

FIVE FINDINGS

Finding #1: The use requested is among those listed as an eligible conditional use in the district in which the subject property is located or is to be located.

- 1) The existing site is zoned O&I with a Conditional Use Permit allowing the operation of a Bed and Breakfast facility and a Retreat and Conference Center. The Retreat and Conference Center has been used for strategic planning meetings, board meetings, training, and conferences, as well as for personal and spiritual growth and development. All of these fit within the definition of 10.4 Office and Institutional District (A) Permitted Use designations. The planned construction provides a facility to expand upon these existing uses, by providing a separate and new facility that will consist of general and professional office facilities and which will also provide additional training and conference facilities, with technical enhancements to support audio and media education, training, and production.
- 2) The proposed improvements are consistent with the Land Conservation and Development plan as follows:
 1. The proposed development balances land development and conservation (p. 1). The present construction plan requires the felling of exactly one tree that cannot be relocated or replaced elsewhere on the property. By choosing the location of a previous (but now collapsed) improvement, we are further conserving the environment by not destroying historic environmental assets. Moreover, the use of “green” building materials, construction methods, and technologies will ensure that environmental impact of the building is minimal over its 50+ year expected lifespan. Finally, the target of making the building 100% carbon neutral through the use of solar and geothermal facilities will make this a model development for Chatham County and the State of North Carolina.
 2. The architecture of the building is heavily informed by the the designs of the greatest American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. His designs integrated nature and shelter, form and function, and have themselves become national treasures for their simple, elegant, yet enduring forms that reflect, rather than dominate, the natural environments around them. The design references rural and early industrial architecture of Chatham country, and also uses materials that highlight their origins and use within Chatham county. People who appreciate the natural beauty of the Doris Duke Center at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens will recognize a similar style and beauty of this design set into Chatham County. Although modern, we believe that our design credibly respects both the form and function of the rural character (p. 1) into which it will be born.
 3. The intended use of the facility has virtually zero impact on long-term quality and availability of groundwater and surface water resources. With two flush toilets and four sinks for washing hands, this office space will scarcely change the existing environmental profile of the existing use of this 16+ acre property (p. 2).
 4. The global economy is shifting from agriculture to technology and services, but that does not render rural land obsolete. In fact, the preservation and protection of rural land is vital to provide the creative re-charge that many in the 21st century's “creative class” want and need. The choice to situate this development on 16+ acres of rural land is very intentional, as we believe that the rural environment will provide value to this facility unattainable in a more developed setting. For this reason, we are committed stewards of the rural character of the land, and take full responsibility for whatever we can do to protect, if not enhance, its environmental health and value. Moreover, as a facility designed to transform creative energy into digital products, the commercial inputs and outputs of the facility will easily support the land use, economic development, and environmental objectives concerning water supply, wastewater, and transportation (p. 2).
 5. The proposed plan is strongly supportive of the plans Desired Outcomes (p. 9), particularly

