

**Albemarle County Planning Commission  
FINAL Minutes April 13, 2021**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were Julian Bivins, Chair; Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Rick Randolph; Corey Clayborne; Jennie More; Tim Keller.

Members absent: Daniel Bailey and Luis Carrazana.

Other officials present were Jodie Filardo; Rachel Falkenstein; Bart Svoboda; Charles Rapp, Director of Planning; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

**Call to Order and Establish Quorum**

Mr. Bivins said the meeting was being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(16), "An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster." He said opportunities for the public to access and participate in the electronic meeting will be posted at [www.albemarle.org](http://www.albemarle.org) on the Community County Calendar, when available.

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Bivins established a quorum.

**Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public**

There were none.

**Consent Agenda**

There were no items on the consent agenda.

**Work Session**

**a. CPA202100002 Comprehensive Plan Update**

Rachel Falkenstein, Planning Manager, said that she works in long range and comprehensive planning. She said that she was there this evening to discuss an approach for their comprehensive plan update with the Planning Commission. She said that the purpose of this evening's meeting was to receive initial feedback from the Planning Commission on a proposed approach to update the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) through a phased process and would also share with the Commission information on the project approach that they presented to the Board and share some of the feedback that they received that had led them to update and develop the current approach.

Ms. Falkenstein said that they have two discussion questions for the Commission to consider: The first is whether the Commission supports the phased approach to the Comp Plan update and then secondly whether there is anything missing from this approach or anything they should highlight or focus on with the proposed project phases.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the agenda for this evening would be a little bit of project background, an overview of the initial approach that they developed, some Board feedback, and then a revised project approach. She said that most of the time would be for the Planning Commission discussion and that staff would be there for questions. She said that she should have about 10 minutes of presentation.

Ms. Falkenstein discussed a little bit of project background and history. She said that State Code requires that every county, city, and town adopt a Comprehensive Plan, and the purpose of it is to plan for the physical development of the locality or the territory. She stated that the State Code requires the contents within the plan such as long-range recommendations, a transportation plan and map, provisions for affordable housing, and recommendations on other topics to include such as a plan for land use and community facilities and services. She said that State Code requires that localities review their Comprehensive Plans every five years—an update is not required unless needs are identified. She stated that as the Commissioners all know, the County does this on a rolling basis because the master plans are part of the Comprehensive Plans, so every master plan update is a Comp Plan update. She stated they also do topic updates periodically and that the most recent one was the Biodiversity Action Plan update, and Housing Albemarle is working its way through the process right now.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that there is a long history of comprehensive planning in the County dating back to 1971. She presented a timeline that showed some of the major planning milestones that have been in the County since that time. She said the most recent Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted in 2015.

Ms. Falkenstein explained that the reason for looking at an update now was that the five-year timeline has been surpassed. She said that even though it is not technically required since there have been the recent updates, it is time to think about an update of the Plan to see if it makes sense to update some portions of it. She said there has been quite a bit of change in the County since 2015. She explained that there have been some significant policy developments, a few of which were listed on the slide she presented, that align with some of the Board's strategic initiatives and that have made significant progress or been a change in direction since 2015. She said that the first phase of the Climate Action Plan has been adopted. She said that Project Enable, which is economic development policy, has been adopted. She said that they have also developed a new office, the Office of Equity & Inclusion, and a new Community Core Value that focuses on the topics of equity, inclusion, and diversity. She said that, lastly, Housing Albemarle is making its way through the update process right now.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that additional reasons to look at an update at this time include the growth that the County has seen since 2015, as the Commissioners are aware and experience, as they get development review applications before them. She stated that there is an increasing demand for urban services related to that growth. She said there are portions of the urban ring that are getting more urban and that service needs are changing because of that.

Ms. Falkenstein said that housing affordability issues persist in the region that might require another look at the Comp Plan. Ms. Falkenstein stated that another reason is to apply some more plan focus and prioritization. She said that they have been using the 2015 Comprehensive Plan for some time now and have some experience with it and have learned a few things. She said it is a very comprehensive document and has quite a bit in it, but she said they are finding some challenges with prioritization with so many strategies—trying to really understand where efforts

should be focused. She said that she thought that doing a prioritization exercise would be an important focus of an update process.

