building Inspections, as well as the Development Services team. He stated he would speak with him offline about the permit for his irrigation system.

- b. Town Attorney**
- c. Town Clerk**
- d. Other Staff**

1) Square to Square Update

**Presenter:**

Amy Shearin, Community Events & Engagement Coordinator

Ms. Shearin provided an update on Square, the Town's annual street festival, noting that 2026 will mark the fifth year of the event. The festival would be held on June 6 as a kickoff-to-summer event. Activities would include free family-friendly programming along Main Street, a bike parade beginning at 10:00 a.m., games, water activities, arts and crafts, free refreshments, and participation from local non-profits. The Farmers Market would be located in Horn Square, and the event would highlight downtown businesses. New activities under consideration include a silent dance party and a paper airplane race. The event would conclude with a spray-down by the Clayton Fire Department.

She stated due to construction at Clayton High School, the launch site for the Independence Day fireworks has been relocated to Clayton Middle School and would take place on Friday, July 3. Although the events would be held on separate dates, staff anticipated strong community participation in both events.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS**

a. Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Casey thanked all those who contributed to and participated in the Earth Day Clean Up. He noted several civic groups have contacted him about borrowing available supplies for future trash pickup efforts and expressed hope to work with them on those requests.

**13. CLOSED SESSION**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

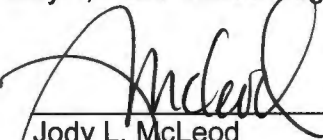
a. Adjourn

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

**Motion To Adjourn**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Result:</b> | <b>Passed 5-0</b>   |
| <b>Mover:</b>  | Andria Archer   |
| <b>Second:</b> | Porter Casey  |
| <b>Yes:</b>    | Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams |
| <b>No:</b>     | None  |
| <b>Absent:</b> |   |

Duly Adopted by the Town Council on Monday, May 4, 2026 while in regular session.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jody L. McLeod  
Mayor

**Attest:**

Heidi L. Holland  
Heidi L. Holland, MMC, MCCMC  
Town Clerk

