



*Town council public hearing  
Nov. 5, 2024*

Present: Councilmen, Tommy Buchanan, Eric Dailey, Doug Koestel and Sharon Johnson;  
Clerk, Kathy Bridges

Visitor: Phillip Jones, GIS manager at NE Ga Regional Commission

Phillip Jones opened the hearing at 7:05. He went over the purpose of a comprehensive plan which is a 20-year guide to growth and development for a local government. The plan must be updated every 5 years and can be amended anytime between the 5-year updates. It addresses the questions: Where are we now? Where are we going? Where do we want to be? How do we get there?

He explained that Bethlehem had adopted a Joint comprehensive plan with Barrow County, Carl and Statham in 2023. The Town of Bethlehem is amending the Land Use Element for its portion of the comprehensive plan explained Jones.

The Land Use element includes a map and accompanying narrative that defines land use designations. This element provides the basis and authority for zoning decisions.

The role of the Northeast Ga Regional Commission is to plan development, facilitation, mapping and technical analysis. The town is to provide direction, oversight, plan adoption and implementation.

“This meeting is the initial public hearing,” said Jones. The next input meeting is set for Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. before the regular December meeting. Jones said he would provide council members with copies of the present future development map in order to make changes.

Plan revisions will be made January of 2025 through March and the closing public hearing will be in the spring of 2025.

The plan has to be transmitted to the Regional Commission and state Department of Community Affairs for review following the close out hearing.