

Albemarle County Planning Commission FINAL Minutes Work Session July 26, 2022

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a work session on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: None.

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

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Firehock called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. She said the opportunities for the public to access and participate in this hybrid meeting are posted on the Albemarle County website on the Planning Commission homepage and on the Albemarle County calendar. She said participation will include the opportunity to comment on those matters for which comments from the public will be received. She noted that their legal counsel, Andy Herrick, was participating online today; it was not legally required for him to be physically seated with them. She asked if Mr. Herrick was present for the meeting.

Mr. Herrick said he was present.

Mr. Rapp said Mr. Herrick was present.

Work Session

Ms. Firehock said there would be no public comments taken during this session, they would take a 5:00 p.m. recess and begin again at 6:00 p.m. She introduced the first and only item on the work session agenda.

CPA202100002 Comprehensive Plan Growth Management Options and Themes

Ms. Tori Kanellopoulos greeted the Commission and introduced herself as a Senior Planner in the Albemarle County Planning Division. She said she was joined today by Vlad Gavrilovic, Principal at EPR, PC, and they would both be presenting on growth management options and themes for this Comprehensive Plan update work session. She said today, they would be covering a briefing on the AC44 comp plan update process, summarizing potential options for growth management, and discussing potential common themes to build a new vision for growth and resilience, which they anticipated bringing to the Planning Commission at a September work session.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said they would start off with an overview of the AC44 process and provide additional detail on where they were in phase one. She said they would share an update on the next steps for the land use buildout analysis and provide an overview of some potential growth management options and public input to date on those options, and share what they had heard, and potential common themes based on this public input. She said they would wrap up with an overview of next steps in phase one and then have time for the Planning Commission discussion and questions on potential common themes.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said they were currently in phase one, Plan for Growth; they were reviewing and evaluating the current growth management policy using lenses of equity, climate action, and capacity projections. She said at the end of phase one, they intended to have a draft vision for growth and resilience, which would be used to inform the next phase, where they would develop a policy framework based on that vision.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the current slide showed a more detailed overview of phase one, and the three blue circles indicated the three steps of public engagement. She said in step one, they shared a local history of planning for growth, an overview of the current growth management policy, and initial findings from the land use buildout analysis. She said they asked for community input on the current policy, what people's lived experiences have been, and what should be prioritized when reviewing the policy. She said they had pop-ups and an online survey to gather this feedback.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said in step two, they developed seven growth management options to consider while reviewing the current policy, which were shared with the community to consider and provide input on. She said they held open houses and had an online survey with information for each option on what the current comp plan said, why they might consider the option, and what potential action steps could follow if the option was pursued. She said based on the feedback received to date, they had drafted potential common themes.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said in step three, they would continue to refine and develop these common themes and use them to draft a vision for growth and resilience. She said they were planning to have in-person and virtual roundtables and online opportunities in step three, then come back to the Commission in September after the public engagement to discuss the draft vision, which would then go to the Board in October. She said they would revisit the growth management options and use the vision to inform a policy framework for the plan. She asked if there were any questions so far.

Mr. Murray asked at what point in this process would they have the opportunity to discuss the rural area in depth. He said he felt there were a lot of opportunities there, and he had not seen a real clear phase where they got to do that.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said phase two would start to get into what they were calling the main topics for the Comprehensive Plan, which would be identified as they scoped that phase, so that could include transportation, economic development, land use, and rural area planning. She said phase two was when she anticipated they would get into more detail for those types of topics.

Mr. Murray thanked Ms. Kanellopoulos.

Mr. Missel said on public involvement, the survey responses, the pop-ups, and all of those, he would like to know if they had adequate public input or if it was at the level they expected.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said for the online survey, the second one that was perhaps the highest number of responses they had ever gotten for a survey.

Mr. Missel said great.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said for the in-person ones, it had been pretty good participation, but it had varied a lot. She said they definitely had more success at pop-ups where there had already been another event going on, but they were definitely continuing to see where they got the most feedback and see where else they could show up.

