Albemarle County Planning Commission
Work Session and Regular Meeting
Final Minutes September 8, 2026

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: Lonnie Murray.

Other officials present were: Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Bart Svoboda; Kevin McDermott; Francis MacCall; Jered Tate; Ben Loppacker; Rebecca Ragsdale; Jenny Tevendale, Deputy County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Carolyn Shaffer called the roll.

Luis Carrazana established a quorum.

Public Comment

There was no one wishing to speak.

Public Hearing

ZMA-2025-00010 Airport Road Commercial

J.T. Newberry, Senior Planner, provided the staff presentation. He said that this application sought to rezone a total of six parcels from a mix of R1 residential and highway commercial zoning to just one singular district, HC zoning, with proffers. He said that the development would be subject to a conceptual plan that divided the acreage into two distinct development blocks.

Mr. Newberry said that the proposal included a special exception to disturb areas within 20 feet of residential-zoned parcels. He said that this disturbance would enable the installation of a 30-foot buffer that exceeded the zoning ordinance requirements, and it would also provide for a pedestrian connection between Airport Acres Road and Airport Road.

Mr. Newberry said that north of the project area was Airport Acres subdivision. He said that there were currently about 40 residential single-family detached units there. He said that to the east was a motor vehicle sales use, and just south of that was a retail use that had a tobacco shop and U-Haul rental. He said that on the corner was an automobile service station and car wash, and immediately south was Airport Auto. He said that to the west was North Fork, which was a very large development. He said the southern tip, including the extension of Lewis and Clark Drive, was just west of the project area.

Mr. Newberry said that over the past few years, this area had seen multiple legislative approvals, and many of those had added residential uses or reduced non-residential uses. He said that in 2024, the Board had approved a rezoning to a portion of the North Fork site to neighborhood model, which allowed up to 1,400 residential units. He said that across Route 29, there was the North Pointe development, which recently amended its rezoning to add up to 707 additional units.

Mr. Newberry said that earlier in year, the Board approved an additional 40 units in Hollymead Town Center Area C and also eliminated the requirement for non-residential use there. He said

they currently had a project under review that was proposing to rezone the acreage from RA to PRD for up to 147 residential units. He said that just south of Profit Road across Route 29 was a project that was known as Maplewood that had rezoned a property from C1 to PRD to allow up to 102 residential units.

Mr. Newberry said that there had been several approvals related to non-residential uses. He said that the ones he wanted to point out were south and west of the project area. He said one was related to a recent industrial approval for more than 130,000 square feet of industrial space and an associated industrial office across nine different buildings.

Mr. Newberry said one project would be a self-service storage facility of just over 90,000 square feet that recently received initial site plan approval. He said that currently under construction was an expansion of Micro Air, which was an expansion of the office space in addition to the existing warehouse. He said that the Board had recently approved special exceptions to allow for two 1-million-gallon water tanks associated with the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) pump station.

Mr. Newberry said that another infrastructure project was the extension of Berkmar Drive, which would have a roundabout at the intersection of Lewis and Clark Drive and Airport Road. He said that it was currently in the right-of-way phase and was estimated to be completed in the summer of 2030.

Mr. Newberry said that the two parcels adjacent to Airport Road shown in red were zoned highway commercial with proffers. He said that the four parcels fronting on Airport Acres Road shown in green were zoned R1 residential. He said that there were some overlay districts that applied, one being the entrance corridor, so future development would be subject to ARB review. He said that there was a small pocket of managed steep slopes on the site, and it was also located in the Airport Impact Area overlay district.

Mr. Newberry said he would review the AC44 FLUM. He said that the project area included portions of neighborhood mixed-use and neighborhood residential. He said that commercial uses were a primary use of the neighborhood mixed-use land use category. He said that neighborhood-scale non-residential uses, including commercial, were a recommended secondary land use for the neighborhood residential land use category.