Ms. Falkenstein said that lastly, an update can set the stage for future work and implementation. She said that future work such as capital investment planning and regulatory updates really should look to and rely on the Comprehensive Plan. She said that one of the main implementation tools they have in community development is the Zoning Ordinance. She said that ideally the Zoning Ordinance would match the Comprehensive Plan, and this update could present an opportunity to realign the two. Ms. Falkenstein said that it has been about 40 years since there was a significant update on the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Falkenstein shared the initial approach that staff brought to the Board. She said they had two work sessions, one in February and one in March of this year, where they brought a high-level project approach to the Board for feedback. They shared ideas on where they saw this project going, especially as it related to resource needs, because the Board sets the work program and the resources to support that work program. Ms. Falkenstein said staff initially brought a three-year update process to the Board. She said the approach conceptualized this project as a complete review from visioning to adoption that would allow them to step through a series of five phases. She said each phase was designed to build upon the next phase with an increasing level of detail and specificity. She said the way they initially approached it was to consider all topics at once but start really high level with the visioning work and then get more detailed as they went along. She said they shared the estimate for timeline and budget for each of these phases and developed this approach based on researching some precedents and best practices. She said they tried to look at plans that focused on equity and inclusion through their processes and through their content updates.

Ms. Falkenstein said staff also brought to the Board an engagement approach. She said that again it was high level and not a detailed engagement plan, but they wanted to get the Board's thoughts on how to do engagement because there would be resource needs associated with this. She said that while they haven't fully designed the approach yet, they did bring some components to the Board that they wanted feedback on, and it was really focused on incorporating the new organizational core value of Community, and focusing on bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion to the way of living the mission and in this case the way to do engagement.

Ms. Falkenstein said that there were a couple of components brought to the Board, but one that they had quite a bit of discussion on and she felt the Commission might be interested in was the idea of a Project Advisory Group. She said that the idea would be to develop a new group of residents to help advise on aspects of the project scope and the content of the Comp Plan update, and they would invite members to apply and volunteer for the group and then have some selection criteria based on County demographics, looking at topics of race, place, age, gender, to attempt to get a diverse group of people that represent the County and the County's demographics. She said that they would ask this group to participate through the update process, give feedback and also help their networks to get involved in the process.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the Board feedback on both the overall Comp Plan Update approach and the engagement approach that she shared was mixed. She said they had support for the engagement approach, especially the project advisory group. She said the Board liked that idea and thought it could be a good pilot for doing engagement moving forward. She shared that the Board did have some concerns about the length of the time associated with the project, most notably thinking about the implementation work that would come after the Comp Plan update

specifically the Zoning Ordinance update. She said the Board expressed some urgency with doing the Zoning Ordinance update work and did not want to see that work wait until a three-year Comp Plan update process was completed. Ms. Falkenstein said that while the Board was supportive of doing a Comp Plan update, they wanted it done in a way that allowed for the Zoning Ordinance to happen concurrently and to begin relatively quickly.

She said that based on that feedback, staff had gone back to the drawing board and thought up a new approach that hopefully addressed those concerns about the timeline and the Zoning Ordinance update. Ms. Falkenstein said that staff have developed an approach that would allow for distinct and parallel updates of the Comp Plan and Zoning Ordinance, and they would break each of the projects into phases. She said that after each phase, there would be an update of the documents. She said that they would update the Comp Plan after Phase 1 was completed before moving on to the next phase rather than providing just one update at the end of the three-year process. She said the Comp Plan phases would be sequenced so that related zoning work could happen parallel to the Comp Plan update. She said they would still apply lenses of equity and climate action planning to each phase. She noted that those were not distinct topics but would be integrated throughout the process. Ms. Falkenstein said that the approach is still high level at this point and still needs more work to determine how the Comp Plan scope would relate to Zoning Ordinance work. She said that is what they are still working through, and the Board will be advising on that with the Community Development Work Program.

Ms. Falkenstein said that an updated approach for the Planning Commission to consider would be break the project into four phases of work. Ms. Falkenstein noted that they currently have several chapters in the comp plan, and they would look at a couple of chapters with each of these, but they might end up with a different grouping of chapters or a different organization of the Plan. She said that she would discuss what chapters they would look at with each of these phases.

Ms. Falkenstein said the first category of topics that is still relatively high level but is an important foundation for the subsequent work she called "Capacity and Growth." She said in this phase they would look at the introduction chapter, vision chapter, and a growth management plan. She said they would do a capacity analysis. She said the current Comp Plan advises looking at capacity for growth over a 20-year horizon to make sure development areas as they are now can accommodate the projected growth, so that analysis work is done with the first phase, and then they would check in on their vision and goals.