Mr. Bivins said he would like to follow up on that. He said they should ensure that at the end of this process there was a body of responses to show there had been an attempt to engage with the community. He said according to the second bit where they were in the 450 or 460 area as far as responses, while compared to what they did before, that was good, given that they were a place of 112,000 people, he would hope they came at least to 5%, although he would prefer 10%. He said otherwise, it would feel like the survey was being lifted up by people who always had the time to engage in these kinds of activities. He noted that the County had done an atmosphere survey.

Mr. Rapp said he did not know the name of that one, but he knew what he was speaking about.

Ms. Firehock said they all knew what he was talking about.

Mr. Bivins said when he looked at the demographics of the most recent one, the trend was white, upper-class, and extremely well-educated. He asked if he needed to repeat himself.

Ms. Firehock said he did not need to.

Mr. Bivins said the opinions which were offered were opinions that made sense given that profile of individual who was responding, but what he was nervous about was that those responses then became the drivers for lots of decisions that they should have balance for. He said it probably would be better to have some additional responses from a more pluralistic group of their citizens.

Ms. Firehock noted that they could likely come up with more creative ideas to get different types of people to respond, and it warranted a longer conversation than right now as they were in a short work session. She said the staff requested from the Board for a very robust community engagement campaign, and they were rejected. She said they were doing the best that they could with the resources that the Board of Supervisors felt prudent to provide.

Mr. Bivins said he was not finger-wagging.

Ms. Firehock said she believed staff supported what he just said because they had hoped to have the resources. She said it was kind of like the less likely people were to comment, the harder and more expensive it was to get to them, so it was not a one-to-one thing.

Mr. Rapp said another factor that would increase participation as they moved through this process over the next couple of years was, as Commissioner Murray pointed out, people were excited to get into specific topics and into the details of this plan. He said at this point, they were at such a high level, trying to figure out which of those avenues they were going to go down and which they wanted to explore, once those topics started to resonate, people were going to want to get involved if they had a particular interest in transportation or in environmental protection and come out for those. He said they were not in that spot yet, but participation would increase as they opened up those opportunities.

Ms. Firehock asked for the presentation to continue.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said they wanted to provide a brief update on the land use buildout analysis, which they were working with the consultant, Kimley Horn, to finalize. She said they had been gathering additional data and analysis based on what was heard at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors work sessions, and continuing to compile and analyze the nonresidential pipeline, analyze recent residential buildout and approval trends, and coordinate with the Economic Development Office on site selection factors for nonresidential uses. She said they had a few key takeaways so far, which included, in mixed-use developments, the residential component tended to build out first, and the nonresidential component may not build out until years later.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said when factoring in site readiness and site selection criteria, there appeared to be sufficient capacity for commercial and retail uses, but much less currently available for office and industrial uses. She said projects with the land use designation of urban density residential were not being approved at the higher end of density ranges, with recent rezoning approvals averaging 17.5 units per acre for net density, and many by-right projects were developing at 30%-50% of the density recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. She said she would now turn it over to Mr. Gavrilovic to talk about the growth management options.

Mr. Gavrilovic greeted the members of the Commission. He introduced himself as Vlad Gavrilovic, principal of EPR, PC in Charlottesville. He said he was honored to be selected as part of the consultant team with a group of specialists and interdisciplinary team to help the County. He said as Ms. Kanellopoulos said, he would walk through some of the growth management options. He said first of all, these were developed by

the staff and consultants after the first round of public input; they were not intended as picking one as winner or loser, and they were intended to initiate discussion. He said they would see later in the presentation that they had taken the input on these as well as general input to develop some common themes.

Mr. Gavrilovic said first of all, starting with the current growth management policy, which was from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, focused on two elements, the rural area which was primarily where agricultural and forestry resources were located, and then the development areas, which were areas where they looked for facilities and services, utilities, future growth, density, and high-quality design.

Mr. Gavrilovic said why and how they were reviewing the current policy was that the Board initiated a Resolution in Support of an Equitable and Inclusive Community in 2019. He said they also identified climate action as a top priority and adopted the Climate Action Plan. He said it was these two lenses along with this directive to review the current growth management policy in relation to the projections for growth. He said these three initiatives, equity, climate action, and accommodating growth, was how they were reviewing the growth management policy.

