Albemarle County Planning Commission
Work Session and Regular Meeting
Draft Minutes July 9, 2024

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Fred Missel; Luis Carrazana; Corey Clayborne; Julian Bivins; Lonnie Murray

Members absent were: Karen Firehock; Nathan Moore

Other officials present were: Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; Tonya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager; Kevin McCollum, Senior Planner; Jodie Filardo, Director of Community Development; Bart Svoboda; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public

Neil Williamson said that he served as President of the Free Enterprise Forum, a privately funded public policy organization focused on local government in central Virginia. He said that while the Virginia state code mandated it for all localities, Albemarle embraced reviewing their comprehensive plan every five years with enthusiasm. He said that the latest iteration, AC44, is a three-plus year planning process designed to capture community sentiment about the future. He said that in recent plans, this community-centered engagement approach had resulted in an unworkable document similar to Santa's list.

Mr. Williamson asked if this really was what a comp plan should do and whether it should be a laundry list of often conflicting citizen priorities or opinions. He asked if the comprehensive plan should focus on specific direction for future infrastructure spending needed to accommodate anticipated growth. He said that if one chose the second option, this would mean that the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors must answer hard questions. He said that perhaps the comprehensive plan should be less comprehensive. He said that the Free Enterprise Forum believed the comprehensive plan should answer seven basic questions with a 20-year horizon.

Mr. Williamson said that the first was what, if any, commercial and residential growth is anticipated by 2044. He asked if there is growth, were they able to maintain a manageable workload, adequate land, and properly designated and zoned for this anticipated need. He asked if the existing infrastructure existed to support the anticipated growth. He asked what impacts will the anticipated growth have on existing infrastructure, both man-made and environmental. He asked if infrastructure was lacking, what, if anything, should local government do, and who will pay for it.

Mr. Williamson asked, in the next five years, what specific tasks will local government achieve to move forward to the 20-year goals in the plan. He asked how any anticipated growth impacted existing County residents. He said that goals and objectives must be prioritized. He said that if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. He said that Albemarle County has the chance to use AC44 as a tipping point where the County makes a conscious decision to set real priorities and spend at least as much staff time implementing the goals of AC44 as planning its replacement.

Tom Loach said that he was from Crozet. He said that regarding AC44, he wanted to discuss one of the more important ramifications of the plan: the section on land use and specifically, the preservation of rural land and the expansion of growth areas. He said that after reading AC44, it appeared clear to him that the intention of the County was to support the expansion of growth areas or, in other words, end the current status of preservation of rural areas in Albemarle County.

Mr. Loach said that in 1991, County Executive Robert Tucker published a definitive paper on the subject of land use taxation program in Albemarle County. He said that in his paper, Mr. Tucker communicated two important points: one, the reason for the implementation of land use, and two, who pays for the program. He said that regarding the reason for Albemarle County joining the state program, he stated that "The current land use program for preserving rural land has been an objective of the County for two decades, and the benefits derived from the program are significant to the community at large."

Mr. Loach said that nothing further in Mr. Tucker's publication express any additional reasons for the implementation of the land use taxation program other than rural preservation. He said that in order to pay for the program of land use preservation, he wrote that "The cost of land use is not hidden since it is implicit in the concept of land use that the tax burden has shifted to other taxpayers." He said that in Mr. Tucker's paper published in 1991, the cost for land use was $4.2 million. He said that by 2005, it had risen to $13 million. He said that by 2023, it was $14 million.

Mr. Loach said that using these dates and amounts, he explained that the investment of County residents in rural protection since 1975 had risen to over a quarter of a billion dollars. He said that despite the cost of land use and the fact that it did not fully stop development, he supported the status quo of the current program. He said that as one of the taxpayers who paid for the program, however, this support came with a caveat: if they wanted him, and he was sure tens of thousands of others, to continue paying for the support of the program, they must continue to preserve rural land in Albemarle County.

Mr. Loach said that the support for rural preservation could not be for just a year, next year, or five years; nor could they nickel and dime the development of rural land and still call it preservation. He said that it was a situation where the Commission could not or would not make a commitment to rural preservation. He said that therefore, it must recommend that they eliminate the land use taxation program since there was no longer a need for additional tax dollars to pay for an obsolete program.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Clayborne motioned the Planning Commission adopt the consent agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Murray. The motion passed unanimously (5-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent.)

Reordering of Agenda

Mr. Missel asked for a motion to re-order the agenda in order to hold the public hearing first and the work session thereafter.

Mr. Carrazana motioned the Planning Commission reorder the agenda to hold the public hearing first and the work session thereafter, which was seconded by Mr. Clayborne. The motion passed unanimously (5-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent.)

Public Hearings

SP202400006 Piedmont Grounds Management

Kevin McCollum, Senior Planner, said that he would be providing staff's report for Piedmont Grounds Management, Landscape Contractor, a Special Use Permit application. He said that the subject property was located at 4842 Richmond Road, approximately half a mile from the Fluvanna County border. He said that this property and its surrounding area had been zoned as rural areas, adhering to entrance corridor guidelines along Richmond Road.

Mr. McCollum said that the surrounding region primarily consisted of rural residential properties with single-family detached houses on lots ranging from two to six acres. He displayed a slide illustrating the existing conditions of the site from Richmond Road. He said that the property was a little over three acres in size, with about half an acre developed as a Class A country store, formerly known as Boyd Tavern Market and briefly Lakeside Market.

Mr. McCollum said that to the right of this building was the proposed location for the landscape contractor business. He said that the land had been mostly undeveloped but contained some cleared areas. He said that a conceptual plan for development was displayed on the screen. He said that the proposal involved establishing a landscape contractor business with an office, parking area, and landscape materials storage area.

Mr. McCollum said that typical business operations would involve employees arriving at the site in the morning to gather materials and equipment for off-site work during the day, returning to the site in the evening to drop off equipment and materials, and leaving in their own personal vehicles. He said that displayed on the screen was an illustrative plan, which included the building, parking area, storage area, entrance corridor street trees along the frontage, and a 30-foot screening buffer.

Mr. McCollum said that staff recommended requiring the use buffer as a condition for approval, as well as an additional 30-foot buffer and 50-foot setback. He said that given the proposal was in the entrance corridor, the development would require Architectural Review Board (ARB) review to assess the proposed landscaping and building design. He said that since it was a new commercial use, the project will require a site development plan and Virginia Erosion and Stormwater Management Program Plan.