She said she is titling the second phase "Resource Planning" with current chapters that cover topics of natural resources, historic resources, parks, and trails. She stressed that climate action planning would be very important in this phase as well as detailed topics about stormwater management, flooding, air quality, tree preservation.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the third phase was titled "Transportation and Economic Development," where they would complete a Multimodal Systems Plan. She said the Commissioners may have heard a little bit about this planning effort; it is a planning effort that VDOT requires localities to adopt if they want to develop urban street standards. She said urban streets would be those with narrower lane widths, on-street parking, wider sidewalks, typically present in an urban environment. She said this phase is also where they would bring in their economic development policy, which is called Project Enable. She said that they have not folded that into the Comp Plan since it has been adopted so they would do that work in the third phase.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the last phase is called, "Places". During this phase, they would look at the Development Areas and Rural Areas chapter and see if any updates were needed based on the previous work. The topic of land use would also be covered, which relates to both development areas and rural areas. She said they also have chapters on Housing and Community Facilities that they would look at within this phase.

Ms. Falkenstein said that concluded the approach that they wanted to share with the Commission. She said they wanted to hear initial feedback before they got too detailed to make sure they are heading in the right direction and wished to hear from the Commission. She shared that staff was going to the Board of Supervisors for discussion on the Community Development work program on May 5<sup>th</sup>, and the Board would give staff further direction on where they see this work going. She said that staff will come back as they begin to get more detail for additional opportunities for content scoping with the Commission.

Ms. Falkenstein concluded her presentation and said that she would put the questions back up for the Commission just as a refresher. She said she wanted initial feedback and wanted to know if the Commission supported the updated approach to the Comp Plan and if they saw anything in this high-level approach that was missing or anything that should be highlighted or focused on when they thought about their phasing.

Ms. Falkenstein said that she, Mr. Rapp, and Bart Svoboda were there for questions if the Commission had them.

Mr. Bivins thanked Ms. Falkenstein and asked if there were immediate questions before opening up for public comment.

Mr. Clayborne brought up the issue where the Board of Supervisors had expressed a concern about the duration, which he thought was shown to go out until 2024. He asked Ms. Falkenstein if 2024 was still the case for all the phases.

Ms. Falkenstein said that they hadn't gotten that detailed in their timeline yet, but she said she would imagine that would still be the case. She said she thought the difference here is that it would allow for a Zoning Ordinance update hopefully to happen sooner so that work would not have to wait until the Comp Plan is completely updated.

Mr. Clayborne asked Mr. Bivins if they would have a chance to continue the discussion with Ms. Falkenstein after the public comment.

Mr. Bivins said absolutely.

Mr. Clayborne said he would hold off then.

Mr. Bivins asked for any questions.

Mr. Randolph told Ms. Falkenstein that one thing he thought would be helpful to share perhaps in a future meeting was a little bit about the past history on the update that the Commission was involved with in the years 2012 and 2013, when the Board as he recalled spent over a year, if not 18 months generally speaking, on it. He said that when you put all of that time together, it really is not very different from the three years presented here this evening as part of the original game plan for this. He expressed concern over all the other demands for time of staff, which is very

different than back in 2012 when this process last got started when Ms. Elaine Echols basically had the luxury of dedicating the bulk of her time to working on the Comprehensive Plan update, and he said he did believe Ms. Falkenstein had some other responsibilities including Route 29 and the project of updating the master plan in Crozet. Mr. Randolph said that staffing challenges now are even more acute for County staff to be tackling this than was the case before.

Mr. Randolph also added that in 2012 to 2015, because of a grant that the City and the County both together received, the County was able to leverage that and hire two planners; Mandy Burbage was one of them who came in to work for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission on coordinating the Comprehensive Plan updating process for the County and the City simultaneously. He said they did a lot of Planning Commission City and County workshops together, and the Boards perhaps also did workshops together with City Council, and therefore there were additional personnel who were dedicated to this that is not going to be the case this time, so it was important for there to be a reminder to everybody in terms of expectations of the really acute limitations that staff would be facing in terms of this update than was the case the last time.

Mr. Bivins thanked Mr. Randolph and said that was extraordinarily important to send that signal to their supervisors because what Mr. Randolph just described were basically three dedicated full-time employees that have yet to be identified.

Mr. Bivins asked Ms. Shaffer if anyone was in the audience. Ms. Shaffer affirmed there was. Mr. Bivins opened the public comment.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Shaffer asked Mr. Williamson to please state his name and the organization he represents.

Mr. Neil Williamson with the Free Enterprise Forum said he was very appreciative of Mr. Randolph's comments regarding the \$1,000,000 that the Federal Government brought into this region regarding planning with the last Comprehensive Plan. He said that he only asked that they take a good hard look at an issue that is not yet fully vetted in Ms. Falkenstein's presentation regarding the public input. He said it would be easy to fall back on their long-serving and very important Citizen (Community) Advisory Committees, but those committees are not reflective of the entire community. Mr. Williamson said that he and the organization that he represents strongly believe an outreach effort is necessary, recognizing such an outreach effort will take time and money. He said that he is hopeful moving forward with the pandemic that they have the ability to get together in person again because of the incredible challenges with broadband across Albemarle County, but he just hoped that they do not forget that the Comprehensive Plan is a community-vetted plan and not an appointed committee plan or an advisory committee plan, and they need to work hard to get those voices that are not often in Lane Auditorium engaged in the conversation. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Bivins closed the public comment.