Mr. Newberry said that the concept plan proposed to divide the area into two development blocks. He said that at a high level, the proffers aimed to have fewer and less intensive available uses in Block 2. He said that those were the blocks adjacent to the residential-zoned parcels that were along Airport Acres Road. He said that the proffers for Block 1 aimed to reduce the overall traffic generated by the site. He said the estimated developable area within Block 2 was approximately 2.6 acres, and the estimated developable area for Block 1 was 2.3 acres.

Mr. Newberry said that the concept plan highlighted improvements to connectivity and transportation. He said that it proposed a vehicular connection between Airport Acres Road and Airport Road. He said that would occur via a 50-foot dedication to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and a sidewalk was proposed on the eastern side of the vehicular connection. He said that the plan also showed two 30-foot buffers, one along the northern edge and one along the western edge. He said that there would be enhanced plantings within both of those buffers, and a Class A trail was proposed on the western buffer.

Mr. Newberry said the 30-foot buffer on the northern edge was not required by ordinance, but it would help mitigate the impacts of any proposed development in Block 2. He said that the uses in Block 1 were meant to generate fewer vehicle trips, which was accomplished by limiting the uses, mainly vehicle-centric ones. He said that Block 2 went further to add things that might be

incompatible with residential areas, such as auto repair and storage yards. He said the full list was included at the end of the applicant's proffer statement.

Mr. Newberry said that staff believed the proposed uses, as shown in the proffer statement in conjunction with the other proffers, allowed this proposal to achieve consistency with the comprehensive plan. He said that the additional limitations in Block 2 would be the building height, which would be limited to three stories, and the building footprint, which would be limited to 20,000 square feet; these limitations were consistent with the neighborhood residential land use category. He said that the applicant was also seeking a special exception from the 20-foot use buffer that was adjacent to residential zoning districts.

Mr. Newberry said that the applicant's full narrative was included as attachment five. He said this disturbance would allow the installation of a buffer that exceeded what was required by ordinance and would contribute to additional connectivity for pedestrians between Airport Acres Road and Airport Road, which currently had no connectivity. He said that there were no sidewalks along Airport Acres Road and currently no way for residents to get to Airport Road other than by car.

Mr. Newberry said that staff recommended approval of the special exception requests. He said staff found two positive aspects and identified no concerns. He said that the application was consistent with the primary and secondary recommended uses in the FLUM, and it would provide an interconnection that enhanced the overall transportation network.

Ms. Brown said that she appreciated the proffers that were networking the area together, knowing that in the future they needed to be connected. She said that Airport Acres Road seemed to be a pretty quiet street, and she questioned the need for vehicular access along the easement that would be granted to VDOT.

Ms. Brown said that she could understand why that might create concerns for residents around there because she did not see a need for it. She said that the buffers looked like great plans, but she thought that the one that created a trail next to the existing occupied property was a concern, because they were introducing people into that area. She said that what was proposed was a significant change from the type of property as it was now. She said she thought it would have been more thoughtful to make the buffer wider from the existing property owner.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that one thing regarding the interconnection that they were looking for was that part of it was just trying to achieve good planning and to look with an eye toward the future. He said that part of it also involved Airport Acres, which connected with Route 29 in two locations.

Mr. Barnes said that the southern connection had a crossover that was close to the airport intersection. He said that as they moved forward with planning in the Route 29 corridor and tried to maintain some regional connectivity, they were concerned that the crossover may be too close to the Airport Road intersection.

Mr. Barnes said that they saw this potentially as an opportunity. He said that they were getting ready to start a study with VDOT at that intersection, and they were just finishing the scoping work. He said that over the next year, they would be looking at potential transportation improvements at the Airport-Route 29 intersection. He said that it could be that that crossover was something that was too close and might need to be eliminated or converted.

Mr. Barnes said that trying to provide connectivity and ways for the airport residents to be able to go northbound easily was something they were looking to do in that particular circumstance. He said that by making this connection, residents could come out onto Airport Road and use the roundabout to travel north on Route 29.

Mr. Moore asked whether there had been an identified need for a road before this proposal, or if it was a situation where they had simply found a location for it.