Mr. McCollum said that approvals from the health department will be necessary for any proposed drain fields and wells, and VDOT approval of the entrance will be required for the proposed entrance. He said that these reviewers have reviewed the plans and have provided no concerns or objections. He said that the special use permit application was reviewed under the factors for consideration as outlined in the County's zoning ordinance.

Mr. McCollum said that generally, staff believed that the proposed landscaping contractor will not be detrimental to adjacent properties, would not change the character of the nearby area, would be in harmony with the zoning district, and was consistent with the comprehensive plan. He said that staff had reviewed the plans and drafted a few recommended conditions to ensure those factors were upheld. He said that the first condition was that development of the site must be in general accord with the conceptual plan. He said that this was to ensure that buildings, parking areas, and storage areas were in the same general location as provided.

Mr. McCollum said that the second condition was to apply industrial setbacks and buffer requirements. He said that this condition was consistent with Arbor Life, the previously approved landscape contractor use in rural areas. He said, the last condition was to address some previously unapproved clearing that was done in the Water Protection Ordinance (WPO) buffer. He said that this condition ensured that the applicant replants that important natural resource area.

Mr. McCollum said that in conclusion, staff had found that the proposed use was consistent with the comprehensive plan and no detrimental impacts to adjoining properties were anticipated. He said that staff had no additional concerns that were not addressed by the proposed conditions. He said that staff was recommending approval of this special use permit application with the conditions as recommended in the staff report.

Mr. Bivins said that in the applicant's concept plan, he noticed that both the shed and the convenience store were situated on critical slopes.

Mr. McCollum said that regarding the proposals displayed on the right side of the screen, the existing convenience store had been in operation for a long time. He said that it was located within the WPO buffer zone; therefore, they would classify that as a non-conforming use. He said that to provide clarity, the proposals pertained to the landscape contractor and would be distinct from the Class A country store.

Mr. Bivins said that the parcel was currently a vacant convenience store, which was more like a shed. He said that he expected that the applicants could confirm whether there was an anticipation that these two properties would be reactivated at some point in the future.

Mr. McCollum said that the applicant had recently received a zoning clearance approval. He said that from the standpoint of staff, this was approved; thus, the country store had obtained zoning clearance and had been approved for reopening.

Mr. Missel said that regarding condition number two, the building was well-positioned within the setbacks but noticed that the landscape material storage area encroached into that space. He asked if the occupant could store items behind the building between the property line and the building envelope.

Mr. McCollum said that staff had phrased the conditions so that they wanted to see a 30-foot use buffer, so the storage area could go up to that buffer. He said that the setback applied to the building, so landscape material storage was not considered a building and could be within the 50-foot setback but not within the 30-foot use buffer.

Mr. Missel asked if the 30-foot use buffer was intended to have plantings.

Mr. McCollum said that was correct. He said that the screening would be addressed at the site plan stage.

Mr. Missel said that it would provide a boundary in that case.

Mr. McCollum said that the buffer could possibly be extended in the proposal. He said that staff would analyze the screening on that property line during the site plan phase.

Mr. Bivins asked for clarification regarding extension of the buffer.

Mr. McCollum said that they were displaying the screening buffer in green color on the proposal. He said that the staff suggested implementing a condition of a 30-foot screening buffer, but they could also evaluate and incorporate additional screening or landscaping alongside the property line during the site plan approval process if necessary.

Mr. Bivins asked if they could potentially extend the buffer down to the entrance to further screen the property.

Mr. McCollum said that was correct. He said that the provided document showcased an illustrative plan, which incorporated street trees. He said that at this time, they were not imposing any conditions on the placement of these street trees. He said that the illustration demonstrated how street trees could fulfill the requirements for a site plan.

Mr. Missel asked if the blue line near the landscape material storage area was a contour line.

Mr. McCollum said that he was unsure. He said that he would defer to the applicant to answer that question.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing. He asked if the applicant had a report for the Commission.

Kelsey Schlein introduced herself as a Planner with Shimp Engineering. She said that she was present to represent Piedmont Grounds Management, who had applied for a special use permit request. She said that Jordan Kaufman, the property owner and also the owner of Piedmont Grounds Management, could unfortunately not attend due to a class commitment.

Ms. Schlein said that Piedmont Grounds Management had been in operation for approximately 21 years. She said that Mr. Kaufman established the business when he was around 16 years old and had managed it ever since. She said that the number of employees varies depending on the season, with slightly fewer during wintertime and more in summertime as business increases. She said that Piedmont Grounds Management primarily serves residential and commercial clients in Crozet and Charlottesville.

Ms. Schlein said that Mr. Kaufman saw this property as an opportunity to provide a permanent location for his business. She said that at present, he was renting space on a property that was up for sale, so he urgently needed to find a permanent home for his business. She said that the property in question can be seen from the provided image, with the historic Boyd Tavern Market property visible on the left side of the screen, along with the existing Class A country store and shed.

Ms. Schlein said that on the far side, there was an open field where Jordan planned to place his equipment and material storage building. She showed a closer view of the landscape contractor's central area on the property, which faces west towards Charlottesville. She said that moving into the concept plan, referring to the blue line, it represented the Water Protection Ordinance buffer. She said that most of this information was based on GIS data, and final surveys were still pending.

Ms. Schlein said that there were some existing structures and a drain field encroaching into the WPO buffer. She said that all proposed landscape work and land disturbance would be outside of the buffer zone. She said that they proposed a new entrance on the high side of the property, providing the best visibility on site. She said that limited areas were available for locating the entrance to the property. She said that this location ensured a safe entrance and exit from the property. She said that regarding the landscaping equipment building envelope and parking envelope, they were generous in size, offering permitting flexibility during the site plan stage.

Ms. Schlein said that concerning the screening buffer visual representation, they initially showed the rural area setback on the property, with a 25-foot side setback on both sides. She said that after working with staff, they increased those setbacks to 50 feet. She said that it was a triangular-shaped property, approximately three acres in size, which reduced their buildable area by about 14,000 square feet. She said that they were able to make that work and wanted to make it work, especially with this location of the house nearby, to increase the setbacks.

Ms. Schlein said that previously, they had a 20-foot buffer shown as well, but they increased that to a 30-foot screening buffer. She said that staff presented it in their condition, extending along the entirety of this property line. She said that however, since they lost about 14,000 square feet of buildable area and approximately 7,000 square feet on this side, they wanted to ensure that there was flexibility for a drain field and potential material storage. She said that specifically, the drain field entrance would encroach into that 30-foot buffer with material storage in between the 50-foot setback and the 30-foot screening buffer.