Mr. Bivins asked Ms. Falkenstein and Mr. Rapp how they wanted to engage in this conversation, how they wanted to lead the Commission through this or how they wanted the Commission to come through these issues.

Ms. Falkenstein offered to reshare the two questions if that would be helpful.

Mr. Bivins confirmed that it would be helpful.

After Ms. Falkenstein reshared the slide with the two questions, Mr. Bivins asked her if basically she would like feedback on whether they supported the phased approach to the Comp Plan update and was there anything missing from this approach or anything they should highlight or focus on with the proposed project phases.

Ms. Falkenstein affirmed that was correct.

Mr. Keller said that he was very positively inclined towards the process that had been outlined. He said he thought obviously Ms. Falkenstein had been thinking about this, as she had been involved with the area plans over the last several years and has a good sense of where there are areas that warrant more concern and areas that maybe are relatively strong where they are with some tweaking. He said that he certainly supported the advisory group in concept and said that obviously the Commission needs to know more about it. Mr. Keller said the prioritization process that Ms. Falkenstein discussed was very important, and he would imagine if Mr. Rapp were to weigh in, he would say that that was part of the challenge in the annual report that the Commissioners were all taken with; there were so many components to that, and to try to answer each of those every year would be daunting.

Mr. Keller expressed concern with the process part. He said going back to that time period that Mr. Randolph was speaking to when he came on the Commission, he and the chair that preceded him had really hoped to see annual information, and it seemed to him that with the Climate Action Plan and the Growth Management Report with the capacity analysis, there were just so many pieces that asking each of those to be updated every year is too much. He said that he was assuming that each of these is going to be a component within the Comprehensive Plan, and he would hope that they could lay out a calendar, whether it is a five-year calendar or whatever seems to be best, that would be earmarked over perhaps the next decade when this finishes—if this is going to conclude in 2024, what would be the primary focus of the annual report from 2025, the annual focus of 2026 and on forward—so that all of these things would not have to be done every year, which he said he was sure would be a full-time staff person just to manage that data and put it out. He said it was really important, certainly in terms of the issues of growth and when to put the pedal down for growth and when to ease the pedal up for growth, for instance, in certain areas. He said that as they are thinking about the process for this, they think about the process for how they are going to report back regularly the data as it changes, multimodal systems, so many of the things that Ms. Falkenstein had spoken to the same way. He said that was his major suggestion at this point. He said that he thought Ms. Falkenstein had begun to get at that when she talked about prioritization process, and he said that they should go the next step and know when the citizens in Albemarle are going to get regular updates.

Mr. Randolph again expressed his concern that any county that is a high-growth community to undertake a Comprehensive Plan update is taking on a major challenge, but in asking staff to take on a Comprehensive Plan update at the same time in parallel doing a zoning update is basically asking an experienced mountaineer to ascend Everest wearing bathroom slippers. He said this was really a difficult exercise in just the Comprehensive Plan for the reasons he had spelled out. He said when the Zoning Ordinance text update was not included in 2012 to 2015, it was something he knew the Planning Commission and the Board had been asking about for years. He likened the situation to a switch locomotive coming out of the yard and quickly taking 17 cars and all that added weight and attaching it to the Comprehensive Plan train that is trying

to go down the tracks and now being asked to haul that as well and do that simultaneously with a Comprehensive Plan update. He said he really thought Mr. Rapp and staff needed to push back a little bit with the Board and give them a much more realistic understanding of the time commitment that is going to be involved here given the fact that they all have other responsibilities.

Mr. Randolph said that things are different now than 6 years ago. He said in taking this approach, there is a bias to look at what was done before, update it based on the new but continue to operate at the same linear level, i.e., down around the ground level, and he said that he thought that the Comprehensive Plan update was not a time to be operating at ground level but automatically to be up at 30,000 feet and looking down. He said that what has changed now in his perspective over the course of time since the last update is that there is much more influence of regional forces on this County, much more operating from a regional standpoint in terms of commuters coming in and going out, traffic coming in and going out, jobs, etc. He said it was always there before, he wasn't denying that, but not to factor that into part of the discussion now would be omitting something really critical.