Mr. Gavrilovic said they were doing this through a broad public input process, which they could always do better, but they were doing a variety of public input activities in each phase. He said there were a total of six working groups that would be working through each phase of this, the land use buildout analysis would be used to get growth projections, and they would be reviewing all of the potential policy options and coming up with common themes, to ultimately build, as Ms. Kanellopoulos said, a vision for growth and resilience as the capstone to this phase of the project.

Mr. Gavrilovic said they would continue to work with the community and take public input and feedback. He said again, some of the feedback had been on which of these options were better for supporting climate action, equity, and accommodating growth. He said they wanted to build on the language in the current Comprehensive Plan as well as best practices and current planning. He said there were a range of policy options, and they did not anticipate that one of them was the future direction for growth management, but they had been useful to kind of find a range of directions for the County that they could take elements from to build this new vision, particularly in the light of public comment on these. He said he would go through these fairly quickly but also focus on what the public survey said about these options.

Mr. Gavrilovic said that the first was applying more density and more infill development within the existing development areas and retaining and enhancing existing green infrastructure. He said the survey responses could be seen on the slide, where the green and the yellow were yes or somewhat through these three lenses. He said out of 400 responses, this particular policy option supported climate action, equity, and projected growth, in the public's opinion, fairly well; over 300 responded with somewhat or yes. He said that was more density infill in the development areas.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the next option was looking in the development areas to adjust the densities and reduce the maximum densities to more closely align with what people had actually been building at. He said as Ms. Kanellopoulos said, they were closer to building out at 17 units per acre rather than the 34 maximum in some of the development areas. He said when they asked people what they supported of these different initiatives, it could be seen that there was a fairly even balance between people who supported climate action, equity, and projected growth versus people who felt that they did not support them. He said there was a little more "no" support on the climate action than of course on the projected growth.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the third option was looking at new criteria to identify when, where, and how the development areas should be expanded. He said this was an expansion of the development areas. He said as they may have expected, this had a strong response that it would support projected growth, with a lot of "yeses" or "somewhats." He said it was fairly balanced on supporting equity, with a little more to the "yes" than to the "no," and a little more to the "no" that it would support climate action. He said it was interesting that in all of these there was not a strong support on one side or the other; people realized that these were complex policy issues and there was a lot of nuance to them.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the next option was opportunities for nonresidential development around the interchanges of I-64 to support job growth and economic development. He said they could see on this one a few more no's on supporting climate action than the equity and a fairly strong yes or somewhat that it accommodated projected growth.

Mr. Gavrilovic said that option five was the possibility of rural villages where they would promote small-scale, commercial, and service uses to nearby rural area residents. He said this option had fairly strong yes and somewhat on all three areas of climate action, equity, and projected growth. He said it was a little higher on equity than the other two. He said it was an interesting policy option that seemed to be filling the goal for all three areas.

Mr. Gavrilovic said number six was looking at current service provisions and seeing if adjustments were needed to ensure equitable distribution of services, particularly health and safety services, in both the rural areas and the development areas. He said looking at schools, fire, safety, and health, could they be more well-distributed, so people had to travel less to get to these services. He said it could be seen on the slide that for equity, this was seen as a pretty strong yes or somewhat, with 340 or so people supporting equity. He said for climate action, again, a fairly good support for yes or somewhat and for accommodating projected growth. He said this one, six and five, the four were fairly good were supporting all three objectives from the public's standpoint.

Mr. Gavrilovic said finally was exploring opportunities to promote forest retention and regenerative land uses in the rural area to support climate action goals. He said there was a very strong yes that it supported climate action, and a little weaker yes that it supported equity, and there was not much feeling that it supported the accommodation of projected growth. He said these were again, they thought a very useful way of getting the public to discuss and weigh how, given the Board's initiatives, different ways of approaching growth management could support these different initiatives. He said Ms. Kanellopoulos would present not only the current policy options, but what had been discussed in the previous round, which was more broadly about growth management.