Ms. Schlein said that regarding operational details, the hours of operation were typically 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. She said that employees would pick up their equipment from the property, leave for their respective job sites, and return at the end of the day. She said that employees would drop off all their company equipment on the site before leaving in their personal vehicles.

Ms. Schlein said that there would be no retail component or customer-facing component as part of the site. She said that the maximum usage of the site involves approximately 25 trips a day in and out of the property, which represented minimal transportation involvement. She said that company vehicles and trailers would be primarily stored on the site, along with some material storage consisting of mulch and gravel for PGM to use on their clients' properties.

Ms. Schlein said that this property is subject to ARB and might end up being an aesthetically pleasing equipment building in Albemarle County. She said that however, they will have to ensure that blank facades would not face the entrance corridor. She said that they may consider the idea of regarding this as a farm structure for Mr. Kaufman’s landscaping business and landscape equipment storage. She said that the proposal aligned with the comprehensive plan's strategy in supporting a strong agricultural and forest economy in rural areas.

Ms. Schlein said that the 2015 comprehensive plan suggested amending the zoning ordinance to allow landscape services and storage of landscape materials in the rural area, which was

implemented in 2020 with a zoning text amendment that enabled them to be before the Planning Commission tonight. She said that there had only been one other approved landscape contractor in the County; this was the second one being pursued. She said they hoped they could gain the Planning Commission's support.

Mr. Murray said that Strategy 4E in the comprehensive plan encouraged the use of native plants and landscaping to protect and provide habitat for native biodiversity, save water, and connect landowners to the local ecosystem. He requested the applicant consider a program in Virginia and Albemarle County where they paid landowners to do things like convert lawns to native plants.

Mr. Murray said that it would be in their best interest to become skilled in doing that. He said that since they had to have a buffer of native plants already, he proposed using this as a demonstration area for native plants. He said having parent material right there next to their landscaping business for native plants. He said that this was a great potential win-win for the applicant if they wanted to take advantage of it and it was certainly a service that the County needed more of.

Ms. Schlein said that she would pass the information along to Mr. Kaufman. She said that she was confident that he would be very receptive to receiving additional funds in order to get the project off the ground and make it a reality.

Mr. Murray said that this program covered most of the expenses related to the installation of different practices. He said that as a result, the homeowner experienced advantages, and so did local businesses, schools, or any other applicants. He said that furthermore, the landscaper also received compensation for their work.

Mr. Clayborne asked about the information on page three, which discussed fertilizers, chemicals, and fuel storage. He asked whether these substances would be stored in large enough quantities to necessitate containment for spills or similar incidents, despite not being stored in bulk quantities.

Ms. Schlein said that she believed that they would not have any large clients requiring on-site storage in such bulk amounts. She said that during the site plan process, they would work with the fire marshal to ensure all safety measures were met.

Mr. Carrazana said that he had a question about the entrance. He said that it seemed there was a berm on the site as it tapered down towards the end, near the high part of the site close to the neighbor's entrance. He asked whether the owner had considered extending and adding more landscaping to create separation between them. He asked if these discussions had already taken place.

Ms. Schlein said that for the entrance, they must ensure maintaining sight distance and not planting any landscaping within their view triangles. She said that apart from that, the applicant was fully on board since he owned a landscape business and had told the neighbor multiple times that he was ready to plant whatever was needed; he had the labor force and could source materials to complete the project.

Mr. Carrazana said that the provided images were helpful because they clearly showed the area in question. He said that it seemed odd for the entrance to be so close to their neighbors.

Ms. Schlein said that if a better location was available, they would move it. She said that due to a crest in Route 250 as they approached the western property edge, this location was the best one for visibility on the road. She said that although traffic would be minimal since there was no customer retail-facing approach, additional landscaping could certainly be added.

Mr. Bivins said that he was unclear as to why they would not consider bringing a driveway through at the back end of the convenience store. He said that given the limited number of people coming onto the property, he asked about the reason for requiring a designated street or entry.

Ms. Schlein said that it came down to sight distance, and even though the existing entrance predated current VDOT regulations, it was considered a new permitted use on the property. She said that when VDOT reviewed the application, they preferred the entrance for the new use to be in the best location possible for safety and compliance.

Mr. Bivins said that he felt it was important to provide as much buffer for the house as possible, so they would not feel exposed over a period of years. He said that there had only been a field at the location, except for someone who cleared the area when they were not supposed to. He said that other than that, neighbors were accustomed to having a quiet existence in the area. He said that he believed trailers would be placed inside the fancy barn rather than hanging out in the parking lot.

Ms. Schlein said that there may be some trailers in the parking envelope, but they must be screened from the entrance corridor. She said that the building would block any view of the parking lot from the neighbors.

Mr. Bivins said that it was a fact that there would be noise generated from this use that the neighbors would be subjected to, and they must be sensitive to this issue. He said that they must also work to reestablish the buffer, so he assumed there would be significant improvements to achieve that.

Ms. Schlein said absolutely. She said that the requirements in section 17-600 were quite robust. She said that the property owner inherited the situation from a previous property owner, and this would result in a significant improvement over the existing condition. She added that it would likely be a better condition than even existed prior to the clearing.

Mr. Missel asked if Ms. Schlein could address the building height limitations. He said that they were determined by the rural areas zoning.

Ms. Schlein said that they could not build anything taller than 35 feet. She said that anything higher than that would require a rezoning application.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak on this item. Seeing none, he closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Bivins said that he supported the application because it would be appropriately bringing a use to this currently vacant property. He said that he was supportive of the applicant intentionally providing a buffer for the neighbors next door.

Mr. Murray said that considering their upcoming conversation, it was essential to discuss whether this type of use should be by right or performance-based in the future. He said that he believed

that it should be. He said that this was something they wanted to promote in rural areas. He said that it no longer seemed suitable for their growth area, which had become expensive and unsupportive. He said that he considered this a form of agriculture. He said that, as they revised the comprehensive plan, they should consider making this process easier for people, with the exception of those producing dyed mulch or similar products with potential water quality impacts.

Mr. Missel said that he did not disagree with Mr. Murray's suggestion, but as they considered rural areas, a similar comment had been made during their discussion about The Grey, proposing that it might be an appropriate use within rural areas. He said that now, they were discussing whether it could be an appropriate use in rural areas. He said they should think about parameters as they moved into the comprehensive plan and should they limit its use to any rural area or only areas that were more developed.

Mr. Murray said that he believed it was an excellent point, which demonstrated that not all areas in the rural area were equally developed.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed.

Mr. Carrazana motioned the Planning Commission to recommend approval of SP202400006 Piedmont Grounds Management, with the conditions as recommended in the staff report, which was seconded by Mr. Missel. The motion passed unanimously (5-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent.)