Mr. Randolph said that left out here was any discussion about broadband that Mr. Williamson had brought up, and he said they need to be looking at new and emerging technologies. He said there was nothing in the previous Comprehensive Plan about new and emerging technologies and their impact on the way the Comprehensive Plan works, without even thinking about how it would operate on zoning ordinances. Mr. Randolph said this requires deep thinkers, out of his pay scale to be trying to deal with that, and he said that he thought they had some real challenges here and that he would urge staff going forward to push the Board to think much more broadly and at a higher scale here in terms of the Comprehensive Plan interactively with other counties and along with the City at the same time.

Mr. Clayborne said that to answer the two questions on the slide, he certainly supported the phased approach, and it made sense; particularly with what his colleagues were saying with the bandwidth and the amount of workload as they look from now into the future, it made a lot of sense. He recommended that developing a list of all of the stakeholders that they probably need to touch throughout the process might be helpful, just to make sure that they don't forget anyone; including some of the local governments, obviously Charlottesville would be someone that at some point they are meeting with, which other counties, school systems, just a whole laundry list that he felt could be helpful.

Mr. Clayborne said that one nice thing about the phases was that it gives them a chance to have some very focused advisors, and so for their program advisory boards, maybe one thing to consider would be having one for each phase; that way, for volunteers, there is a finite amount of time that they are volunteering, and with that, you can get the best and the brightest from the community as well as folks who may not be that experienced in that field. He said, for instance, with that transportation piece, maybe that would be a time where the focus would be getting folks who specialize in transportation on that advisory committee.

Ms. Firehock said she had several comments and that she would try not to be too longwinded. She said that she had to speak a little slowly because of bad internet. Ms. Firehock said that she supported the phased approach, but as she looked at the topics and the way they were laid out, obviously most if not all of them interrelate to one another, and so they need a phased approach, but it also needed to be iterative. She explained that one cannot really talk about growth and development and then move on from that and talk about environment or other things that affect growth and development, reflecting on the kind of place that they want to grow into. She

suggested more of an adaptive management type of diagram rather than so linear. She said she would be happy to say more about that later.

Ms. Firehock said that she has put together many different advisory committees in her career, and she was a little concerned that they make sure that any kind of multi-stakeholder advisory group understand their role because she has seen problems of role confusion between committees in other jurisdictions, and probably sometimes their own, and so she wanted to make sure that they are clear. She described the Planning Commission advising the Board, and the Planning Commission having another committee advising them advising the Board, that committees can take on a life of their own, so they need to use this as an opportunity to bring the best talent and new voices while also finding a way that they don't run away with themselves.

Ms. Firehock said that the other thing she thought might be important to spend a little more time on is this issue of creative outreach or bringing in previously unheard voices. She said that even the best stakeholder committee would not reach everyone that needs to be reached. She said she understood very well that the County staff put a lot of effort into being creative and coming up with an involved outreach process, and the Board shot it down and said that they did not want to spend that much time and resources, so she just wanted to acknowledge that, but given that, they needed to put their heads together and think of a lot of different creative ways to reach the unusual people, whom she described as the people who do not come to meetings, are not on the Zoom meeting, are not going to respond to computer surveys, and might not belong to an organized group, the many voices in the County that they do not hear from. She said an example of that could be some of the folks in some of the rural areas where they are not on a CAC, and they do not have a regular process for them to be heard. She said they need to think about that. Ms. Firehock said that she could say a whole lot more but that she would not in the interest of time.

Ms. Firehock said it would be worthwhile to generate a list of "hot topics"—topics that were either completely not addressed in the last Comp Plan or are emerging and will become important in the next 10 to 20 years. She said there are a lot of things that are coming up. She said they did not plan for utility scale solar when they did the last Comprehensive Plan. She said that broadband had already been brought up. She said that a city around a city was being built in the urban ring, and they lack a lot of the traditional city planning tools that they need. Ms. Firehock said that if they could come up with that list of topics ahead of time rather than waiting for that chunk of the Comp Plan to come forward, they might be able to get some of the research done that needed to be done.

Ms. Firehock said that when reading the strategies in the Comp Plan, she noticed that some are very general and vague, and some are extremely specific and detailed and have very deep specific actions and even timeframes sometimes. She said it is unusual to have a strategic document with such a variability in detail. She said she believed that was due in part to the fact that the last Comp Plan was written in a committee process, and so some committees really got into the details, and others did not. She said that Ms. Falkenstein had mentioned reporting on progress; Ms. Firehock noted that some of the strategies would be difficult to report on whether they had been done because they were not articulated in a way that one could tell if they had been done or not. She said within her first two weeks on the Planning Commission, Supervisor Liz Palmer had asked her to critique the strategies in the Comp plan and made her write a long memo, which made her unpopular with some folks, but she thought they should decide what level of detail they were going for in this Comp Plan. She asked if they would want to have very specific strategies or more grand statements of aspiration. Ms. Firehock said that with this Comp Plan they have now is-both, and it needs to determine what personality it is going to have.

