



Salisbury Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Draft Workshop

January 14, 2026

MINUTES

The Salisbury Planning Commission met in a special session on Wednesday, **January 14, 2026** to review the Draft Comprehensive Plan. The meeting took place at 125 N. Division St, Room 301, with attendance as follows:

COMMISSIONERS:

David Chiddenton, (Absent)
Matt Drew, Chair
Latonia Ayscue, Open Meetings Delegate
Susan Rall
Mike Piorunski
Lynne Bratten (Virtual)
Anthony Dickerson (Absent)

CITY STAFF

Nicholas Voitiuc, Director of DID
Betsy Jackson, City Planner
Zachary White, Associate Planner
Henry Pearson, Associate Planner
Laura Ryan, City Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mr. Drew called the meeting to order at 4:00PM. A roll call took place for the members of the commission. It was noted that David Chiddenton was absent from this meeting.

2. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Drew requested that anyone who could not make a public comment today please contact Betsy Jackson with any comments or concerns.

Betsy Jackson stated that the purpose of a comprehensive plan is to capture how people want their communities to function and grow. It is a big picture, long-term plan that serves as a guide. Public and private development initiatives should be consistent with the plan.

Ms. Jackson listed the state requirements for the comprehensive plan and public engagement efforts. In 2024 there was a public workshop presentation and online survey results. In Spring 2025, four focus groups met about the comprehensive plan. The focus groups came out with similar responses as the 2024 survey results.

Ms. Jackson also stated that after one or two more meetings about the comprehensive plan and a consensus from the commissioners that we will be sending the plan to the state for a 60-day review. After the 60-day review, the Planning Commission needs to have a public hearing to recommend adoption of the comprehensive plan. Once the Planning Commission recommends the plan, it goes to City Council for a work session and to go through their legislative process.

Mr. Drew asked if after the 60-day review a recommendation report will be generated by the state. Ms. Jackson responded yes, but it is still up to the Planning Commission to review these reports and recommend the comprehensive plan.

Henry Pearson, Betsy Jackson, and Zachary White presented the comprehensive plan goals of chapters 1-4.

Matt Drew discussed being pleased with the findings. He discussed economic development, jobs, and how many of the people that work in the City do not live in it or even the County.

Latonia Ayscue expressed concern about a lack of diversity initiatives within the plan objectives. Ms. Jackson let Ms. Ayscue know to email or call her with any ideas she may have.

Mike Piorunski looked at the correlation between skilled trades workers and lack of further education, economic despair, and renters within the City, as well as in the County. He also discussed the importance of training people to pursue trades.

Lynne Bratten (virtual) discussed car manufacturing within the City, as well as vocational training. She felt as if this page left out some extra opportunities within the City of Salisbury. She agrees with the fact that lower income within the area will have more citizens living within rental properties or communities.

Mr. Drew opened the floor to the public, as well as reminded the public if they didn't feel comfortable with speaking in public that they can always share their voice through email.

Joe Schiaffino stated that he participated in the survey. He discussed how the large number of rentals in the community could be due to Salisbury University and the number of students living off-campus. He also spoke on public transportation and how nearby cities have free public transportation options.

Robert Taylor stated that the commission needs to spread out the meetings for the plan as it is a large document with over 100 pages and has only been given to the public for a few weeks. He urged the commission to take more time for the plan and to revamp how we are addressing the issues.

Carol Donahue attended every focus group meeting, kept in touch with staff, and read parts of the plan. She stated that she had similar issues as Mr. Taylor, the plan was heavy with information and she was unable to read it in its entirety as it came out not long before the meeting was held. She stated how the public wasn't ready to discuss as they haven't had enough time to take the information in.

Jessica Cook looked through the plan for sewer and infrastructure. She wanted to know more about budgeting for these issues and that she would like to see this in the plan.

Mr. Piorunski discussed Chapter 2 page 11, and some issues he noticed. He asked for clarification to define what services within the plan. Ms. Jackson let him know that this information was taken directly from American Community Survey. He also discussed Chapter 4, specifically the objective about

supporting larger manufacturing plants within the community. He proposed supporting manufacturing companies that have a positive impact on the City rather than all manufacturing facilities.

Ms. Ayscue questioned whether or not the plan covers recycling. Ms. Jackson stated that how that section will be viewed over the next meeting as it's within a later chapter.

