

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
FINAL Minutes Regular Meeting July 26, 2022**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Karen Firehock, Chair; Corey Clayborne, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Luis Carrazana; Lonnie Murray; Fred Missel; David Bailey.

Members absent: None.

Other officials present were: Charles Rapp, Deputy Director of Community Development; Cameron Langille; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Vivian Groeschel.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Firehock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and Vivian Groeschel called the roll.

Consent Agenda

There were no items on the Consent Agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZMA202000012 Montclair (formerly known as White Gate Village)

Principal Planner Cameron Langille reported that a few hours ago, staff had received a request from the applicant to defer the ZMA, and he asked the applicant to come forward and make the request.

Mr. Vito Cetta, the project developer, addressed the Commission and stated that he had exchanged a phone call that day at 4 p.m. with a county official—and there was some confusion about an aspect of the site that could not be resolved by this meeting. He apologized and said he hoped to be back shortly, and he confirmed that he was requesting a deferral until he could clarify the answers needed.

Mr. Missel moved to accept the applicant's request to defer ZMA202000012 Montclair to a date not certain.

Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion.

Ms. Firehock apologized to the public for coming out to the meeting to hear this application, but it was in their best interest to have all the facts, and there have been a number of questions raised about this application—including some raised by the public. She emphasized that this was an example of the public process working, as they listened to constituents, asked questions, and now were waiting for good answers.

The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Recess

The Commission recessed the meeting at 6:05 p.m. and reconvened at 6:10 p.m.

Other Matters not Listed on the Agenda

Ms. Firehock noted that she had failed to mention the other matters from the public item, and she asked people to come forward and speak, or to participate online.

Mr. Tom Olivier addressed the Commission and stated that he is a resident of the Samuel Miller District, adding that he was before them to speak about the County's growth management policy and the need for significant changes due to climate change. He stated that in 2014, President Barack Obama said we are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.

Mr. Olivier said that in 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) alarmed the world when it declared that to escape rapidly worsening, potentially runaway climate change, humanity must reduce new greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2050; containing climate change will also require drawing down greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere and otherwise greening human societies. He stated that despite these dire warnings, humanity's greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.

He said that *Washington Post* columnist Eugene Robinson noted, "We seem headed for barely mitigated doom."

Mr. Olivier asked, "What gives?", as we've been insulating our homes, driving more fuel-efficient vehicles, etc. He said that as the IPCC noted in 2014, most greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels are driven by population and economic growth; politicians and business leaders tend to think growth is good—even when it isn't. He said that these points bring them to the County growth policy, which calls for creating new growth areas when existing ones show signs of filling up. He said perhaps until the County reaches full buildout, accommodating growth, but the policy enables the ongoing loss of ecosystems and the ability to sequester carbon, enables new greenhouse gas emissions from new developments, and is directly at odds with becoming carbon neutral and with becoming climate resilient.

Mr. Olivier emphasized that they need to reimagine the growth management policy, one that requires limits to our growth so they can coexist with natural systems that are vital to our survival. He said that as both Obama and the IPCC noted, the time for effective climate action is short, and the clock is ticking.

Mr. Neil Williamson of the Free Enterprise Forum addressed the Commission and stated that he'd recently penned a blog post highlighting that the growth area boundaries were drawn in 1979 and 1980. He mentioned a scene from the movie *Airplane* and analogized it to the Comp Plan: What if they looked at some other localities and had an urban core; then a suburban area with different performance standards, densities, and services; then a transitional area that had even different amenities and that might be larger than the current growth area to allow for growth that staff is telling them won't adjust based upon the 17 units per acre as achieved now. He said they could come up with performance standards that had high density and tall buildings—and people in suburban areas wouldn't be upset because those wouldn't be appropriate there.

Committee Reports

Ms. Firehock stated that her Historic Preservation Committee did not meet, due to lack of quorum. There were no other committee reports.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting – July 20, 2022

Mr. Rapp stated that there were no development-related public hearings that evening.

Old Business/New Business

Ms. Firehock welcomed Mr. Rapp back.