Mr. Barnes said that in the Places 29 master plan, it showed a connection in that area. He said that in a subsequent version of the master plan, the Board elected not to show smaller streets. He said that they had kept some larger ones, such as Berkmar, but smaller connections shown in the previous plan were removed. He said the Board at that time had felt it was a bit premature to show smaller connections in the long-range master plan.

Mr. Moore said he was very fond of neighborhoods having two exits, and sometimes they had approved ones with only one exit plus a bollard. He said that this neighborhood already had two exits, which was why he had been wondering if that was a big factor. He asked if they were looking to close one or if it would simply make it easier to enter the roundabout.

Mr. Barnes said they were only beginning the study, and he did not know what the result would be. He said that even if that crossing were to be removed, they would still have a right-in, right-out at the existing southern entrance. He said that they would not be able to easily turn and go north.

Mr. Moore said that he had been wondering if, in the proposal, he could get a better sense of the land use, the development blocks, and the acreage of what was within the teal line. He said that he was curious about two things. He said that one was the actual economic development impacts affected by this.

Mr. Moore asked if there would be more jobs and what was actually going to happen on that land. He asked whether staff could speak to the County's demand for more commercially zoned sites, particularly in relation to the demand for residential.

Mr. Newberry said that in the proffers and the use table, some of the most attractive uses to target industries were provided as by-right uses in that area. He said that those general land use categories included manufacturing, processing, assembly, storage, warehousing, and distribution.

Mr. Newberry said in that area of the County, there were big drivers of economic development, whether it was the AstraZeneca site or the associated companies that would be coming to places like North Fork. He said that from a site selection point of view, a site like the subject property offered a nice diversity of sites and an opportunity. He said that if North Fork was not in their price range and there was no land available in other places, that could be a landing place for companies that fit within the target industries.

Mr. Moore asked if they knew if the applicant had plans to use it for something like expanding the mechanic shop.

Mr. Newberry said the applicant would be better suited to answer that question.

Mr. Clayborne said that he had one question regarding page six of the staff report, where there was a table that showed location, regulation, proposed, and AC44 recommendations toward the bottom of the page. He said that he was curious about the staff's conversation. He said that clearly, there were no concerns at the end of the staff report, but it said in block number one that a maximum 65-foot height was being proposed and the building footprint was not regulated.

Mr. Clayborne said when he compared that to AC44, the recommendations were starkly different. He asked if they could share a little bit about the staff's conversation and how that did not yield a concern.

Mr. Newberry said it was related to the size of the site, the shape, and the overall developability of it. He said that based on the setbacks and other applicable regulations, achieving a form or intensity of development that would be inconsistent with AC44 was unlikely just based on the developable area.

Ms. King asked what types of businesses they foresaw using the site. She also asked about the location of the connector road and right-of-way. She said that by having the right-of-way in that specific location, they were limiting all the development to the east side.

Mr. Barnes said that there were multiple factors that they had wrestled with in that particular rezoning. He said that a lot of them were very technical and interconnected with Airport Road. He said that a certain separation distance from the roundabout was going to be required at about 230 or 240 feet from the roundabout, and VDOT wanted 250 feet. He said they would address this during the site planning process.

Ms. King said it seemed that the right-of-way would be reserved for VDOT to construct a road in the future.

Mr. Newberry said that they were anticipating that at the time of development and as access was established, the applicant would construct the roadway and then dedicate it to VDOT.

Ms. King clarified that the road would have a sidewalk.

Mr. Newberry said it would be on the eastern side.

Ms. King asked why there needed to be a special exception for another path on the property line.

Mr. Newberry said that the commercial districts in the zoning ordinance required a 20-foot use buffer for any properties that were commercially zoned and adjacent to residential districts. He said that in order to install the buffer and construct the trail, a special exception would be needed from that section of the ordinance.

Ms. King said that she had two problems with it. She said combining the clearing, right-of-way, and path, they were reducing the buffer between the properties. She said that if they were going to put a sidewalk on the road, that was the pedestrian connection that was going to happen at the time of development.