Ms. Kanellopoulos showed the steps for phase one, and said in the following slides she would show an overview of the feedback they heard during steps one and two, which they used to draft the potential common themes. She said the feedback on step one was focused on the current policy and the feedback on step two was focused on generating ideas for meeting those goals. She said in step one, they heard the current growth management policy had been successful at protecting natural resources and agricultural and forestry uses. She said they also heard that challenges under the current policy included housing affordability, the need for more transportation options besides driving, and the need for infrastructure concurrent with growth.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the top three priorities for updating the policy were protection of natural resources, infrastructure and utilities planning, and housing type variety and affordability. She said based on the growth management survey results in step two, they heard that the three options that best supported climate action were regenerative land use in the rural area, rural villages, and distribution of service provision. She said the three options that best supported equity were service provision, rural villages, and providing more density and infill in the development areas with green infrastructure. She said for accommodating growth, the three options were rural villages, nonresidential development at interchanges, and service provision. She noted that options five and six were the only ones that made it onto all three lists from the survey.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said they also asked the community which options they should continue to explore, and included an opportunity to provide other options for us to consider. She said regenerative land uses in the rural area, rural villages, and opportunities for density with infill in the development areas received the most support, and they wanted to note that the spread between the top and bottom options was not wide, and all other options had some support for continuing exploration. She said based on the text responses in the survey, some respondents were interested in exploring certain options, but noted that it was dependent on how those options were implemented.

Ms. Kanellopoulos showed some of the other options to continue to explore, which they attempted to summarize. She said that included alternative modes of transportation, more recreational opportunities, keeping the current growth management policy the same and keeping the status quo, strategies for affordable housing, more replacement and enhancement of the tree canopy, more mixed-use development, job training opportunities, and encouraging career ladder jobs. She noted that they received a significant number of emails and several survey responses expressing support for the Three Notched Trail.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said along with this feedback on which options to explore and which best seemed to meet their goals, they received significant open-ended comments in both steps one and two and in their working group meetings. She said the current slide showed the support and concern for some of the options. She said they were hearing that the growth management policy had increased the cost of housing by restricting land area available for development, that they were not getting enough density within the development areas to support local housing needs, and that the development areas should be expanded to allow for more housing. She said they had also been hearing that there had been too much growth and density within the development areas, that density should be reduced, and that infrastructure had not kept up with growth.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said they had heard that both density should be concentrated to reduce sprawl and support climate action and also that new development removed tree canopy. She said for the rural villages, they were hearing concern that the rural villages could have the unintended effect of encouraging additional growth, but also that they could reduce distances that residents needed to drive for some goods and services. She said for nonresidential development at I-64 interchanges, they were hearing that development at interchanges could make use of existing infrastructure and support new business opportunities, but also that it could negatively impact the surrounding area with additional noise and traffic.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the challenge was what to do with this very robust public input. He said reading through the comments, there was a lot of intelligent comment; a lot of people took this very seriously. He said there was a polarity of input to some extent with regards to what Ms. Kanellopoulos just detailed. He said remembering that their process chart showed that the end result of this phase was not picking one of those options, but was coming up with this new vision for growth and resilience. He said in light of that, they took the common themes from what they heard, both from the seven options and from the input that was open-ended that people wrote in and the input on the first phase, and looking at what things were common elements that people were generally showing agreement on.

Mr. Gavrilovic said they anticipated using these themes for the next round of public input, so rather than going back to the development options or the growth management options, using these common themes seemed to have some traction and people in agreement. He said however, they did not want to lose the seven options and they anticipated coming back to those in phase two and looking at, in light of this vision, how they each performed and what elements could be taken from them.

Mr. Gavrilovic said to briefly take away some things people heard and seemed to be in agreement on was a focus on action, the broad policy directions from the Board of climate action in equity needed to be translated into concrete actions, such as if equity was about more affordable housing and if climate action was more about regenerative uses. He said their general support for affordable housing was to address the high cost of living and housing. He said the importance of how they grew was with design quality and focus on conservation-based design in guidelines and standards. He said of multimodal transportation focus was that alternatives to the 80% of the County who used single-occupancy vehicles to get around, so not only active transportation like bike and ped, but also transit options, got a lot of support. He said the infrastructure needed to keep pace with growth, particularly on schools they heard many comments, so growing sustainably.

