

**TOWN OF FOUR OAKS  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.**

1) Call to Order

Albert Brewer, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Vice Chair, Tamara Dunn, Loreta Beasley, Casey Matthews, DeLaine Jackson, Jamey Caudill, and Ian Trammell. Also present were staff: Carol Allen, and Rhonda Lee, Town Clerk, who recorded minutes.

2) Pledge of Allegiance – Led by Jamey Caudill

3) Approval of Minutes

(a) Planning Board Meeting – July 8, 2025

Ian Trammell moved to approve the minutes from July 8, 2025, seconded by Jamey Caudill. The vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

4) Public Hearings:

Albert Brewer called the meeting into a public hearing.

Rhonda Lee, Town Clerk, presented the cases.

Mara Mejia, Petitioner and BRL Investments, Property Owner – Application for a Special Use Permit to allow Mystic Grove Games & Gathering to operate at 108 N Main Street. Parcel # 08012027. Parcel is in the Town's City Limits.

- **Owner would like to request a Special Use Permit to allow for Mystic Grove Games & Gathering.**
- **Parcel is in the Town's city limits.**
- **Public notice was in the FO Benson News in Review on July 30 and August 6.**
- **Sign was placed on the property August 1, 2025**
- **Letters were mailed to 60 property owners within a 500 ft radius on July 31, 2025.**
- **There were no inquiries from letters that were mailed.**

Mara Mejia, petitioner, relayed to the board that she would like to open a local card shop. There is a community of card players who now have to travel to Fayetteville, Goldsboro, or Chapel Hill to play since there is not one located in Johnston County. She presented a layout of the inside along with a schedule of different games and tournaments. The information turned in also lists the charges for the card table when being used in tournaments. Ian Trammell, planning board member, stated, "I'm going to interrupt here, and let's be fair here for this first part. When the

application was submitted and letters were sent out, the term gaming was a little ambiguous for interpretation.” He addressed the audience, asking “if everyone understands what she means by card games”. DeLaine Jackson, planning board member, responded no. Jason Jannette was in the audience and responded yes. Ian then stated “I need you to explain, your interpretation of what she means by card game. There’s a purpose behind this.” Jason explained he was involved when AJ Ryman had a place similar to this. He states this was a fantasy card game like Pokémon. Jason says that it is something that families can do together and he has actually been missing it. He is in attendance tonight to make sure this was not a gambling type business. Ian stated that was exactly the point he was trying to make. Ian addressed Mara, the petitioner, and said “what we need you to do for the people here in the public, is to break down exactly what’s going on rather than just cards, in let’s say your business establishment. Because I understand that there are going to be RPG’s there. Most of the community here do not know what an RPG is, I do, but others don’t. So we need that definition given.” Mara explained games such as Magic the Gathering, Pokémon, and One Piece, which is a Disney game, are some of the most popular. Others include Dungeons and Dragons and Warframe. When playing these games, the participants use a notebook, build a character, and take that character on an adventure. They create a story with 5 or 6 people and go on an adventure with their characters. There is no going out or dressing up. Some of the games involve figurines, so they will build and paint these figurines. There will be no gambling, and the only real money involved is in a tournament. DeLaine Jackson asked about parking and occupancy. She asked how many people would be in the business at one time. Mara answered by saying she had not talked with the Fire Inspector as of yet, but she expects the limit to be somewhere around 40. She is hoping for 46 but will be ok if 40 is the max. DeLaine also asked if you have to pay an entrance fee to come in and play. Mara said it depends on the day of the week and what type games are being played. There is no entrance fee to just come in and shop for merchandise. The board has copies in their packets with game day schedules and the building layout. Copies were made for citizens in the audience. She is planning to have free tables on the side and is planning a place with great aesthetics, so it’s not dark and grey. DeLaine voiced her concern over parking again. Railroad Street was a suggestion by Jason in the audience, and Ian. Anita Stephenson, local business owner, asked if she felt that she could get 40 people in that establishment. Mara explained that she had only been in the building twice, so she really didn’t know. She stated she still needs to discuss that with the Fire Marshal. Ian then proceeded with “I think a good question to caveat for that would be, are you understanding your ability to hold yourself accountable to that number?” Mara stated 100 percent. Ian responded by saying, “It is a fair question, and to assume when you have large numbers of people in a smaller building like that and in an older area of town and stuff, you know, so we are looking at our safety and things like that. It’s a fair question. And also, the accountability and holding yourself to that because business is business, and the more and more people you get in there, the more and more revenue, and sometimes certain ideologies take over on responsible actions, so that’s where you have to hold yourself accountable to what the Fire Marshal says. If the Fire Marshal comes in and says now that you’ve got all your tables in here, all you can have in here is 30 people, what are you going to do?” Mara’s answer was that it is what it is, it’s 30, and that’s it. She states she has had many years of experience dealing with the Fire Marshal, and she does not want to get a fine, a bad name, or to be shut down. She said, “I don’t want to deal with all that.” Ian continued with, “So, my next question is, why did you apply for a special use permit?” Mara stated, “Because I was told I had to.” Ian said, “I am not looking for names, but what was told to you? Don’t tell me any names, what was told to you?” Mara replied that because of what she was petitioning and what she had named it, and after explaining