Ms. King said that she would have preferred to see 30 or more feet of existing natural vegetation that they were not clearing out to put in something else. She said that one of her personal concerns was that when they talked about buffers, specifically from commercial areas, 30 feet was not a lot of buffer. She said she would have preferred if the vegetation was not removed.

Ms. King asked why they were including another trail if the road would have sidewalk.

Mr. Newberry said the applicant would be able to better answer the question.

Ms. King suggested that they convert the path to a multimodal path.

Mr. Barnes said that they would have to increase it from 8 to 10 feet, typically.

Mr. Carrazana asked if staff had suggested the road, or if the applicant proposed it as part of the application.

Mr. Newberry said that the genesis was the first review of the rezoning application. He said that looking back at the master plan and conducting a site visit to observe the distance between the two roads, interconnections had already been an expectation of the ordinance. He said that it had

been part of staff's formal feedback to the applicant to consider making a full interconnection between the two streets.

Mr. Carrazana opened the public hearing for presentations from the applicant.

Kendra Moon, Line and Grade Engineering, representing the applicant, provided a presentation. She said that they had taken into account the Airport Acres subdivision and the planned extension of Berkmar Drive and the roundabout at Innovation Drive. She said that this proposal originally did not have the road. She said that it was just a rezoning to highway commercial for the four R1-zoned properties in the back.

Ms. Moon said that after the first submission and comments from staff, they had discussed the process, the roadway connection as a benefit to the County, and also added the two highway commercial properties in the front of the site. She said that they had held one community meeting for the original application, then revised it and had a second community meeting.

Ms. Moon said that Airport Auto was under the same ownership. She said that there were currently no plans to expand Airport Auto. She said that the owner had been looking at relocating it, and he was aware that the market would probably drive the relocation of that eventually.

Ms. Moon said that they also included a VDOT detention basin. She said that they showed it on their graphics just to note that the owner had been in conversation with VDOT about taking over the basin and potentially redeveloping the site. She said that it was already zoned C1, but again, they were still in conversations.

Ms. Moon said that she wanted to give some background about how the trail came about. She said that the road came from a comment from the County. She said that she thought they were open to phasing that, or they were open to feedback on the road. She said that they needed connection to the site from Airport Road, and originally, they imagined sidewalks on either side. She said the trail was proposed as an amenity to Airport Acres, since it was probably unlikely that they needed sidewalks on both sides of the road. She said the exact placement was open to change.

Ms. Moon said that the developable area to the west of the road was in flux at that time. She said that the reason they were showing it approximately at the corner of Airport Acres Road was because of the best sight distance available, but they would need to work through with VDOT where it was located. She said that similarly, off of Airport Acres Road, they needed to make sure that they had the proper spacing from the planned roundabout.

Ms. Moon said that the exact location was not known, but the western area was not likely going to see a massive building there if the location of the road stayed on that side of the property. She said that regarding the question of why they would not keep existing vegetation, the answer was because there would be a lot of regrading anticipated for road construction.

Ms. Moon said that they were trying to make sure they were protecting existing neighbors, but also leaving it flexible for the engineering challenges that would come with developing the site. She said that since the proposed development was open-ended, she wanted to inform the Commission that the first application was for self-storage, but the site was open to what the market would allow.

Ms. Moon said that they had elected to proffer out many of the uses that they thought would be the most disturbing to neighbors. She said these included the highest traffic and noise generators, and the most unsightly uses. She said that they had examples of the density of those screening buffers, and that would be proffered so that they were committing to a certain density of vegetation in those areas.

Ms. Moon said that in the first community meeting before the road was added, they did not have any neighbors in attendance. She said that they did not hear any feedback about the rezoning of those properties. She said that in the second community meeting after the road was added, they did have a few neighbors in attendance. She said that they heard feedback that that road could potentially be negative to them by adding additional traffic. She said that it was intended to be used for Airport Acres residents, not necessarily leading people to Airport Acres Road.