1. Balanced Growth – because the facility does not create unbalanced demand for any public or private services or housing.
2. Conserved and Protected Natural Resources – because the plan was conceived from the start as being environmentally friendly and minimally intrusive.
3. Commercial Endeavors, a Net Long-Term Asset to the Community – because the facility caters to, and employs, the emerging creative class in Chatham County, the workforce of the 21st century.
6. The proposed plan is directly beneficial to a number of Goals (pp. 9-10)
 1. We have attempted to identify, conserve, and protect all natural resources on the property.
 2. The plan respects and protects Chatham County's surface and underground water resources.
 3. We have done extensive evaluation of the site and its scenic value and have worked tirelessly to make this development an enhancement to the scenic value of the property. Because of the location and because of natural buffers, there is no visual incursion into any other scenic areas that surround the property.
 4. The intended use of the facility will create no measurable impact to long-term transportation, water supply, wastewater, and/or solid waste requirements. Nevertheless, since we do anticipate serving Church and School communities, we have designed the garage so that two full-sized 10-person vans can be parked inside. This proactive planning typifies our approach to being a model, rather than merely meeting minimums of design.
 5. The location of the site is sufficiently close to the Jordan Lake recreation area that the facility will likely increase use of that State facility. Moreover, as perhaps the best facility of its type east of Nashville Tennessee, and with excellent access to the Haw River, Jordan Lake, and historic Pittsboro, we believe that we are creating what will become a true destination for those seeking a superlative creative experience. Those who come do not only bring their creativity—they combine that creativity with the community, culture, and cultivations of the host. The experiences of Chatham County will become an inseparable component of the digital product they create, and when others aspire to emulate what we have created, they, too, will be tempted to tour Chatham in order to find the magic that works for them.
6. The proposed plan is consistent with, if not a model for, the Policy Objectives (pp. 10-13)
 1. By developing a sensitive office environment in the location where the old barn used to be, we re-create the same work flow that existed when the land was used agriculturally. The creative people who use this facility will be sweating different details than the farmers who came before, but they will walk the same paths through the same meadow that the farmers walked, wipe their brows in the same sun and the same wind that the farmers did, do their work under the same trees the farmers did, and will drink in the same calming view the farmers enjoyed when they faced west and watched the sun set over the pond. It is different work, but the feel of the land will remain the same. The rural *form* of the land will be preserved by the consistent pathways that we will continue to trace.
 2. Cultivating creativity has many parallels with cultivating land: you cannot make a summer crop grow in winter, and you cannot get creative product when the artist and the environment are not ready to collaborate. Cultivating creativity is not literally farming, but it is more like farming than just about any other approved use of the land that is not farming. As such, we intend to preserve the *function* of ruralness in

that such function is to help the seeds of creativity sprout within the clients who use the facility.

3. One of the largest and most underreported home-based business activities is that of the home studio. Talking informally with developers, there's anecdotal evidence that hundreds of Chatham County houses have home recording studios, usually in bedrooms, bonus rooms, or over garages, and with the Internet, become virtual record labels as they share their products with friends, family, and fans. The professional capabilities of this facility, unmatched by any known similar facility in Chatham County (or Durham, Orange, Wake, or Alamance) provides an opportunity for these home businesses to reach the next level of audience, experience, and revenue. Because of the Internet, much of the traffic between these home businesses and the facility can be virtual. And because of the nature of digital media, clients can take it with them—back home—to rewrite, rearrange, or otherwise perfect their products in ways they could not have imagined without a chance to hear what they might be able to accomplish in a professional environment. This facility will not be a home business, but it will help many who have home studios be more successful.
4. Because the business itself produces so little waste of any kind (water, solid, or otherwise), because the site itself was an original building site, and because the facility is designed to be soundproof (16"-20" thick, double-layer masonry walls with 4" of solid acoustic fiber between the two layers), we believe that we will produce no degradation in environmental quality, tranquility, or quality of wildlife habitat.
5. Creativity is not a singular function nor artifact. The facility is being designed to support audio recording, mixing, mastering, and publication, video recording, animation, editing, production, and release, as well as training, education, and cultural stewardship. Moreover, we intend to service clients and the community in diverse ways, whether it is helping church choirs make CDs for fundraising purposes, elementary school students learn the ins and outs of new media production methods and career opportunities, aging artists pass on their legacy to those who are up-and-coming, or helping to establish new trends in North Carolina music and media. The diversity of our services, the diversity of our intended clients, and the diversity of the disciplines of creativity all exemplify the policy of encouraging a broad blend of uses rather than a separation of uses.
6. We are open to linking our development plan to a conservation plan, whether through conservation easements or other mechanisms. We share the County's interest in the preservation of the rural environment as an essential feature of this plan.
7. The proposed development is very convenient to US 64 east of Pittsboro, and "on the way" from US 64 to Jordan Lake's Vista Point recreation center. If there were some future transit system linking downtown Pittsboro and Jordan Lake's Vista Point, a logical bus stop at Seaforth Rd and N. Pea Ridge Rd would be only ½ a mile, about the distance between the Carolina Inn and the Moorehead Planetarium on the UNC campus or the distance between the General Store and Chatham Mills in downtown Pittsboro.
8. The site is especially suited for the particular use we have in mind. First and foremost, is it a site that is conducive to the type of creativity we seek to nurture, so it is a better site than others we have considered. Second, as evidenced by buildings that have existed on the property in the past, it is a site that has been used for quiet productive purpose in the past. Third, the site is large enough, and well-positioned,