Work Session
CPA202100002 AC44 Comprehensive Plan Update: Structure

Mr. Missel said that before staff began their presentation, he asked that the Commission consider how to structure the discussion effectively. He said that he encouraged everyone to address two questions proposed by staff: firstly, were there any aspects of the proposed comprehensive plan structure missing, and secondly, for scheduling purposes, which key issues within the comprehensive plan did the Planning Commission believe should be a focus of future work session discussions. He said naming areas that may need attention and saving detailed discussion for later, as it could take eight to nine hours to cover all of the information.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that he was joined by Tanya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager for Long-Range Planning and Transportation. He said that they would be presenting a plan structure and project update for the AC44 effort. He said that in April, they were wrapping up with the Board on a series of plan chapters, each chapter having some goals and objectives that were vetted out of a long Phase 1 and Phase 2 process.

Mr. Barnes said that these goals and objectives were based on input from both the general public as well as other stakeholders, including the Planning Commission and the Board. He said that recently, they had been focusing on developing action steps to undergird those planning goals and objectives while continuing their collaboration with the chapter teams. He said that their chapter teams consisted of other departments involved in the planning process, as well as agencies like the Service Authority, schools, and Blue Ridge Health.

Mr. Barnes said that as they were creating these action steps, they realized that they were cross-cutting in nature, cutting across some of the chapters they initially presented to the Commission. He said that there were also multiple challenges with implementing these actions across various

departments. He said that consequently, they decided to move away from the initial structure of eight topic chapters and instead adopt a new structure called plan elements. He said that they would discuss this further later on. He said that at the same time, senior management was really pushing them to have a more innovative and easy-to-use format and plan.

Mr. Barnes said that these two major efforts led staff to focus on ensuring that they had a well-thought-out outline for the document's structure, making it easier to use and read, especially for those who would invest time in reading the entire thing. He said that this had been a significant effort for staff. He said that another point was that their previous process involved going through each chapter and presenting action steps and working through them. He said that they planned to do something different this time, which was that later in the year, they would bring forward the whole draft so the Commission can have a view of the document in its entirety.

Mr. Barnes said that this would give them an idea of where they were headed and answer some questions that might not be apparent without seeing the full document. He said that they could come back during a given work session with their thoughts and feedback. He said that another important aspect regarding the transition from the previous document's content was that they were refining key terms using a defined nomenclature to avoid confusion and inconsistency in terminology. He said that they may recall that they had a framework consisting of climate and equity lenses. He said that they previously had a term framework, which they now called "guiding principles."

Mr. Barnes said that they introduced tool kits such as activity centers and community design guidelines to replace the neighborhood model. He said that this still existed but would now be part of the second section of the document under the name "place-type framework." He said that they discussed topic chapters, which were now referred to as plan elements. He said that they had many goals for these elements and decided to create a goal statement for each one. He said that they also talked about catalyst projects, large-scale initiatives that span multiple actions, in an effort to avoid using jargon.

Mr. Barnes said that the document structure consisted of three major parts with an appendix at the end. He said that the first part provides context and included the place-type framework, land use maps, activity centers, rural areas, and development areas. He said that this section described geographical divisions within the community and policies for where these apply. He said that the final part focuses on plan implementation, which involves goals, objectives, and actions. He said that finally, the appendix contained small area plans and other related documents from various departments, such as economic development and biodiversity efforts.

Mr. Barnes said that the guiding principles were the policies for the community, and a reader should understand what the County was trying to achieve without having to read the entire document. He said that they hoped that this first part would effectively tie that together. He said that the second aspect involved the geographic component, the place-type framework, which outlined where and how they want to grow, provide public services, and protect their resources in both development and rural areas.

Mr. Barnes said that the third section focuses on implementation, driven by these plan elements or 10 topic areas, that will help them work towards realizing their community's vision and supporting their growth management strategy. He added that this lengthy current plan was over 900 pages and 125,000 words long, which could be overwhelming and potentially conflicting. He said that in contrast, cities like Charlottesville and Charlotte, North Carolina have plans around

40,000 words in length. He said that they were working to make the new plan more concise and accessible.

Mr. Missel asked where the implementation of the plan fit inside of the key term refinements.

Tonya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager, said that they had goals, objectives, and actions, which were familiar topics to discuss. She said that after consolidating those goals, they now had a single goal statement. She said that in part three, all of these elements would be covered, starting with the goal statement, followed by several objectives and actions below it.

Mr. Murray said that he had found the planning toolkits to be problematic. He said that it was interesting how they rebranded everything else but did not rebrand those. He said that it seemed that the content of planning within the planning toolkits was acceptable; however, it appeared that they elevated the topics within them over other potential subjects that could have been incorporated and would be relevant to that chapter. He asked if staff could provide more information on why these specific toolkits were prioritized above other possible topics.

Mr. Barnes asked Mr. Murray what other topics should be considered.

Mr. Murray said that there had been extensive discussions about rural area preservation and conservation strategies. He said that these strategies could have been included in a toolkit. He said that the elevation and emphasis on the toolkits seemed unnecessary.

Mr. Barnes said that the second section had a growth management policy serving as the basis and focused on development areas and rural areas. He said that in development areas, land use types and activity centers were established to encourage density and intensity growth within the community. He said that objectives for providing public services were also outlined in this framework. He said that the same approach applied to rural areas.

Mr. Barnes said that toolkits were developed to address specific components, with a geographic aspect highlighting how development areas and activity centers would function as mixed-use, walkable spaces with higher density. He said that conservation was a key principle in rural areas, which would be further articulated in the plan element within the third section discussing environment and conservation efforts. He said that action steps for achieving specific goals were detailed in this section, while the second section sets the foundation for these strategies.

Mr. Murray said that he believed that the planning toolkits themselves failed to address this issue. He said that the actual guiding policy, such as the growth management policy, should have received more attention in terms of wording and implementation to ensure that growth occurred in designated growth areas and rural areas remained rural.

Mr. Murray said that he believed that their current comprehensive plan served as a great example of a well-thought-out growth management policy that explained how each one contributed to this goal. He said that element seemed to be missing or at least not given enough attention in the last draft he saw. He said that as they looked forward, they must ensure that they prioritized the core conversation of establishing and encouraging growth in designated areas while preserving rural uses in their respective areas.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she believed that staff agreed with Mr. Murray's sentiment, and perhaps the phrasing on the slide was misleading in this way. She said that staff would take this

into consideration for their next presentation so that the second part was worded to ensure the growth management policy was articulated distinctly in both the rural area and the development area.