Mr. Rapp stated that he would love to visit the topic of their work sessions and get some feedback as to what might be appealing. He said that they've had a few rounds of both the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan, and they all see the need for more time—which the consultants have requested as well—to allow for better dialogue.

Mr. Rapp reported that the last time they met, he encouraged a larger meeting space to foster a more collaborative work session and less of a presentation-based format, as well as increasing the timeline to 90 minutes, two hours, or whatever the Commission might feel comfortable with. He suggested going past 5:00 p.m. and going to 5:30 p.m., and possibly starting at the same time or earlier. He asked for Commission feedback on what timeframes might work, and whether another Tuesday of the month might be preferable.

Ms. Firehock asked if everyone preferred to not have three weeknights and have a longer day instead. The Commission expressed its support for two longer days instead of three.

Ms. Firehock asked if they preferred 90 minutes or two hours, stating that the longer time was not always needed—but with the Comp Plan, they need two hours to have a real discussion instead of just bringing up topics and moving on. She commented that she'd rather come earlier.

Mr. Murray stated that he would like to do two hours, and tacking on a half-hour on either side would be the best approach.

Mr. Missel agreed and said that it would depend on the subject. He added that the preparation piece was also important, and it would be valuable if staff could help the Commission understand specifics as they proceed, so they can be helpful and efficient.

Mr. Rapp stated that staff had provided a lot of information and tried to pare down their presentation in the interest of time.

Ms. Firehock commented that they were all really major topics.

Mr. Rapp said that staff was trying to not monopolize the meeting time, and perhaps they needed to go longer, adding that there was no shortage of topics to discuss.

Mr. Carrazana stated that he found it helpful to start with broad themes, and there was a lot to dive into. He asked if they could schedule out as far as possible in advance so they could block out enough time for work sessions, so they can get it on their calendars.

Mr. Clayborne agreed and stated that 30 minutes didn't sound like a lot of time but was for him, in light of employment obligations, especially if it meant arriving at 3:30. He said he would love to hear their thoughts on doing 90 minutes from 4:00–5:30, and then extend it if it wasn't enough.

Mr. Rapp stated that he could guarantee that the fourth Tuesday of every month for the next few years, they would like to have a work session—as this was the only way they would accomplish both the Comp Plan and Zoning Ordinance. He suggested going from 4:00–5:30 for the August session, then adjust if they felt it was rushed.

Ms. Firehock said that one way to achieve that is for the Commission to read the materials ahead of the meeting and not have staff reiterate that in the presentation. She stated that the other aspect that would be helpful would be for staff to specify exactly what it is they want from Commissioners, cutting to the chase of the most specific things they need them to react to.

Mr. Carrazana agreed, stating that staff can assume the Commissioners have read the materials, then come in and focus on the key points.

Mr. Rapp stated that they tried to include that in the memo in terms of what they expected from the Commission, and if they liked that approach, they would continue with that. He said that they would start at the beginning with a flowchart, the steps along the way, and where they would end up; the same would happen with the Zoning Ordinance. He said that with the ordinance, they would start looking at administrative sections and the way they formulate the ordinance from the table of contents—then look at the different pieces and how they would be addressed, for a higher-level approach rather than just diving into the revisions.

Ms. Firehock emphasized that she would rather do a good job than just having cursory conversations, and it could be something they need to come to a resolution on. She noted that it would be helpful to have enough deliberation time to provide staff with direction, rather than just popcorning quick reactions. She confirmed that the timeline would be 4:00–5:30 p.m. She mentioned Mr. Williamson's comments about the tiered areas instead of just a few distinct districts.

Mr. Carrazana stated that they have all agreed there are areas that could benefit from more density, which would help with the low-income housing issue.

Ms. Firehock noted that they want to get away from the urban/rural area and pronounced divisions between them.

Mr. Bailey said that he agreed, adding that one major factor is what the future of work is—as a lot has changed and is changing—which requires conversation as to what employment looks like here over the next 20 years.

Items for Follow-Up

Mr. Bivins wished Mr. Clayborne a happy birthday, and other Commissioners echoed the sentiment.

Adjournment

At 6:36 p.m., the Commission adjourned to August 9, 2022, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.



Charles Rapp, Deputy Director of Community Development

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 08/23/2022
Initials: CSS