Mr. Drew expressed that the introduction should address the balance of growth, to serve the future and current citizens but also improving and sustaining the City's built environment. He stated that he wants to include that we want to grow responsibly to make the things we're building currently sustainable for the future and to have a "one Salisbury mindset" between both the City and the County. He stated that would like to see a more in-depth timeline for public outreach within the report. He would also like to see voter participation added to the demographics. Chapter 3 page 18, states that the current density for Central Business District should be much lower than what is in the report. He asked to add a footnote for the actual number of the density rather than the calculated number. On page 20, Land use & Municipal Growth section, Mr. Drew suggested a rewrite of the first paragraph. He would like it to emphasize infill and redevelopment as the primary growth strategy and to try to limit expansion. Mr. Drew then turned to page 27 and expressed interest in seeing a goal for economic development. He also believes we should recognize the river, as we are the second largest port in the state, this could help bring more companies and businesses to the City. Mr. Drew moved to page 30 and discussed Perdue Farms, and how they're one of our largest employers but we should focus on some more major companies. He proposed a table of the top ten private employers in the area ranked by revenue, number of employees and annual property tax contributions.

Mr. Piorunski inquired whether there is a strategy or plan in place for severely underdeveloped property, such as a lot that was previously a manufacturing or commercial use, that is currently vacant.

Ms. Jackson stated that a strategy could be added to research underdeveloped or vacant properties in the City and ways to encourage redevelopment.

Staff presented chapters 5-8 comprehensive plan goals. Mr. Drew opened the floor for the public.

Joe Schiaffino expressed concerns with the transportation chapter. While density increase is supported, he wants to be sure there will be adequate parking within the downtown area.

Robert Taylor expressed that we need to go more in depth with the comprehensive plan and extend the project.

Sharon Dashiell asking about CIPs and putting them in place, who is accountable and what the timeline for the goals within the CIPs.

Ms. Bratten agrees with Mr. Taylor that some of the terms seem generalized. She believes we should rethink what is Salisbury. She also expressed issues with transportation and how that correlates to employment and economics. She would like to rethink the vision for Salisbury.

Ms. Rall discussed building rehabilitation within the historic district and how the plan only discusses rehabilitation for those of lower economic status. She stated that rehabilitation efforts should be available all homeowners no matter economic status.

Mr. Piorunski would like to add an objective to historic and cultural resources. The major demographics are increasingly non-white and immigrant populations. He would like to see the immigrant population as a priority for the plan. Mr. Piorunski would also like to see in the housing section, a table or description of the housing stock. With regards to public transportation, he would like to see if we can connect Ocean City and Salisbury at least during the peak season.

Ms. Rall would like to add to community facilities. She questioned what plans are in place for recreational programming and using the green space that we do have.

Ms. Bratten would like to add we have a disproportionate ratio of renters to homeowners. She would like to know if there is a way we can add homeownership into the plan and what incentives can we put in place to help people to become homeowners within the community.

Mr. Drew stated that we need to work toward improving the historic district by help them keep their homes in good condition and giving them more flexible options. He believes we should provide more housing within walkable neighborhoods or areas. He would like a hybrid approach within the zoning to address the housing need and adding ADUs as an option. He would like to add a goal to the transportation section on page 48, emphasizing safety for all users. He stated that we should expand more on public parking within the Central Business District. He would also like to add a long-term plan to address contaminates in drinking water. Mr. Drew added that he would like to see Salisbury University's comprehensive plan included within the City's comprehensive plan and to discuss their new performing arts center within the downtown area. He expressed that we should be include any known downtown expansion within the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Piorunski stated that he would like to add to the transportation section specifically how Routes 13 and 50 intersect. He would also like to add a goal to the parks section of the comprehensive plan to implement a city-wide parks master plan.

Ms. Bratten would like to know if there is anywhere within the vision that expresses the nature of what we would like to see in 10-20 year. She asked what would stop the annexation of farmland for development to prevent the City from becoming a metropolis.

Ms. Jackson clarifies for the commission that the plan is the place to talk about how we want to grow and that annexation cannot occur outside of the designated growth area in the plan. She expressed how certain topics are zoning issues, such as where stores should be located. She also stated that the housing reports came directly from the finance office and these shouldn't be changed so that they stay consistent with their report.

Mr. Drew addressed the commission by asking what the next steps of the comprehensive plan might be and stated that he thought it needed additional review and public comment.

Other Business

Ms. Jackson discussed with the commission later dates for a continued workshop for the comprehensive plan and it was determined that she would reach out later to determine availability and set a date.

Adjournment:

Mr. Drew entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piorunski made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ayscue and duly carried.



Matt Drew, Vice Chair

3/12/26

Date



Betsy Jackson, Acting Secretary

3/12/26

Date