Mr. Carrazana said that this raised an important point. He said that the planning toolkits, which he appreciated might change their name or title, were a development framework. He said that this framework was designed for how one would develop growth areas and rural areas. He emphasized that they cannot have one without the other. He said that if they define how they were going to grow, what they needed to accommodate in the planning horizon, and how they would achieve it, and began to develop activity centers and communities, he preferred the term "framework" versus "planning toolkit," which he found too vague.

Mr. Carrazana said that they needed to maximize capacity in development areas so that they could preserve rural areas. He said that these two aspects have a symbiotic relationship. He said that their plan should show developers a path to achieve the growth they were looking for without always thinking they must grow the area. He said that if the plan indicated that they must expand the area due to insufficient space, then they could begin addressing this issue. He said that this raised the question of whether the rural area was equal in all areas. He said that this point had been discussed earlier in the day, and this was where the discussion should take place as well. He said that they were not all equal.

Mr. Carrazana noted that the biodiversity plan layer was an essential aspect yet to be fully integrated into the overall plan. He said that it did have a symbiotic relationship with the development framework, and they needed to determine how best to express this relationship within the plan. He said that he appreciated the direction taken by referring to it as a framework. He said that if people can understand the connection between this development framework and its role in preserving rural areas, that would be beneficial. He said that they must maximize infill opportunities and adaptive reuse possibilities available in the County.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed with Mr. Carrazana, but he wanted to add that they were checking both boxes in the areas of recommended focus. He said that one was structural, which was just raised, and the other was that this clearly would be a primary focus of future work sessions.

Mr. Barnes said that there were three key sections in the document. He said that the first one was the introduction section, which discussed existing conditions, trends facing their community, and the concerns and issues they needed to address. He said that this part presented six principles that aimed to advance efforts in meeting community challenges. He said that these principles expressed the vision through guiding principles such as green and resilient, welcoming and equitable, to implement the vision and outline efforts at a broad scale.

Mr. Barnes said that the section provided clarity on what Albemarle stood for and its goals without requiring readers to read the entire document. He said that this part focused on County priorities and short-term actions, while foreshadowing the content of parts two and three, giving readers an understanding of the document's structure and direction.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that staff’s intent was to form part one so that it could stand alone in order to gain a general sense of the comprehensive plan in its entirety.

Mr. Missel asked if it would be a detailed summary.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that it would be a long executive summary, with additional details to give more of a story.

Mr. Missel said that his understanding was that it would also tie everything together so that it was linked to the whole of the plan.

Mr. Clayborne asked if this part would examine how they compared to similar-sized localities in any way, as this question often arose. He asked if they considered whether exploring that content might be something to consider for this section. He said that regarding numbering, he suggested placing "County Vision" directly beneath "Introduction" as they proceeded to establish context.

Mr. Barnes said that he moved on to the second part, they were focusing on the framework. He said that the structure for rural areas and development areas was at the forefront, with growth management serving as a guiding principle for many policies within the document. He said that this encompassed land use designations and the concept of activity centers, where the toolkit began to be applied. He said that in rural areas, this involved future land use designations and applying activity centers as targeted zones for future development. He said that the objective was to deliver public services more efficiently and increase density and intensity in development areas.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that additionally, it would be concentrating on the transportation infrastructure and network, as they aimed to guarantee that they catered to the areas where most individuals desired to travel in the quickest, safest, and most direct way possible.

Mr. Barnes said that ultimately, the community design guidelines were intended to determine the appearance and recognize the design elements that contributed to its prosperity.

Mr. Murray said that he generally supported all these ideas and those addressed in the toolkits, such as activity centers. He said that he believed it was a great idea and he supported their inclusion. He said that when considering aspects such as agriculture, activities were not solely commercial or residential; they could also involve identifying areas for productive agriculture and biodiversity conservation. He said that to broaden their perspective on rural area activities, he would like to see the range of considered activities expanded.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she appreciated the idea because it clarified something that had been unclear in her mind. She said that she had been wondering about the feasibility of an activity center in a rural area and how they might carry that concept forward. She said that it seemed like Mr. Murray was starting to make that more clear.

Mr. Murray said that the previous applicant had an example of someone doing landscaping, which was necessary, because it benefited the rural areas and the County by providing consistent use. He said that there should be designated places where such uses were encouraged. He said that other agricultural support industries existed in Albemarle County but were not acknowledged as a designated use. He said that people who engaged in canning, food processing, or other activities that supported agriculture also needed assistance. He said that his grandfather owned for many years, and they did not have much support for that type of business in Albemarle County. He asked if staff would keep this in mind when developing concepts for activity centers.

Mr. Missel asked if staff could provide further clarification for item number two in the place type framework. He said that he understood numbers one and three, but he was unsure about number two. He said that number one was laying it out; it presented the County vision, their direction, and

the document's content. He said that number three illustrated how they achieved their goals. He asked about the contents of number two. He asked if it was describing the existing conditions or where they wanted these conditions to be in the future.

Mr. Barnes said that they keep coming back to where they want that implemented, geographically. He said that Mr. Murray's point of having some of these permissible uses in rural areas was partly about things they want to avoid. He said that partly, it may be tied to transportation, such as that it has to be on a primary road or something like that, as opposed to a secondary rural road. He said this would set the rules for where these types of uses and activities would be found within the County.

Mr. Missel said that regarding development areas, the plan context had discussed the vision for these development areas and mentioned that they were addressed in the framework plan. He said that it listed some vision items that fit within the development areas and others that could apply to rural areas as well. He asked their stance on public services, and if they needed to have a goal for them.

Mr. Barnes said that public services, including transportation, parks, and recreation, were areas where they were focusing their efforts. He said that they aimed to tie these services closer to activity centers as the area became more urban. He said that providing public services in the form-based code area required offering more urban services, such as those provided by a public works department.

Mr. Barnes said that the vision for their community should be implemented within specific areas, allowing for a nuanced application that emphasized development areas, particularly activity centers. He said that they wanted to create a hierarchy that supported high density and intensity in regional activity centers, which would require corresponding transportation and other public services to support the intensity of development.

Mr. Missel asked if, under the transportation category, they would discuss topics such as transportation, transit, and traffic in rural areas within this section, or if they would be included in the implementation plan in the following section.