Ms. Firehock said also that if they want staff to report on progress in meeting the Comp Plan, then the strategies should be detailed in such a way that one could say if it were done or not, and she said she would be happy to later show some examples of what she meant by that but did not think they would want her to go on a soapbox for the next hour. She said that she knew that the Zoom format was not as good for discussion as when they were on the dais, but she looked forward to everyone's participation in this. Ms. Firehock also said that she thought the Planning Commission should make a strong statement to the Board that they need a dedicated staff person for this work. She said that Ms. Falkenstein would be a great person for this, but she also has many other tasks, so the Commissioners needed to figure out who could put in the time or how it was going to work because she knew that staff feel burned-out at times, if not all of the time.

Ms. More said that she did like the phased approach and had a question for Ms. Falkenstein. She said she wondered about the order they had things in, and she had a theory about why they were in the order they were in. She said she thought the first one was pretty obvious, but she wondered if Ms. Falkenstein could talk about having land use be the last one. She said she thought it was the fourth phase.

Ms. Falkenstein confirmed it was the fourth phase. She said she thought it would help to tackle the other topics first because they inform land use, whereas if land use were done first, when they came to transportation planning, they might have to go back and revisit land use. She said that was why that was at the end, and it was also probably the most challenging of the topics, but if they had a good foundation in the first three phases of giving them direction that they needed, hopefully it would be a little easier to figure out where to go with land use.

Ms. More thanked Ms. Falkenstein and said that it made sense. She said she would like to be there to talk about land use, and given the current timeline, it seemed like she possibly would not be, and so she had a very personal reaction, though that was probably not the kind of feedback the Commissioners were being asked for. Ms. More stated that it did occur to her as she looked at it that she wished that she would be around for the land use part. She discussed turnover; even as Mr. Randolph had brought up with the time it took when it was done last, which was right before her time when it finished, with Planning Commissioners' and Board members' terms ending, there was turnover. Ms. More surmised that was just something that they all learned to deal with, but having the phases might help that so people could get into that part and participate and see that through instead of spending two years on it and then not getting to see it finished, so she said that is part of why she liked the phased approach.

Mr. Bivins said that one of the things the Commission would like to come out of their discussion to go with Ms. Filardo and Mr. Rapp was that there was an overwhelmingly strong sense that the Board of Supervisors recognize that there was going to be a need to have dedicated resources aligned with Ms. Falkenstein. He said that it is not to him to say how Ms. Filardo and Mr. Rapp and Ms. Falkenstein align their resources, but that the Commissioners recognize and lift up to them that they believe that this is a critical and powerful enough set of responsibilities that are going to be had over the next few years, that people who have this as their primary thinking should be given the time to do this. He said he also thought that one of the pieces with the Zoning Ordinance was that Mr. Svoboda would come alongside of that from his standpoint with the zoning phase. Mr. Bivins said that he did not believe there was a full expectation that Ms. Falkenstein would be responsible for the zoning piece, but that that would be a partnership between them, but even with that, he said he believed he was seeing from the Commission that that was something they believed, having a set of resources that could deep dive, that could distinguish

between the incremental pieces and really look at what are the new emerging issues that this County should be thinking about and engaging as far as this Comp Plan and planning for the next 10 to 15 years.

The Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Bivins asked Ms. Falkenstein and Mr. Rapp and Ms. Filardo to take at least that piece from the Commissioners that they believe that this is an important enough affair that staff needs to have dedicated resources to be able to move at a pace and do the kind of deep dive that is necessary for this given that we live in a different time. He said also there is this piece of how to engage with what would be the economic development piece of the County that is probably going to have a different kind of conversation around it than in 2012. He said that where they are as far as the centrality of Albemarle being a place where business wants to come, and not being snarky, that Charlottesville may be a city vis-à-vis the Commonwealth of Virginia, but as far as having the components of a city, it does not have those kinds of drivers; it has one huge employer and a lot of entrepreneurs. He said that is not a city by anyone's definition. He did not want to offend their friends in the city, but it was a jurisdictional issue and not an economic platform, as the City of Charlottesville was not an economic driver other than the University of Virginia and some other very smart people. He said that driver was probably going to happen in the County, and the question was how to do that. He said that a number of the Commissioners have spoken about big plans, how to look in big ways to be able to accommodate that and still stay true to who we are as both a world and an intellectually and economically evolving community.