Ms. Moon said that currently, Airport Acres had two connections to Route 29. She said that regardless of how people used it, it was not the intention to drive people to the subdivision. She said that the concerns were that, apparently, people already used that as a cut-through to Route 29. She said that there were concerns of people using the new road as a cut-through in the future to get to Airport Road or to Berkmar.

Ms. Moon said that there were no significant environmental features on the site. She said that regarding impacts to traffic, they coordinated with VDOT on the planned roundabout. She said they determined that the additional traffic generated by the site would not have a negative impact on the planned roundabout level of service at Innovation Drive.

Mr. Moore asked if there were any job projections from the development, or if the zoning was just speculative.

Ms. Moon said that it was speculative at that time. She said that there was not a specific plan in place.

Ms. King asked if the condition enumerating plant species would restrict future developers to using only those plants. She said she did not see any information about the required size of the initial planting, and she suggested they work on that with staff. She said that in her experience, it was quite possible the current landowner might not be the developer.

Ms. King said that if another owner came in, they were going to have to live by those rules. She said that in her experience, they were going to do the bare minimum to meet the requirement. She said she thought as much information as they could have in there about size was important.

Ms. Moon said that they could add another column in the legend that specified the minimum caliper or height of planting.

Mr. Moore asked if the owner had any interest in developing residential uses to meet the County's housing goals, since the FLUM recommended residential.

Ms. Moon said that residential development with the rezoning would require special use permits. She said that it was still a potential, but at that time, there was no residential planned for that area.

Mr. Carrazana asked why the path was moved to be in the woods, whether it came from community conversations, or if the preference was for it to be in the woods. He said he was concerned about safety and lighting.

Ms. Moon said that it had come from a suggestion in the County's concept plan. She said it was intended to help limit the right-of-way. She said that they had been contemplating removing one side of the sidewalk altogether and requesting an exception. She said the suggestion of the trail was a compromise to removing the sidewalk entirely. She said it was not considered due to community feedback.

Mr. Carrazana said that using the sidewalk would probably be safer, and instead of the trail, they could have an increased buffer area.

Mr. Carrazana opened the hearing for comments from the public.

Tom Packett said that he lived in Airport Acres close enough to the site where it was a concern for him and his wife. He said that everybody in that community was on well water, and they did not have public water or sewer access. He said that would have a negative impact on everyone in the community. He said that as far as the road, he had talked to people in the community, and he could not find one person that wanted the road or would use the road for any reason. He said that he thought it was completely unnecessary in the development. He said that if concessions were in place, he wondered why they would want to make concessions to them anyway.

Ellen Phipps said one of her neighbors, Jennifer Hoggs, had submitted a letter which detailed the concerns of other neighbors very well. She said that she and her husband had moved to Airport Acres about 29 years ago. She said that they had moved there because it was quiet and secluded. She said that being so close to Route 29, nobody really knew it was there. She said that the only traffic they received was people who were coming home or visiting people who lived there.

Ms. Phipps said that there was a lot of concern about additional traffic safety. She said that many of the neighbors, herself included, walked on a regular basis. She said that she understood what she had heard that night was the road was not intended for traffic to come in, only out. She said that would have to be a pretty unique road, unless it was actually a one-way street.

Ms. Phipps said that they also had concerns about light pollution and noise pollution with the additional proposed buildings. She said that most of them could not see any justifiable reason for the project. She said that she traveled north for work, and she did not have any problems getting out in the morning. She said that if they wanted to fix that, they could make it easier by putting in a light.

Mr. Carrazana closed the public hearing, and brought the matter back before the Commission.

Ms. Brown said that she was concerned about the lack of clarity around the intention for the road at that point, because she thought it was a significant part in the proposal. She said that the timeline was unclear for it, and it was really hard not knowing the location or the vicinity of where it would be located.

Ms. Brown said that she would have been much more supportive of the application if they could streamline the concept for a trail, a pedestrian, or a multimodal extension to just one of those initially. She said she would have preferred thickening the buffer to at least 50 feet.