Mr. Barnes said that broadly speaking, yes, especially when discussing rural areas and transportation, he did not believe they would emphasize providing many sidewalks or other types. He said that this provision was somewhat applicable in rural areas. Regarding Mr. Carrazana's points on the symbiotic relationship, it was the other side of the coin. He said that as a community, they must express their vision for the community, as well as where and how that vision would be implemented.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that their priorities might differ, particularly in rural areas compared to development areas. She said that transportation could be a higher priority in the development area but may rank lower, such as at number five, in the rural area. She said that these numbers were arbitrary, but she hoped her point was clear: priorities can vary slightly. She said that while they remain important, how they prioritize what they want and where they want it will differ fundamentally between development and rural areas. She said that therefore, part two aims to help them understand how this worked for each area.

Mr. Missel said that he had identified the specific items, their locations, and the priorities of those places, and now they were going into the method.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that was correct.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to examine the disparities in service provision between rural and growth areas. He said that in a rural setting, residents had the ability to grow their own food due to available space and resources. He said that conversely, individuals residing in growth areas may need to rely on farmer's markets or grocery stores for their sustenance needs. He said that although the services are similar, they manifest differently in each environment. He said that in growth areas, the focus should be on developing new services and constructing infrastructure. He said that in contrast, rural areas required preserving existing services without degradation.

Mr. Murray said that for example, a safe walking path on a grassy road is considered a service in the countryside, while sidewalks are more relevant in urban settings. He said that it may not be feasible to expect sidewalks in rural areas. He said that to prevent confusion and ensure appropriate service provision, he suggested that it could be beneficial to create a grid illustrating how services appear in both rural and growth areas. He said that this way, one can think clearly about the differences without attempting to impose one area's services on another.

Mr. Missel said that Mr. Murray's points referred to part three, which was strategic implementation within certain areas.

Mr. Murray said that he was discussing the provision of public services.

Mr. Clayborne asked how much of the document was dedicated to part two. He said that he was struggling to see how part two should be a separate section and that perhaps it would be better fit into parts one and three.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she estimated the document would consist of around 60 or 75 pages, slightly longer than the first section. She said that it took her approximately one month to fully comprehend part two. She said that even now, it remained somewhat unclear. She said that they continued to work through its intricacies in order to explain it more easily. She said that they believed that adopting this structure would assist everyone, including themselves, in visualizing how these components interconnected and perceiving the overall picture rather than focusing on individual parts. She said that she was unsure if this clarified matters for others; however, their implementation component, or part three, would be more extensive. She said that it would delve deeper into specifics, but section two would prove crucial.

Mr. Carrazana said that regarding sections 2.1 through 2.4, he wanted to know if there would be basic goals and definitions for the rural area and development areas at a high level in section two. He said that part of Crozet was a development area, so they would define activity centers, which were in the Crozet Master Plan, as well as areas of density and land use designations. He said that they also defined public and private services. He said that they were woefully lacking, especially in terms of transportation.

Mr. Carrazana asked if they would then begin to talk about how to unlock the development opportunities in those activity centers in Crozet. He asked how they unlocked the higher densities in the master plan. He said that they currently had a master plan that was unachievable with the current infrastructure. He said that this was an issue they had in general, where the master plans could not be supported by this infrastructure.

Mr. Carrazana said that it was important to lay out a high-level strategy to determine how they begin to unlock that potential. He said that the implementation was also tied to a funding strategy, so they must identify how they would fund their development in order to realize the density in their plans. He said that in part two, they could begin to lay out those strategies at a high level. He said that his understanding was not necessarily the step-by-step implementation but the main goals that needed to be achieved.

Mr. Barnes said that he appreciated Mr. Carrazana using the word “strategies,” which was appropriate. He said that they did need to identify how to undergird the activity centers and identify the necessary policies to be emphasized for their support. He said that it should provide them guidance for what the community needed to do to facilitate growth in these activity centers. He said that there were still some aspects of small area plans they would be tackling to link the plans together.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was not suggesting that that concept be in section two, but they must provide a high-level strategy of how they would achieve that in the different growth areas and activity centers.

Mr. Bivins said that the key aspect for him was viewing this situation as a simultaneous equation, where they were attempting to support the County vision using the comprehensive plan as the framework and the primary model of achieving it. He said that in his previous experience of constructing such things, 2.1 to 4 represented various variables necessary for success, ultimately equating to the County vision. He said that many of those variables were not owned by the County and would likely never be. He said that consequently, adjusting the equation to succeed with the variables they owned had caused him some concern.

Mr. Bivins said that they should not cause harm in any area, whether it be rural or developmental. He said that he believed there was a false dichotomy in the community's mindset, suggesting that children living in rural areas were favored over those in development areas. He said that he had personally experienced this resistance when discussing increasing the built environment in development areas. He said that he was not criticizing local developers but rather pointing out that significant projects proposed by outsiders had faced challenges and ultimately failed to materialize, with only Gray Star being successful so far. He said that there were three other potential large-scale projects, but their proponents decided against pursuing them due to the difficulties they encountered within the community.

Mr. Bivins said that this raised questions about whether the focus should be on a full build-out or maximization of available land in development areas. He said that the current comprehensive plan needed to address this issue and signal to potential investors that the environment for development projects would be ready and welcoming. He said that if someone wanted to do a project requiring additional public transport, the County did not own it. He said that while he believed the microtransit was successful, it had limited capacity for passengers. He said that regarding place types, there was not a park in the County that people could easily walk to.

Mr. Bivins said that the options were Charlotte Humphreys Park, which was a wooded area, which would remain an urban woodland. He said that it was challenging to get children and their mothers to a park that was not a tot lot. He said that tot lots were basically the same thing as dog parks in terms of the size of their benefit. He said that this strict categorization was unnecessary for development areas. He said that achieving success required finding a balance in simultaneous equations, so staff might present variables not owned or controlled by the County, but to reach

their goals, they must determine how to get buses to less-served neighborhoods or extend coverage past 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Bivins asked who would want to live there and commute elsewhere under those conditions. He said that regarding regional plans, he did not know what those plans were. He asked if they were building housing to supply workers to places outside Albemarle County and if they would adapt like Greene County, Augusta County, Fluvanna, and Louisa have done in supplying workers and housing for Albemarle. He asked if there was a piece in this equation that needed balancing so that they provided housing for economic benefit outside of the County. He asked whether they would need a plan implementation of these activities happening outside the County.

Mr. Bivins said that regarding regional plans, he thought of something in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District, which talked about economic development outside and within the entire community. He asked how that came into this and how it got balanced into this equation. He said that he observed that the comprehensive plan seemed to reflect a desire for the status quo, but discussing density and proper use of all density property was not the status quo. He said that he believed that the comprehensive plan could not bear the burden for that change, as it required a much broader transformation than what a comprehensive plan could handle.

