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Final decision on land-use plan falls to commissioners

By [Eric Deines](#) | Independent Tribune

CONCORD — The final component of a massive land-use plan for Concord's eastern growth area will fall to a decision from the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners in January.

The down-zoning decision for 24,500 acres was tabled by the Cabarrus Planning and Zoning Commissioner in September and failed to garner the super majority vote in November, putting the zoning decision in the hands of commissioners.

"I do think it's an important step for the county to manage growth," said County Chairman Jay White of the land plan. "We had an open process asking what the citizens wanted for the area. They spoke loud and clear."

In a series of community input sessions, hundreds of residents from the land-plan area requested the land remain zoned for agricultural and open space, with little allowance for development. Most of the plan entails a zoning that would allow only one to two houses for every three acres of land — a zoning too light for residential development.

But when the planning commission was scheduled to consider the item, another group of residents — over 100 — let its opposition to the plan be known.

The board tabled the decision for 60 days, voting in November.

Planning Board member Larry Griffin called the land-use plan "overkill."

"The county needs to have things to control growth, but I think what we're doing right now in the Central Area Plan is overkill," Griffin said. "This is not necessary in the county to control growth. I think what we have in place is adequate."

In April through June, a consultant hired by the county and the City of Concord performed a study of 39,200 acres to the south and east of Concord to find a land-use plan that would be agreeable with residents while also manage growth.

In June, Concord City Council and the County Commission OK'd an interlocal agreement that set utility boundaries for the planning area and required the city to keep the new, proposed zonings for the area if it annexes a portion of planning area.

Commissioner Grace Mynatt, who is planning a small, upscale residential development for land she owns within the identified growth area, has removed herself from any vote regarding the land-use plan or rezoning for the plan.

White said he did not think Mynatt's recusal from the issue would have an affect on commissioners' decision.

At its January 20 meeting, commissioners must consider the down-zoning plan as a "de novo" item,

meaning they will not base their decision on the findings of the planning board.

"I want to hear this fresh," White said. "I don't feel like I need to speak with planning board members. What they say may skew an independent mind."

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