

## **Eminent domain up for discussion**

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The public is invited to speak about the county's proposed eminent domain ordinance at Monday's meeting of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners.

The document states that commissioners will not use the power of eminent domain to take property for development of greenways or public trails or for use in economic development initiatives.

Commissioners will consider the ordinance at 4 p.m. Monday on the second floor of the J. Newton Cohen Sr. Administration Building, 130 W. Innes St.

The county planning board unanimously recommended the amendments.

The ordinance is, in part, a response to a request for Rowan County's support of a proposed 15-county network of trails. The Carolina Thread Trail would link communities and sites of interest from Iredell County to Lancaster County, S.C., and from Cherokee County to Anson County.

Part of the proposed trail would be made up of existing trails and greenways, while other sections would be new and could require crossing private lands.

In May 2009, Rowan County commissioners unanimously rejected a resolution in support of the Carolina Thread Trail, expressing concerns about the possibility of condemning private property for the trail.

The proposed eminent domain ordinance recognizes the legal authority granted to local governments by state law to condemn private land for public use, and it does not prohibit the use of that power for other purposes.

Three other public hearings will be conducted Monday, and two of them also came to commissioners through the planning board.

One is regarding a request to rezone 7.7 acres in the 8300 block of Smith Road from mobile home park to rural agricultural.

Another involves a change in a conditional use permit for a sand dredging operation on Grants Creek near its entrance into the Yadkin River.

In 2000, Carolina Sand Inc. was granted a conditional use permit for a sand mining operation on property owned by Alcoa Power Generating Inc. and the city of Salisbury. It would be located off 1915 Grubb Ferry Road near the Salisbury wastewater treatment plant.

Carolina Sand did not go forward with the operation as planned. Now, the company is requesting a reduction in acreage from 26 to 10.2 acres, and a rezoning of the remaining 15.8 acres back to rural agricultural.

A public hearing also will be held for YMCA industrial revenue bond refinancing.

Commissioners plan to reschedule a hearing about the proposed road name of Gemini Drive from Monday to March 15.

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