Mr. Moore said that he was concerned about the future land use map in terms of the County's housing goals. He said it was not going to make a gigantic dent, but the County's own publications talked about how residential construction had not kept up with the pace of demand. He said that more than 10,000 people could not find housing they could afford, and more people were commuting from other counties and other localities.

Mr. Moore said that the latest number was that they were going to need something like 13,000 homes for the 30,000 people moving there in the next 15 years. He said that they had six acres that were currently in residential zoning on the future land use map as neighborhood residential. He said that that was not the densest, but three to six homes per acre could be 36 townhouses in a space that had about 600 feet of street frontage.

Mr. Moore said that it came down to what public need was served by removing potential homes from the capacity on the future land use map. He said that if it were there to meet a real need, such as if the business was really thriving and needed space to expand, he would have been more willing to consider that. He said that taking six acres out of residential capacity for speculative rezoning for commercial was not something he supported.

Mr. Moore said that while they could use more commercial, taking things out of high demand and putting them in a category with less demand did not strike him as a high priority. He said that he would have liked to see the land better used. He said that he did not know that the neighbors who valued the quiet neighborhood would necessarily agree with him about having townhouses built there in the future.

Mr. Moore said that to take this to the next level, he did agree with the applicant's language; the narrative referred to the four parcels as underutilized and unorganized. He said that it was true that having just two homes on six acres right in the development area by the highway was a little wild at that time. He said that he wanted the County to identify the parcels throughout the development area that were similarly underutilized and unorganized.

Mr. Moore said that they could find good candidates and actually invest in social housing for teachers, firefighters, nurses, hairstylists, grocery workers, and the people who now had to come in from Greene, Waynesboro, or Staunton. He said that instead, they could develop wonderful, County-owned homes for people who needed them.

Mr. Clayborne said that he would like to discuss the depth of the buffer and the housing aspect. He said that they should consider the huge economic development that went with AstraZeneca, which would need more residential housing. He said that he thought it was one piece to look at as that northern part started to grow.

Mr. Clayborne asked if staff could weigh in as they started to look at the comprehensive plan and the inventory of residential properties and parcels. He said it would be helpful if staff could provide metrics on housing supply, but perhaps that was better for a future conversation. He said he was curious about what they could afford to sacrifice in terms of residential uses. He said he was concerned when they started limiting uses.

Mr. Carrazana said that while they needed housing, they also needed commercial zoning to support the housing. He said that there were a lot of housing developments going on around North 29, with more coming in the pipeline. He said that they also wanted to encourage the live-work area so that they minimized traffic and how far people were driving.

Mr. Carrazana said that having an appropriate development of commercial was important, but for this project, they did not know that yet. He said that he would be disappointed if it was storage, just because he thought what was coming to that area was significant in terms of the industries, and there could be an opportunity to think beyond self-storage.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was not opposed to the right development from a commercial standpoint, but he did think there were some issues. He said that he was not convinced about the need to connect the road. He said that if in the future they found that they had to close one of those entrances, they could connect the road at that point.

Mr. Carrazana said that the trail needed to be moved into a sidewalk that was well-lit. He said that they were not creating a nature trail there that went to an industrial area. He said that needed to be considered and the buffers maintained, but maintained as landscape buffers that would provide more of a separation.

Ms. Firehock said that when she was first looking at this on paper in the staff report, she thought that since this was commercial, it was just expanding the commercial area in an already existing commercial district. She said she questioned the need for the connector road. She said that she went and drove around the site to experience the neighborhood. She said that it was like a little tranquil hidden gem, a little island. She said that it was surrounded by commercial, but that to her made her want to protect it more.

Ms. Firehock said she did not see why they should go against the comprehensive plan, which called for this to continue to be residential. She said that she did not see what the rationale was for that. She said they did not need more self-storage facilities. She said that small businesses needed more storage, but she did not see that as a compelling case for this speculative rezoning.