Mr. Gavrilovic said there was a very interesting idea of strategic density, which meant that not one size fit all, but looking in the development areas to increase development density where there may be available infrastructure, services, good access, and less issues with adjacent low-density development, versus areas where it may make sense to reduce development density in accord with what they had been seeing typically

coming in, rather than the maximum density in the Comprehensive Plan. He said finally, greening the development areas meant that as they grew, they made sure to add green infrastructure and parks. He said those were the seven that they would love to hear thoughts about. He said they would pause for questions, but there were only two or three more slides.

Ms. Firehock said there should be some conversation before going to the next steps. She asked if they should discuss these common threads or the specific options.

Mr. Gavrilovic said there was a slide with questions for the Planning Commission. He said there were two things; they wanted to use this in the next round of engagement, so were they getting them in the right direction, did they get them to this vision for growth and resilience, and what was missing?

Ms. Firehock noted no one would disagree about the importance of climate action and equity and that they needed to be translated into concrete actions. She said greening development areas was related to climate action and equity because people should be able to walk to a park or a trail near to where they live. She said it was important, in regards to climate action, to provide services in the rural areas so people did not have to drive everywhere for every need.

Ms. Firehock said affordable housing was complicated. She noted the County was trying hard to provide affordable housing in the growth area, but the reality was that most of the affordable housing was in the rural areas. She said if someone lived out in the rural area, then they did not have access to all the services. She noted the need for equity of service provision.

Ms. Firehock said the County could not claim it was providing all the resources in the development area because it was efficient without providing the affordability for people to choose to live in the development area—it then became unfair. She noted the County had taken steps, shifting to a more understanding position. She noted the recycling center being constructed as an example of the County taking steps to provide services in areas like the southern parts of the County.

Ms. Firehock noted some of the challenges with the green infrastructure, parks, and green systems. She noted stormwater management green infrastructure and how there was less of it. She said there were fewer instances of developers using green infrastructure, like permeable pavement and bioswales, in favor of purchasing offsite credits because it was the cheapest option. She said the County could look at incentives, such as density bonuses, so developers would incorporate those structures. She noted there had been a related ordinance in the City. She said the County would have to do something to change the market.

Ms. Firehock noted the parks systems—green trails and tree canopy. She said there were things related to codes. She said the County did not have decent code requiring planted trees were maintained and kept alive. She said if the County waited for the density to get to the point where there was really a demand for greenspace, then there would be no land left to put the trail. She said if the County did not have a master plan for how the greenways should connect, then the developers did not know where to locate the trail spurs.

Ms. Firehock said Charlottesville had been successful because they had the voluntary urban ring of the Rivanna Trail, and they indicated where connections to that trail should be located. She said a number of connections were proffered because developers knew where the connections should be located. She said if the County waited, then they would keep receiving proffers from developers with incomplete paths and disjointed path segments. She said the County had to do a lot more of the intensive planning and spending the tax-payer funds to get the infrastructure in place. She said the County's model of hoping proffers and Comprehensive Plan suggestions would get the County the infrastructure it wanted was not working.

Mr. Murray said equity with the rural area was an important topic of discussion. He said it was important to have a concept of do-no-harm in the rural area and to not lose the services that existed. He said one example was that the rural area did not get sidewalks or bicycle trails proffered in the rural area because the rural area did not get rezonings. He said the only safe places to run, or cycle tended to be gravel roads,

and the roads used frequently by runners and cyclists were known, but the County kept paving them. He said there was a tendency to have a degradation of the services rural residents used, yet they could not get new services that were corollary with the growth area. He said it seemed to be a big problem. He noted Route 76 and a national bicycle route that went through the County. He said the route was an embarrassment, and anyone on the bicycle route was risking their life.

Mr. Murray noted the challenges with greening the development areas and parks. He said there was a develop-to-protect policy, and in order to get greenspace proffered, they had to clear more and more land. He said it seemed counterintuitive. He noted some localities had implemented urban concepts of transfer development rights so whole green areas could be protected rather than having a development in place to protect a small portion of greenspace. He said there needed to be more creativity in how they looked at the issues. He said there was an ACAP program, but it could not be used for properties under development. He said the County needed incentive programs.

