

**Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Commission**  
**Minutes of Meeting of August 14, 2025**

**The Regular Meeting**, held at the Ladonia City Hall, was called to order by Chairman Newt Cunningham at 5:35 p.m. Present were Chairman Newt Cunningham and Commissioners John Ed Shinpaugh, Kurt Fogelberg, Russell Duckworth and Jan Johnson. A quorum was present.

**2. Public Comment.**

- (1) Sid Davis spoke about his history with the Lake and his interest in water quality.
- (2) Steve Barber, a developer who owns 170 acres in the buffer zone, spoke on the need for the Shoreline Management Plan.
- (3) Jeremiah Welch, who along with his dad Tim Welch owns Big John's Septic Service, was in attendance to speak on the phosphorus issue. Coms. Johnson suggested that he wait to make his comments until Item 4.
- (4) Jason Eagan spoke about his interest in clean water in the Lake.

**3. Discussion and possible action to approve minutes from the July 15, 2025**

**Regular Meeting.** The minutes were approved upon motion by Coms. Johnson and second by Coms. Duckworth. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Discussion regarding On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) and phosphorus output;**

Di Hopkins, Director of Development Services, noted that Upper Trinity had voiced its opinion that centralized sewage systems are the best option to keep phosphorus out of the Lake. Ms. Hopkins said that a centralized sewage treatment requirement would result in smaller lot sizes and greater density or no development. She does not believe that there is much difference between the effluent from an OSSF and a centralized system.

Coms Johnson stated that she had asked Jeremiah Welch of Big John's Septic Service to come as an expert to provide testimony on OSSFs and centralized systems. She noted that OSSFs are essentially a miniature water treatment system (package plant) for a single home.

Mr. Welch said that an OSSF is a scaled down wastewater plant. Existing regulations provide how far an OSSF can be from a lake and from property lines. He noted that TCEQ does not have guidelines for phosphorus and does not require monitoring for phosphorus. He noted other sources of phosphorus. Com. Johnson said that her research had shown that most algae blooms result from agricultural runoff, flood or drought.

Chairman Cunningham spoke about housing density as a result of the requirement for package plants.

Com. Johnson asked about service contracts for OSSF's. County permits require three inspections per year.

Sid Davis spoke about sewage problems with the former meat facility in Ladonia.

Ajay Verma had questions about maintenance issues with OSSF's. He also mentioned his problems with his property near Trenton.

Com. Fogelberg asked about where the effluent from the package plants would be discharged.

Com. Johnson asked about size requirements and permits for houses. Ms. Hopkins answered questions in relation to requirements in the Bois d'Arc Lake buffer zone and the Shoreline Management Plan there.

David Cullar spoke about his experience as a home builder with septic systems. He provided articles and research which concluded that individual septic systems were more effective than package plants.

Steve Barber spoke about septic requirements on other lakes in Texas, the cost of installing sewer lines and sewage sludge.

Doug Janeway of the Upper Trinity Regional Water District noted that developments south of the lake will likely be part of the Ladonia sewage treatment system. He distributed photos of algae blooms in Austin and TCEQ documents.

Chairman Cunningham noted that the City of Ladonia can impose the requirements for the south side of the lake. He also noted that he was still waiting for the Shoreline Management Plan. Mr. Janeway noted that he had presented a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) powerpoint. Chairman Cunningham wants a complete, approved plan and said that he would provide comments on the powerpoint. Mr. Janeway said he was working on the complete SMP.

Mr. Janeway said that Upper Trinity is agreeable to allowing septic on 5 acre lots and to removing the 20 acre requirement and to having package plants on subdivisions. Upper Trinity objects to aerial spray. He noted that the current rules allow a developer to apply for an exception to the septic regulations.

Coms. Johnson believes that no development will occur near Gober if 5 acre lots are required to have a package plant. She believes allowing developers who want 2 acre lots with individual septic systems is not unreasonable.