Ms. Firehock said that it was simply going to raise the commercial value of the property; if they wanted to sell it as commercial, they would get a lot more money for it than they would if it stayed in the current configuration. She said she did not see any compelling reason to rezone this to highway commercial.

Ms. Firehock said that one could make the case for a denser townhome development, which they sorely needed close to town. She said that the road made no sense to her. She said that the connector road was a road to nowhere. She said that the neighbors did not need it, and they also did not need the pedestrian trail, as there was nowhere to walk to. She said she did not support the application.

Ms. King said that she would not be against a right-of-way, which was what was requested, for a potential future road. She said that if the entire parcel was developed in blocks 1 and 2, there was no benefit to those two parcels to have an entrance into the neighborhood. She said that if the neighborhood did not want the entrance, then they should not do it. She said leaving the right-of-way did not harm anyone.

Ms. King said that she could foresee the entrance into the commercial development coming in and having a fire exit, and maybe there was a path where residents could walk to what could be a future commercial area. She said that there was nothing to walk to because they had not built it yet, but there was potential. She said that the people from Airport Acres would want to walk to those things without having to crawl through the weeds.

Ms. King said that she could see a need for some connectivity for the neighborhood to get to whatever the future use was, but she did not see a need for the future commercial use to get into the neighborhood.

Ms. King said that she thought having the path on the boundary line to the west made no sense. She said that she thought it should be on the road. She said that she also thought as much natural existing vegetation as was on that particular boundary should just remain and not be taken out. She said she wanted to see more buffer along all residential property. She said she could see Block 2 being converted to a residential or mixed-use. She asked if a mixed-use development would be allowed under the rezoning.

Mr. Barnes said mixed-use was not allowed under the requested rezoning application. He said that staff was looking at the site from the perspective that more than half of the area was commercially zoned. He said that parcel 32A1B3 even had a commercial use on it. He said that, while all the empty lots were shown for low-density residential, they were considering something different.

Mr. Barnes said that recognizing the changes that were happening in that area, they were trying to anticipate future development and traffic needs. He said that the proposed interconnection was probably something that would be useful in the future. He said they viewed this as a transitional area, and the challenge was in aligning the zoning correctly. He said he would defer to the applicant about whether it was possible to add a mixed-use development to the back of the site.

Ms. King said she would support the application if they changed the path and added additional buffer area.

Mr. Barnes said the County had tried to move toward more general concept plans with rezonings, rather than have every detail decided with submittal. He said that by including all of the details in the rezoning request, it required additional rezonings if anything had to change. He said that VDOT did not get into those details at this stage, either.

Ms. King said that it seemed complicated to try to eliminate a couple of uses that may be high impact. She said that she agreed with that. She said that she read through the list, and there were some uses that were allowed on both of the blocks that appeared more industrial than commercial. She said that removing some uses was not a guarantee, because they could forget something.

Mr. Moore motioned that the Planning Commission recommend denial of ZMA-2025-00010 Airport Road Commercial because of impacts on removing residential capacity from the FLUM. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion.

Mr. Clayborne said that adding the potential for residential uses would change his opinion on the project.

Ms. King said that while they needed residential development, they needed commercial uses to support it. She said there were a lot of redevelopments for housing within the half-mile around this area. She said that they had recently approved higher density in this area. She said that the size of the proposed development may not be feasible in terms of parking restrictions.

Mr. Moore said he was not opposed to commercial development along Airport Road. He said that at the same time, they had established a comprehensive plan with a FLUM that designated the parcels for housing. He said that if the applicant wanted to add residential uses to the site, he could support it.

The motion failed (3-3). (Ms. Brown, Mr. Moore, and Ms. Firehock voted aye; Mr. Clayborne, Mr. Carrazana, and Ms. King voted nay; Mr. Murray was absent.)

Jenny Tevendale, Deputy County Attorney, said that with a tie vote, the motion did not pass.

Mr. Barnes said that in times like this, the Chair may offer the applicant an opportunity to defer the application.