Mr. Bivins said he was supportive of the common themes. He said there was the idea of how to balance and strike an equitable way forward. He said a piece would happen in 10 years when the County undergoes another redistricting. He said if the County did not increase the development area, the Samuel Miller district would end up being the largest district in the County by land mass. He said the County would have to address the size of the district. He said the decision about equally balanced districts was in control of the General Assembly. He said it ended up being an unintended consequence of the land use.

Mr. Bivins said while there were obvious pieces, he asked they examine the secondary issues that were not so apparent. He said there were two parks in the development area, and the park in his district would never be a recreational park. He said there were plenty of green spaces in the rural area. He said when they discussed greening the County, they were talking about greening the County for the people who had the least amount of access to those resources. He said he did not care about another park in the rural area. He said he wanted connectivity to the green spaces and areas that were sufficient as public spaces for young people and their families.

Ms. Firehock noted Mr. Murray's point that people should be able to get to the greenspaces via pedestrian paths.

Mr. Bivins said he just wanted the spaces to be there. He said people could not run to a space the County did not have. He said there were secondary and tertiary issues that would arise.

Mr. Missel said staff was looking to refine the process. He said they were currently starting out broad. He said it did address the common themes. He said he had to think about subthemes. He noted his question regarding public participation. He said he wondered how involved the development community and the Economic Development Department were involved. He said his first instinct was to prioritize them. He said ensuring the foundation for the broad area of focus was stable enough and representative enough was important.

Mr. Missel said as they thought about the strategic density, he thought about what the goal was. He said the County needed to be driven by a goal. He asked if the goal was to fill in the gaps, add more density to the development areas, expand the development area, or bring economic development from other parts of the state. He asked what was actually driving the County's desire to look at strategic density and sustainability. He said open space and sustainability needed to be linked to a master plan. He asked how the capital plan for infrastructure informed development and how they were linked. He asked what the RWSA capital plan was and how it supported strategic density and sustainability.

Mr. Missel noted the issue of site readiness. He said the issue was that site readiness applied primarily to office and industrial uses. He asked how they were defining site readiness. He said there were different ways to define it. He said one method would be to have a site that was ready presented for economic development, and another method was to determine if there was room to build based on the master plan. He said they should consider how that process built on the strategic density approach.

Mr. Carrazana said he was late because of his day job. He said he was present for some of the commentary. He agreed with what had been said in particular about the approach. He asked if the County could build in measurable opportunities and metrics to be able to measure success. He asked how they would know how they were achieving the goals that were set. He said when they focused on the big picture, they lost the opportunity set short-term metrics.

Ms. Firehock said she agreed and that she liked to have comprehensive plans that had measurable objectives.

Mr. Clayborne said the proposal was heading on the right track. He noted the action focus section and the highlights on climate action and equity. He said those themes should be woven throughout each of the other themes rather than standing alone. He noted the strategic density topic. He said one of the key takeaways of the urban density residential was that 17.6% was the average. He said the density was a key portion of solving the other challenges. He said figuring out the disconnect in the community—between those who did and did not support density. He asked if there was an education aspect for the community as they went through the process—either through graphics or visuals. He said it could be a key to affordable housing.

Mr. Bailey said he agreed. He said there was momentum around environmental social governance, corporate reporting, and financial disclosures in his professional field. He said it was not a standalone theme, and it should be woven through all the County did. He said the climate action and the equity should be cross-cutting. He said in regards to affordable housing, there had been previous discussions about how it had to be affordable and accessible.

Mr. Bailey said there was an aging population, and he asked whether they would be able to age in place. He said there was the question on whether it was affordable, and there was the question on the definition of affordability. He asked whether affordable meant the cost of the unit or the type of the unit. He noted how developers would proffer affordable units, but they would be the size of a shoebox.

Mr. Bailey said the County had struggled with gathering data on how much progress it was making. He said Belvedere had a community center that had been vacant for 10 years. He said there had been approvals of novel neighborhood model developments. He wanted to know how many of those developments that were supposed to have retail space were developed. He said it was something the County was promoting, but questioned whether it was really wanted. He said they should set the standard for how they would collect and track the data. He said they pointed the County in the right direction, but they would struggle over the reasoning because of the lack of data.