what the business was, she was told she needed to apply for a special use permit. Ian responded with, "I want everyone in the audience, the board, to listen to what I have here. The term game room, as used in several North Carolina towns, such as Pink Hill, Stoneville, and Beaufort, refers to places of business operating mechanical or electronic gaming devices where players pay to play. Examples include arcades, billiard halls, poolrooms, and electronic gaming centers. My understanding that RPGs or board game venues would not meet that definition since it operates no coin-operated or mechanical games for payment and thus should not be regulated as a game room. What we are looking at is the definition of what someone writes on a form. The term game room, game room as defined throughout North Carolina, the entire state of North Carolina, is that as what I just explained, and that information is found by those municipalities on the internet. The information is here for anyone to look up themselves. Ok, so by definition, this business idea does not fall under game room. It falls under retail business and should be authorized, possibly for approval, just under right of use. So, with that, right is right. I don't feel by this and I'd like the board to look through their information themselves. Also, given the table of uses per Johnston County itself has, they only have a definition of adult arcades, not game rooms. I don't feel that you should have filled out an application for a special use and I'd like my members of the board to look through their paperwork and understand where I'm coming from, and if you have questions about where I'm getting this information, I will definitely reference it for you, because I think what it is here, we have an application for a special use where they paid five hundred dollars." Audience member asked if we knew what Mr. Ryman was listed under when he operated his card shop and was located where Buzzy Bee is now. Ian answered "no, I don't even know how many years ago that was. I've been here eight years and I don't remember that." Rhonda Lee, Town Clerk, suggests we wait for Mike to get back to discuss. Delaine Jackson stated "that is right, this goes under Mike Cook, this goes under planning and Mike is the Director of Planning and Rezoning. This needs to be discussed with him and get his input on this. That is not our decision." Ian said, "Ok, let's talk about that responsibility. That's a good point, in North Carolina, Planning Boards have the core responsibility of guiding and implementing developing plans within their jurisdiction. They prepare and maintain comprehensive plans, recommend policies and ordinances and advise government bodies on, I'm advising right now, government bodies on zoning and development matters. Specifically, they focus on fostering orderly development, insuring compliance with plans and engaging the public in the planning process. It's not just a Mike issue; it is a matter of what is right is right for this individual who is trying to open up a business in our beautiful downtown. And, if not pointed out by us, who does it lie on? Was anyone else going to look back on that? No. It is our job to be the first line defense of this town at any moment with any kind of thing submitted for special use permits and actions of developments and businesses. And I will hold myself accountable to maintain that job and doing that appropriate level of operation. That thing I just read came from the state's guidance of what planning boards should be in every town. So, my thing is, as we move forward it needs to be recommended that the \$500.00 is refunded in this action. Tamara Dunn, co-chair, made a motion to table the special use permit application until the September meeting, in order to discuss with Mike Cook. Jamey Caudill seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Rhonda Lee, Town Clerk, presented the case.

Chris Stanley, Petitioner and Fred & Linda Jensen, Owner – Application to rezone Parcel # 08J11023X from RA to R8.5 located at 1104 S. Lakeside Dr. Parcel is in the Town's ETJ.

- **Parcel is zoned RA. Petitioners are requesting the parcel to be rezoned to R8.5 in order to conform with surrounding properties.**
- **Surrounding parcels are zoned R8.5 and are in the City Limits.**
- **If approved, the parcel should be annexed into the City Limits. If not approved, the petitioner would like to apply for a variance.**
- **Letters were mailed to 43 property owners within a 500 ft radius on July 30.**
- **There were no inquiries from letters that were mailed.**
- **Public notice was in the FO Benson News and Review July 30, 2025 and August 6, 2025**
- **Sign was placed on the property on August 1, 2025.**

Chris Stanley was present and approached the board. He asked if anyone had any questions. Delaine stated she feels that this is something that was zoned a long time ago and Mike is trying to get everything cleaned up on the map. Chris stated that if the rezoning takes place, then the parcel would need to be annexed into the Town's City Limits. The surrounding homes that are zoned R8.5 are already in the town limits. Delaine Jackson made a motion to rezone the parcel at 1104 S. Lakeside Dr. from RA to R8.5. Ian seconded the motion, Motion passed.

With no further business brought before the board, a motion to adjourn at 6:55 pm was made by Albert Brewer and seconded by Tamara Dunn; the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor and Board of Commissioners will hear the recommendations of the Planning Board at their monthly meeting on Monday, August 18, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Four Oaks Town Hall Chamber.

Mark your calendar for the next Planning Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 9th, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned.

Attest

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Albert Brewer, Chairman

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Rhonda S. Lee  
Town Clerk