Ms. King motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00010 with the recommendation that the applicant work with staff prior to the Board of Supervisors hearing to continue to diminish the impact on the existing neighborhood by increasing the buffer and removing the walking path. Mr. Clayborn seconded the motion.

Mr. Carrazana motioned to amend to add a condition that the road addition would only be for emergency access.

Ms. Brown said that adding the restriction for emergency vehicle use made sense since it allowed the road to be built with private funds and addressed neighbor's concerns about using the road as a cut-through.

Mr. Barnes said that when they built an emergency access road with bollards, it was built to a private or lesser condition. He said that building it to a full VDOT state standard was typically not done for an emergency access road.

Ms. King said the application was only requesting the right-of-way. She said that the commercial developer was not likely to build the road unless the County indicated that it was needed.

Mr. Barnes said that the intent was for the road to be a public street. He said that if it was only going to be an emergency access, it could be an option. He said that the right-of-way was included with the intent it would become a public road.

Mr. Carrazana said that the application included the road as a proffer.

Mr. Carrazana amended his amendment to direct the applicant to work with staff to review options to not have a through road, but to include the potential for a road extension if needed.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the County would have to complete the termination at some point.

Mr. Carrazana said that the applicant would have to complete the termination. He said that his amendment would direct the applicant to work with staff to come up with a solution.

Mr. Barnes said there seemed to be a concern about creating a road connection, and there was a desire to preserve the connection option for a future need. He said that staff can work with the applicant to figure out what that would result in. He said that at this point, he did not want to come up with a solution at the dais. He said that the present motion had the buffer increased to 50 feet, removed the walking trail, and left the road for a future expansion.

Ms. King withdrew her motion. She made a motion to recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00010 with the recommendations that the applicant work with staff to increase the buffer, remove the walking trail, and discuss ways to restructure the right-of-way and road proffers so that it did not go into the neighborhood unless necessary.

Mr. Barnes said they could work with that. He said they would obtain a right-of-way for a public street, but it would not be constructed as part of the initial development phase.

Mr. Clayborne said that his understanding of the whole value proposition of the road proffer was because they did not think VDOT would build it on their own. He said that this was a chance to inherit a gift, in a sense. He said that from a County perspective, it seemed like they had just sacrificed all of that. He said that there was no guarantee if they moved forward in that direction with just the right-of-way. He said he would suggest constructing the road, but closing it off to through-traffic until a later date.

Mr. Carrazana said that was his intent with limiting the use to emergency vehicles only.

Mr. Clayborne said that if they limited it to emergency access, then it would not be built to the right standard.

Ms. King restated her motion to recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00010 Airport Road Commercial with recommendations that the applicant work with staff, before the next public hearing and before going to the Board of Supervisors, to increase the buffer on both the north and west sides to 50 feet and remove the walking path on the western border, and to determine whether the road needed to be built as a through road or not.

Mr. Barnes said that if they wanted to vote to not make the road connection, that would be clearer. He said they could still provide the right-of-way.

Ms. King amended her motion to direct staff to work with the applicant to dedicate the right-of-way for a future road, but not make a connection into the neighborhood.

The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00010, with the recommendation to increase the buffer to 50 feet and to restrict the road to limit through-traffic, and convert the walking trail to a sidewalk. Ms. King seconded the motion.

Mr. Moore said he felt that the proposal was the worst of both worlds. He said that if they wanted to build a road connector, he did not like the idea of connecting to a divided highway.

Ms. Firehock said that the road did not provide any necessary access for the neighborhood, and it was pointless. She said there was no commitment that there would be a commercial use on the site that neighborhood residents would want to access.

Ms. Brown said she had not seen a demonstrated need for the road.

The motion failed (3-3). (Ms. King, Mr. Carrazana, and Mr. Clayborne voted aye; Ms. Firehock, Mr. Moore, and Ms. Brown voted nay; Mr. Murray was absent.)

There was no recommendation for approval or denial.

Adjournment

At 7:49 p.m., the Commission adjourned to September 22, 2026, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.



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: 09/22/2026
Initials: CSS