Coms. Fogelberg asked if Ladonia could approve individual septic systems on 2 acre lots within its CCN. Coms. Duckworth said that the City of Ladonia wants customers for its sewer system and wants to encourage that. Coms. Duckworth asked if there is an absolute prohibition on individual septic tanks on 2 acre lots because the regulation allows for exceptions to the 5 acre rule. He is in favor of allowing the Commission to act on requests for exceptions. He also noted that the Commission only makes recommendations to Commissioners Court, and that the Commissioners can act in any way it sees fit. Mr. Duckworth, speaking on behalf of the City of Ladonia, wants the Zoning Commission to have the opportunity to hear the developers' plans and make recommendations to Commissioners Court. Mr. Janeway spoke against the spray systems.

Coms. Johnson asked Mr. Janeway to clarify the position of Upper Trinity regarding the exceptions for single family residential lots but not for single family residential developments. She wants to allow developers to put in one acre single family lots and use OSSF systems. Mrs. Hopkins noted that such developments would be reviewed by the Subdivision Committee and would have to comply with TCEQ regulations. Chairman Cunningham summarized saying that the Commission and Upper Trinity agree the rule (5.01) needs to be changed. A commentor asked about requirements for commercial operations.

Ms. Hopkins said that she does not recommend a change in the regulation until there is a fully approved Shoreline Management Plan. The powerpoint of the Shoreline Management Plan said that any subdivision would have to have a package plan if they wanted boat docks. She recommends removing Section 5.01 which was placed in the regulations in May 2021 with no prior consultation with the County. She also referenced sections of the Comprehensive Plan and TCEQ requirements. She believes the change proposed by Upper Trinity will either stop development or lead to denser development and Section 5.01 should be removed. Mr. Janeway said that Upper Trinity does not support removing Section 5.01. Chairman Cunningham noted that regardless of the regulation the Upper Trinity's Shoreline Management Plan proposal requires any subdivision to be hooked up to a centralized sewage system to have boat docks. Coms. Shinpaugh is against any action until the

Shoreline Management Plan is approved. Mr. Janeway said he would do his best to complete the Shoreline Management Plan. Chairman Cunningham asked for an invitation to the address the Upper Trinity Board. Based on the remark by Coms. Fogelberg, if no Shoreline Management Plan is presented before the next Zoning Commission meeting, then the Commission will proceed with notices to change the regulation. Coms. Johnson asked Mr. Janeway if Upper Trinity would remove the requirement for package plants from the boat dock approval. Mr. Duckworth is concerned about removing restraint-based decision making. Mr. Fogelberg noted that action is required. Mr. Janeway wants to work hand in hand with the County to review development plans. Chairman Cunningham noted that the plans are published and that Upper Trinity can comment on the plans before the Subdivision Committee, etc. and that no additional process will be established.

**5. Discussion regarding changes to Section 5.01, On-Site Sewage Facilities of the Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Regulations.**

This item was tabled because it was already discussed above.

**6. Discussion and possible action regarding recommendation to Commissioners Court to approve or deny the Master Water and Wastewater Plan for Lake Ralph Hall as a supplement to the Lake Ralph Hall Comprehensive Plan (LRHCP), Chapter 4;**

The Commission tabled this item.

**7. Discussion and possible action regarding any additional changes, modifications or requests that to Lake Ralph Hall Zoning.**

Ms. Hopkins noted that any applicant can apply for an exception to the OSSF regulation.

**8. Discussion, consideration and action to set the next Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Commission meeting.**

A motion to set the next meeting for October 16, 2025 at 5:45 p.m. was made by Coms. Fogelberg, second by Coms. Duckworth. Motion passed unanimously.

**9. Adjourn Public Meeting**

A motion to adjourn was made by Coms. Johnson, seconded by Coms. Duckworth. Motion passed unanimously.

The above and foregoing represents true and correct minutes of the Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Commission meeting that was held on the 14th day of August, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Malinda Allison LRH Zoning Commission Secretary