Ms. Firehock said it would be almost useful to make a list of the planning approaches. She said they needed to examine some of the items they had been promoting, such as the neighborhood model. She said there were a number of topics to discuss. She noted people needed affordable transportation to reach the necessary services.

Mr. Bailey noted the surveys. He said it did not matter if they believed the survey samples were representative of the population. He said they would be able to have smaller samples if they were confident the samples were cross-cutting.

Ms. Firehock said it was a qualitative sample, not a quantitative sample, and it was not a representative sample of the County. She said it was not designed that way.

Mr. Bivins said options 1 through 7 had the County waiting for the market to catch up. He said the Comprehensive Plan was acting as a gentle hand on the market to guide it. He said there were areas that the supervisors and community should decide to receive more government investment and oversight. He said there had to be a dialogue followed by an appropriate investment. He said noted they would have to have a discussion with VDOT in order to address the roads because they did not make decisions regarding

the roads. He said there was a hard debate to get some of the community to support some of the items. He said that the community support was not behind some of the items.

Ms. Firehock said some items would have to be funded by the County. She said there were projects where the locality had to plant the trees and construct the sidewalks before the development to make the area desirable.

Mr. Murray said there was a relationship between 5 and 6. He said they needed to change the way they examined density. He said density had become a bad word in the community. He said people associated a density of people with a loss of service. He said they needed to start considering a density of service in addition to a density of people. He said they would receive more support if they reinforced that the increased density included an increase of service. He said it was a problem to associate density strictly with a density of people.

Mr. Bivins said he had also heard within the community that density included a type of person. He said he wanted to be careful that was not forgotten. He noted there was a project before the Commission the year prior, and a group of people stated they did not want the project to be constructed because the group was afraid the project would add a certain type of person to the community. He said it was the narrative that was heard in regard to density. He said some of the written comments they received in the past week had a similar undertone. He said some of what the Commission heard was couched in a fear of density and loss of service, but when pressed as to what would be lost, the commenters revealed they were actually afraid of specific people coming to the community.

Mr. Murray said in his time growing up in Crozet, the area had become denser but less diverse. He noted the people in his high school yearbook did not look the same as the people who live there now.

Mr. Missel noted Mr. Murray's comment regarding services matching density. He said it was perception versus reality, and it depended on the location and the person. He said there were situations where density brought services that people recognized. He said it underscored the need to continue to think about master planning. He asked about ways to engage as much of the community as possible. He said they should encourage a focus on flexibility because the market was unpredictable. He said the next public engagement was a community round table. He asked how those round tables would be structured.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said staff was still working on the planning. She said they anticipated to have both in-person and virtual options. She said if enough people signed up and participated, they may break up into smaller groups to facilitate discussion.

Mr. Missel asked if the roundtables would be themed or would cover multiple themes.

Mr. Rapp said it was something they had discussed both ways, but they had not made an actual decision. He said he saw positives to both sides. He noted certain themes brought particular interests groups but did not encourage a diversity of viewpoints. He said there were pros and cons to both.

Ms. Firehock said they needed to move to next steps.

Mr. Carrazana said he had one more point. He said Mr. Murray made a point that items 5 and 6 were connected. He challenged them to think beyond the status quo. He said infrastructure needed to enable growth and open opportunities for strategic density. He said the County could never keep up—they would also be the same, the schools would be overcrowded, and traffic would be the same. He said they should enable growth through the infrastructure.

Ms. Firehock said they needed to determine the things they thought the market could provide versus the things the County had to provide. She said too often, there was talk about development plans that did not happen. She said there were a lot of items that required the County to invest in order to get what they want. She said they had to consider connectivity.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the next steps would be to hold public engagement meetings with the common themes and then return to the Commission in September with a work session on the draft vision for growth and resilience. He said it would then go to the Board with their comments and input.

Mr. Bivins asked if it would be longer than an hour.

Ms. Firehock said it would be brought up during other business. She said they would consider whether to make the sessions longer. She said she believed they needed to be two hours. She closed the work session. She said they would reconvene at 6 p.m.

Adjournment

At 5:06 p.m., the Commission adjourned to July 26, 2022, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. Lane Auditorium.



Charles Rapp, Deputy Director of Community Development

(Recorded by Vivian Groeschel; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

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