Mr. Keller said that Mr. Herrick could speak to the Commissioners for the proper language, but they did go through a lot of effort to come up with a way for direct communication between the Commission and the Board of Supervisors through the Planning Director, and he said they have that in their "code."

Mr. Bivins interjected with the word "policies."

Mr. Keller said he wondered if they would be so bold as to suggest two four-year-term staff positions, one in zoning and one in planning, to accomplish this and whether it would be helpful. He said that again he thought staff needed to advise the Commission if they were getting out of their realm here or not, but whether something that was official like that may be at a later date recommended with different specifics. He said he was just using this as a starting point that could be helpful in this process. He said he felt like they were all coming back to this point, beginning with Mr. Randolph's eloquent beginning to this, that they need to think about how to address this. He said this is very important. He said they haven't talked about infrastructure or impact fees and the potential of that in the future and allowing for that so that they are up and going if they are able to get the Commonwealth to allow them to do those kinds of things. He said that many of the mechanisms that they all envision for the future have been discussed, and he said it would be helpful to think about how they could implement right from the beginning if they had that opportunity. He said that was his two cents' worth on trying to summarize that degree of support.

Mr. Bivins asked Mr. Herrick if he wanted to respond.

Mr. Herrick said that he did not know that he had anything to add to what Mr. Keller said. He said he thought Mr. Keller's opening reference was to a piece of the rules of procedure. Mr. Herrick said that obviously the input of the Planning Commission is very important. He said that he did not know whether Ms. Filardo had any suggestions about how specific or how general the

feedback of the Planning Commission should be. He said that they were certainly hearing a strong consensus tonight that there needed to be dedicated resources to this effort. He said he would defer to the Commission on the specificity of the recommendations as to those resources.

Mr. Bivins asked Ms. Filardo if she would like to step in at this point.

Ms. Filardo said she would like Ms. Firehock to go next as it was her turn and that then she would be happy to follow.

Ms. Firehock said that she wanted to emphasize that they needed to dedicate resources if they expected to have meaningful community engagement. She recalled many years ago when there was a water shortage, the County sent out a survey to residents concerning the shortage, and they had also included a question on the survey as to level of educational attainment. Ms. Firehock said it was very useful because while they got a lot of responses, those responses were basically from people who had master's degrees who were very excited to talk about water supply, and not a lot of other voices were heard, even though it was a paid-return postcard.

Ms. Firehock said that the ordinary man or woman on the street would not even know what a Comp Plan was, so the Commission would need to do some very creative outreach. She said she was working on the master plan for McIntire Park long ago, and they held booths at the Dogwood Festival and gave out chocolate for comments. She said she has had festivals and barbecues in the past and was not saying they were going to have a bunch of parties, but they needed to think about going to places where the people are, which takes a lot of time, money, and creativity. She emphasized that if they just had their usual web page or committee positions, they would not get very far and would not meet those diversity, equity, and inclusion aspirations that have been established for the County.

Ms. Filardo said that first and foremost, she wanted to thank all of the Commissioners. She said their thoughtfulness and perspective had been valuable. She said she also wanted to share some good news. She said that number one is that in the budget that is going to the Board for approval on May 5<sup>th</sup>, there is a set-aside of funding to support resourcing for both the Comp Plan work and the zoning redos. She said that the Commissioners were onto something and that fortunately the budget was prepped up and ready to go to support that too, so there was good news relative to that.

She said as per the outreach discussion, they also are very mindful of wanting to make sure they enlarge the feedback to reach everyone they possibly could in the County. She said they even now have an Albemarle County van that has a really cool wrap around it that has conversation bubbles on it that the Office of Equity and Inclusion -(OEI ~~all full title~~) team and the Community and Public Engagement Office (CAPE ~~add full title~~CAPE team take out around to various places to gather input from people. She told Ms. Firehock that they are "on" it. She said they really love some of Ms. Firehock's ideas and said maybe they need to go invest in some good local chocolate. She said she just wanted to share that they aligned with what the Commissioners were saying and were so excited about this plan coming forward. She said to Mr. Randolph they are going to be sharing some resource constraints and issues when they go to the Board on May 5<sup>th</sup> as well because they are severely resource-constrained, but fortunately they have some support from the Board thus far in the budget, and she said they fully anticipate and hope that that will make it through the other end on May 5<sup>th</sup> budget conversations. She thanked the Commissioners.

Mr. Bivins thanked Ms. Filardo and told her that it was good to see her this evening. He invited

Ms. Filardo to come and join Mr. Rapp and Ms. Falkenstein and the Commissioners any time, as they liked hearing from her.

Ms. Filardo thanked Mr. Bivins.