Mr. Carrazana thanked Mr. Bivins for his comments, which reinforced the idea of unlocking potential despite existing hurdles. He said that these hurdles were present because, unlike UVA, they did not own all the acres, resulting in less control over land use. He said that long-range planning could help identify these hurdles, determine desired growth areas and densities, and identify necessary partners, such as state agencies or private entities, to unlock higher densities, adaptive reuse possibilities, and infill projects.

Mr. Carrazana said that these partnerships were crucial because government alone could not achieve everything; they needed private entities as well. He said that they should focus on long-range planning instead of reacting to development proposals. He said that when an out-of-state developer proposed a project, such as building a thousand units in a mixed-use community, they should have the necessary infrastructure in place to avoid issues for nearby residents. He said that some complaints may be impossible to appease, but by planning for growth areas and developing infrastructure strategies, they could minimize problems and create a more sustainable community.

Mr. Bivins said that the Barnes Lumber Plaza has been in limbo for many years due to various reasons. He said that the question was how to develop that area, which had been identified by both a private and public entity as the new town center of Crozet. He said that there would be some challenges there because it was impossible to cross the railroad tracks. He said that it would be an interesting place to have a town center. He said that the County had made it easier for this to happen. He said that however, the delays were also due to the foibles of a private developer.

Mr. Bivins said that Route 29 had six lanes and was designed for growth in that area up to Hollymead or even further. He said that the infrastructure on the east side of 29 indicated where the growth was intended to go. He said there is some growth there due to Riverbend, with a lot of residential areas. He said that it was not ideal for establishing roots because accessing other parts of the community can be difficult. He said that every time someone had proposed putting a small community there, they had opposition from neighboring communities. He said that these communities already had public roads and two schools in the area. He said that they put the infrastructure on Route 29, six lanes, and some sidewalks on the west side of Route 29.

Mr. Bivins said that despite these additions, the community still says they did not want those people to use the infrastructure that the County and VDOT said should be there. He said that this was the piece he was talking about. He said that he agreed that UVA had a fortunate ability to control more variables in its long-range plan because they owned it. He said that they needed to balance a comprehensive plan for success when many critical elements were not under their control. He said that for example, 60% of their budget goes to support schools, and they had limited means to increase funds except through private partnerships. He said that it was an untenable future in that aspect.

Mr. Carrazana said that he did not disagree if the project could change human nature, as it would lead to a different situation. He said that people did not like change, so that would happen regardless. He said that they needed to establish a framework to allow private-public partnerships and think creatively about crossing the railroad track to unlock development in the lumberyard. He said there were ways to achieve this; they just needed to work with it. He said that he hoped this document would create the framework that enabled the partnerships that needed to happen in order for them to develop their community in a meaningful and intentional way.

Mr. Missel said that one of their tasks tonight was to identify the focus of future work sessions. He said that unlocking the development potential was one of those areas to concentrate on. He said that they were discussing once again rural areas not being developed. He said that they were talking about infrastructure as well. He said that he thought that a work session should be held regarding how development in growth areas could be approached if they were serious about it, and how this could be done in the most efficient manner. He said that there had been many lessons learned by the County as well as those from other communities that could be implemented into this process.

Mr. Barnes said that the third part of the document focused on plan implementation, with the main content in sections 3.2 and 3.3. He said that these sections outlined ten key elements: conservation environment, healthy communities, thriving economy, transportation networks, parks and open space, historic scenic cultural resource protection, community facilities and services, housing. He said that there were two others, rural areas or development areas. He said that some topics may overlap across multiple categories. He said that it was necessary to create a more specific strategy tailored to the rural area or development area.

Mr. Barnes said that the second section of the plan outlined large strategies and goals, as well as the rules for achieving them and the partnerships needed. He said that the third section went into specific actions required to achieve these objectives. He said that each element had a goal statement that defined what was aimed to do in terms of conservation and environmental protection, along with the necessary actions to accomplish those goals.

Mr. Barnes said that the plans will be implemented by both public and private sectors, recognizing that this was not just a County action plan. He said that the other aspect they were trying to incorporate was action types and responsible parties, identifying who should attempt these tasks within timelines for completion. He said that this example demonstrated time placement from another jurisdiction regarding action types.

Mr. Barnes said that the goal was to make this process action-oriented, resulting in catalyst projects and priority actions that the community identifies as essential starting points or

continuations. He said that these initiatives related to other plans already adopted by the community, such as the biodiversity plan and future area plans.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that in the past, they have created master plans for various areas. She said that the goal here was to clarify what could be achieved with these master plans, define the process, and identify the available tools, or "colors in the crayon box". She said that they focused on the hyperlocal area study and determined what aspects they could influence.

Ms. Swartzendruber said their aim was to document the expected process, anticipated update cycle, and potential criteria for updating a master plan or small area plan. She said that they wanted to ensure regular and equitable updates. She said that this approach aligned with incorporating future area plans into the comprehensive plan, providing consistency and expectations.

Mr. Missel said that it was not rewriting those plans, but how they would address existing plans.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that was correct. She said that it was about how they would update them moving forward and how they would be addressed.

Mr. Bivins asked how catalyst projects would be determined and who would create the extensive list of such projects. He asked about the prioritization process and if it would be a community activity or initiated by the supervisors. He asked whether the Board and the Commission would have a conversation informed by staff and community input.

Mr. Barnes said that they had been discussing finding ways to connect this issue with the Board's strategic plan while understanding its implications for the comprehensive plan and capital improvement plan. He said that the document did not include specific details because they were still working on them. He said that the comprehensive plan was a list of many goals they aimed to achieve over the next 20 years.

Mr. Barnes said that in contrast, their strategic priorities focused on what they wanted to accomplish within the next five years. He said that revisiting and prioritizing these objectives was essential for updating the comprehensive plan amendment. He said that they were striving to be more results-oriented and prioritize the outcomes they needed to work on next.

Mr. Bivins asked if it was fair to assume that the departments' budget plans might become sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. He said that in this scenario, a department could argue that if they were charged with something about healthy communities under plan implementation, it would drive their strategic plan and budget requests.

Mr. Barnes said that creating a strategic plan has been an effort within the community. He said that the community had numerous ongoing projects. He asked about the staff's work plan and where they would invest their funds. He said that ideally, it connected some of the points Mr. Carrazana discussed, such as unlocking objectives and removing barriers to implement priorities.

