

**Albemarle County Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Final Minutes May 26, 2026**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Luis Carrazana, Chair; Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Corey Clayborne; Nathan Moore; Lonnie Murray; Catherine Brown.

Members absent: Mary Katherine King.

Other officials present were: Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning; Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager; Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager; Francis McCall, Deputy Zoning Administrator; Andy Herrick, County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commissions.

**Call to Order and Establish Quorum**

Carolyn Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Carrazana established a quorum.

Ms. Shaffer asked if Mr. Murray could state his reason for remote participation.

Mr. Murray said that he was located at his home in Albemarle County and was requesting to participate remotely due to transportation issues.

Mr. Moore motioned that the Planning Commission allow Mr. Murray to participate remotely in the meeting. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Ms. King was absent)

**Public Comments**

There were none.

**Consent Agenda**

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Planning Commission approve the consent agenda. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Ms. King was absent)

**Public Hearing**

**TA-2025-00004 Add a New Category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness for Rooftop Solar Installations in the Entrance Corridors**

Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager, said that she would present an entrance corridor-related zoning text amendment (ZTA) this evening. She said that they did not often bring entrance corridor items to the Board, so she would start by providing some background on the entrance corridors to give context for what the Commission would be reviewing today. She said that

entrance corridors were first established in Albemarle in 1990. She said that these are streets that run through or to the historic areas of the County. She said that the Entrance Corridor District was an overlay district, meaning that entrance corridor regulations were in addition to the underlying zoning. She said that entrance corridors were established to ensure that new development maintained a consistent character with the historic character of the County.

Ms. Maliszewski said that this was achieved by establishing an Architectural Review Board (ARB) that applies design guidelines to the review of new development in the corridors. She said that the technical term for ARB approval was a Certificate of Appropriateness. She said that when the entrance corridors were first established and for many years thereafter, every ARB application was presented to the ARB for review in an ARB meeting. She said that this resulted in a large number of applications, many of which were straightforward. She said that over time, the outcomes became predictable. She said that in 2009, the County streamlined the process, and in 2010 a zoning text amendment was approved that established the new class of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness. She said that this resulted in 11 types of development eligible for staff-level review, which were types of development that were relatively small in scope or had less visual impact.

Ms. Maliszewski said that for each category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness, the ARB established design criteria that would be used for the review of subsequent applications. She said that in 2021, a 12th category was added as part of the Rio-29 Form Based Code, and in 2023, a 13th category was added for developments subject to public-private partnership agreements. She said that tonight, the Commission was considering a text amendment to add a 14th category, which would allow for streamlined review of rooftop solar installations in the entrance corridors. She said that the ARB recommended the addition of this category following their review and approval of three solar installation proposals in September of last year. She said that these proposals included rooftop panels at Albemarle High School, the High School Center II, and the Virginia Asphalt business on Avon Street.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the ARB was currently working to establish the design criteria required for this streamlined review. She said that in the staff report, the Commission would find that this proposal had been reviewed for typical factors, but she would highlight two positive factors. She said that first, the amendment would simplify the review process, and second, it was consistent with the goals of the County's climate action plan. She said that what was before the Commission tonight was a request to make a recommendation on the addition of one line of text to the Entrance Corridor Overlay section of the Ordinance to include rooftop solar installations as a new category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Moore said that this amendment was a great idea. He asked about, in the context of a staff review for a proposal like this in the future, what factors would lead to a denial of a rooftop solar proposal.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the criteria had not been finalized yet, so it was hard to say. She said that currently, the ARB was considering factors such as the arrangement of panels on the roof, the configuration of the panels, their relationship to the roof's slope, and their distance from the roof. She said that the ARB would also want to ensure that the related equipment was not visible. She said that once the criteria were established, staff would be evaluating these factors to determine compliance.

Mr. Moore said that made sense. He said that he also noticed that number six on the Countywide Certificates of Appropriateness was the newer replacement rooftop-mounted equipment. He said that he was wondering what the logic was behind separating solar panels from other rooftop equipment.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the criteria for rooftop equipment was that it should not be visible at all. She said that they recognized that there were many potential solar installations that would be visible. She said that as a result, the criteria for these installations were slightly different, with a focus on making them more consistent with the building's roofline.

Mr. Carrazana said that to follow up on that point, he would like to clarify the extent to which the orientation, bracket, mounting, and other aspects of the project fell under the purview of the Architecture Review Board versus the Planning Commission.

Ms. Maliszewski said that establishing the design criteria for each of these categories of Countywide Certificates of Appropriateness fell within the tasks of the ARB.

Mr. Carrazana asked if everything would go to the ARB.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the ARB would set the design criteria and adopt them, and when individual applications were received, staff reviewed those applications against the criteria that the ARB had already established.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that to clarify, the item before the Commission this evening was an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, which would be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the ARB was the agency that would review the details of the items mentioned by Ms. Maliszewski.

Ms. Maliszewski said exactly.

Mr. Carrazana said that in terms of the design criteria, he was wondering how much of the agency's review process was focused on Design for Freedom.

Mr. Barnes said that he was unfamiliar with that term.

Mr. Carrazana said that they should familiarize themselves with it. He said that it was an organization that examined humane practices in manufacturing, particularly with solar panels. He said that there was a significant concern regarding the manufacturing process, as most panels were made using slave labor. He said that this issue had sparked considerable concern around solar panels.

Mr. Carrazana said that to encourage manufacturers to stop using such labor and instead produce panels in other locations, they needed to pay attention to these practices. He said that this was not limited to solar panels, but it was an industry where they were seeing a notable challenge in identifying where the labor was coming from, whether it was free or not. He said that he would send more information on this topic to staff.

Ms. Maliszewski said that would be great. She said that she thought that sounded very important, but she was not sure that they had the ability to address that issue through the entrance corridor overlay.

Ms. Firehock said that Mr. Carrazana may be suggesting that this could be a later policy the county could adopt regarding County buildings. She said that the School Board could adopt a similar policy for their school buildings, as it was mentioned as one of the applicants in the past. She said that they may not be able to include it in zoning requirements, but it could be a County standard for purchasing or other related matters.

Mr. Carrazana said that he thought the ARB could include it in the design criteria.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not know if they could include sourcing of materials in the criteria.

Mr. Carrazana said that they were paying more attention to it at the University of Virginia.

Ms. Firehock said that she understood that because the University was the buyer.

Mr. Carrazana opened the public hearing. Seeing no speakers, he closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission.

Ms. Brown motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of TA-2025-00004 to add a new category of Countywide Certificate of Appropriateness for Rooftop Solar Installations in the Entrance Corridors. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Ms. King was absent)

### Adjournment

At 8:40 p.m., the Commission adjourned to June 9, 2026, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.



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Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 06/09/2026
Initials: CSS