Mr. Bivins said he wanted to pick up a little bit about what Ms. Firehock said. He said he did a little bit of a scratch on the Albemarle County survey to look at the demographics. He said if any of the Commissioners had some time that it was interesting. He said that as Ms. Firehock had suggested, 39% of the people who responded to that had a master's degree. He said that you add another 23.5% with BA, so now close to 60% either had BAs or master's and plus. He said the other interesting thing that he thought was fascinating was that if one looked at the income that was in the Albemarle County 2020 survey, again over 50% of the people who replied were in the brackets from \$100,000 and above to \$50,000 to \$100,000. He said If you looked at \$200,000 and above, that was another 11%. He said those are people with means and those are people with time who had the ability to respond to the Albemarle County survey. He said he only shared that alongside with what Ms. Firehock was saying about who the people are who take the time to respond to those things. He said he could tell the Commissioners a little bit more about where those people may live in the County and what they may look like in the County too, but he thought everybody could get there on their own when talking about that kind of income and that kind of education. He said that was fascinating to see that was who was responding, and if they want to do something a little bit different, as he thinks they all want to do, they are going to need to tackle that in a different way.

Ms. Firehock said they are a deliberative body, but she also wanted to encourage each Commissioner to take some time, maybe in the next few weeks, to meet with their Board member individually to reinforce what some of their perspectives are on the Comp Plan process. She said the Commission would be sending the notes from this meeting up to the Board, but she encouraged them to have a back-and-forth conversation.

Mr. Bivins said he might also suggest to Ms. Filardo and Mr. Rapp and Ms. Falkenstein that if there is an opportunity for the Commissioners to have a shared work session with the Supervisors, they would appreciate that opportunity. He asked his fellow Commissioners, and they agreed.

Mr. Bivins said if that was a message that they could also move forward—he thought in Mr. Keller's conversation if they put something together—they would welcome an opportunity to sit with the Board and to have a work session to talk about how they would anticipate moving forward on this. He asked for other comments.

Mr. Randolph said that he thought that was a really good suggestion to avoid a situation that he and Ms. Firehock and Mr. Keller had experienced in the past where the Planning Commission had finalized the Comprehensive Plan update recommendation and turned it over to the Board. He said the Board substantively changed it because they did deep dives, and he was not casting aspersions as to where the dives went as some of them were well called for, especially in terms of natural resources, but the net effect of it was that they did all of that work as a Planning Commission and were not in sync with the Board and lacking that communication. He said there now hopefully would not be the change that there was in 2013 with an election that brought in a completely different philosophy. He said that hopefully the philosophy that they have on the Board would be maintained going forward so that they know what the ground rules are as a Planning Commission. He said he would seek as much as possible to try to avoid that dissonance between what the Planning Commission came up with and what the Board then decided they wanted as a

final product.

Mr. Bivins asked if anyone had a piece that they would like to add, remembering that Ms. Falkenstein had said that she would come back to the Commission to be engaged at several points for the Commissioners to be able to help to shape this process or to reflect on the process before it sets down. He asked Ms. Falkenstein if that were correct.

Ms. Falkenstein affirmed that they would have multiple future work sessions on this topic.

Mr. Bivins thanked Ms. Falkenstein. He reassured Ms. More that if for some reason she were not on the Planning Commission, there would always be a spot for her. He said they would leave a light on for her on the advisory committee if she somehow or another did not make it so not to worry about that.

Mr. Bivins said the work session was fun. He said he anticipated they would be doing more of this over the next few months. He said they deserve work sessions where they can have this kind of talk because they do so much business where they have to be a bit more in control of themselves, so this is a time where they can be big thinkers.

### **Committee Reports**

There were no reports.

### **Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting – April 7, 2021**

Mr. Rapp said that the Board met the previous Wednesday. He said they did not have any public hearings that evening on development matters, but there was a work session on the Crozet master plan, and that got some valuable feedback. He said that work would continue with the Crozet community and back with this Commission as well over the next couple of months. He said they have a couple of public hearings of their own the following Tuesday night, so they would be getting together again for that.

Mr. Bivins asked if they were on for all three of them next week.

Mr. Rapp said they do have a deferral request on one of them but still have a public hearing for MonU soccer park and a solar application.

### **Items for Follow-Up**

There were no items.

Before adjourning, Mr. Bivins encouraged everyone to get their shots, wear their masks, and to be careful because of pollen. He warned again of the ticks arising.

## **Adjournment**

At 7:12 p.m., the Commission adjourned to April 20, 2021, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.



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Charles Rapp, Director of Planning

(Recorded and transcribed by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards and transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 05/04/2021
Initials: CSS