Mr. Missel said that regarding Section 3.3, the tracking and reporting of metrics was not Section 3.7; they were part of section 3.3. He said that essentially, it asks how the project was progressing. He said that if the locks had not been fully unlocked or if there were missed opportunities, changes should be made. He said that it appeared that this could also follow catalyst projects. He said that

it related to other plans and future land use. He said that there might be two instances where checking in was necessary.

Mr. Carrazana said that he understood it to be identifying the matrix, tracking method, and reporting process. He said that he believed one thing came after another: identification followed by implementation. He said that if things were working, they would ask what made them successful. He said that they had to identify how they would do that.

Mr. Clayborne asked where they would begin discussing the comprehensive plan borders, particularly concerning Charlottesville. He asked for clarification on how they should approach addressing that topic given its central location within the County.

Mr. Barnes said that he would highlight two things. He said that one was activity centers. He said that many of these activity centers were lower Pantops, such as the Fifth Street Center, or Hydraulic and Route 29. He said that these interfaces necessitated consideration in relation to the City. He said that a multimodal transportation network needed to be considered holistically. He said that they had discussed this with the City and planned to demonstrate how their transportation networks extended into what some may call "the doughnut hole." He said that it was important to describe a regional multimodal network more effectively, as they had been focusing on a regional transit network recently.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wanted to ensure it was intentional because currently, it felt like happenstance. He said that he was unsure if they had talked much about the City border as a group. He asked where it fit into their plan as they looked at 20 years ahead.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she believed that was their objective within the context of an ongoing collaboration with the City. She said that their goal had been to ensure that they did not impede the City's efforts, and the City did not impede their own. She said that they could summarize some of the conversations for clarity.

Mr. Missel said that consideration of borders was important, and maybe it should be under Part 1.

Mr. Bivins said that he experienced this issue around the MPO Tech and transportation, specifically regarding how people move across jurisdictions rather than focusing on the built environment. He said that these conversations were important in considering regional transportation and moving people within the community effectively. He said that UVA's involvement with bus services can change the approach to student transportation.

Mr. Bivins said that they were considering whether there was a shared way for students to move without requiring a bus from Albemarle to cross into another part of the City. He said that this discussion was more about practical solutions rather than built environment changes. He said that he did not know if all decision-makers may agree with the City's zoning approach.

Mr. Missel said that they should also consider water, and sewer. He said that he questioned how City and County water systems played against and together within the borders. He said that he considered density as there may be higher-density areas between the City and County that could be more accommodating for the built environment and County growth.

Mr. Murray said that continuing with the theme of borders, there were other borders as well. He said that Moores Creek was a contaminated stream, and there were discussions of conservation borders and how to deal with that issue. He said that when discussing parks and recreation, he thought about when they pulled up the map of Crozet, and they talked about multimodal traffic in Crozet.

Mr. Murray said that many people pointed out that there were connections from Crozet that went all the way to Shenandoah National Park. He said that maintaining those connections beyond the boundaries of the growth area of Crozet was important, such as greenways extending into rural areas. He said that thinking beyond those borders also applied to the Biodiversity Action Plan, which included wildlife corridors as a theme.

Mr. Clayborne said that concerning the ten areas of focus listed, some were quite defined while others were more subjective. He said that for example, "healthy communities" and "starving economy" might need additional explanation in this context.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that they struggled defining healthy communities, so it was renamed as resilient communities, which focused on the overall health of a community rather than individual health. She said that considering the holistic well-being of community members, they wanted to address how to cope with and recover from natural disasters.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that thriving economy had previously been named economic development. She said that they aimed to reconsider it by stepping back and suggesting that it was a broader concept than merely economic development; instead, it was about creating a flourishing economy for all individuals.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was inquiring because with climate change and equity being their two main priorities, he felt they lacked boldness in addressing them. He asked if there was a place to be more assertive regarding these issues. He said that many of the climate goals relied on good design, which they could not enforce but could encourage. He said that he often found applications lacking from a design perspective where numerous opportunities were missed.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was curious about integrating this focus into their work, particularly in relation to equitable communities or equity. He said that as climate change and equity were two of their main priorities, they should consider how to better incorporate them throughout their work.

Mr. Murray said that he was concerned about removing climate from conservation. He said that in many situations what may seem like an appropriate strategy regarding climate change, such as constructing a large solar farm, might not be the best approach for biodiversity or water protection, among other things. He said that one could make errors in climate policy by focusing on it narrowly. He said that he supported the suggestion of being bold. He said that there is more authority to mandate certain actions than what had been utilized so far. He said that requiring low-impact development was something that the County can implement under the Chesapeake Bay Act, but they had not done so.

Mr. Clayborne said that Section Two should clearly state their mission.

Mr. Barnes said that he believed part of this was realizing that these issues cut across multiple elements. He said that you could see this coming through in the actions they were attempting to take. He said that they would assess their relative boldness or lack thereof when discussing them.

Mr. Murray said that he struggled in categorizing certain topics as they could fit into multiple categories. He said that for example, some biodiversity action items might belong in parks and recreation. He said that to resolve this issue, he suggested including a "see also" link at the top of relevant sections to link to related parts.

Mr. Barnes said that he would briefly address the appendix. He said that although not as exciting, it contained regional plans referenced, such as transit or small area plans undertaken by departments. He said that they also planned to discuss the development of the plan itself at the introduction and beginning. He said that this section primarily documented the process they had followed for community outreach and engagement to create this plan.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that they were currently working on refining the different parts of the document and making the language clearer. She said that they planned to spend the next month and a half carefully reviewing and revising the text. She said that they would return in the fall to discuss any remaining key issues before producing a final draft of the entire document. She said that their goal was to provide the final version by the end of the fall, allowing at least one month for review.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that in the winter, they would begin having detailed conversations about specific elements and their implementation within the document as a whole. She said that their next public engagement round might take place in September or October. She said that they hoped to have a complete plan document ready for spring or summer of the following year.

Mr. Carrazana said that when discussing the fall/winter 2024 agenda, there were numerous significant topics. He said that he would suggest breaking these topics into manageable, bite-sized pieces for work sessions. He said that he recommended reviewing the plan and determining how many work sessions would be needed based on the topics.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that they planned to divide the topics into manageable segments.

Mr. Missel asked if, when breaking down the structure into smaller components, the focus was on a small part as a method to increase density in growth areas. He asked if this small part was instead to analyze the issue under plan objectives, place type framework, and implementation plan. He asked how one would determine which approach to use. He said that it was important to have a framework for these work sessions.

Mr. Bivins said that if he understood correctly, Mr. Missel wanted them to know the framework for this work. He said that by the end of the evening, people would have a clear understanding of the elements involved in this particular thing. He said that this way, they could view it from a holistic perspective and see how the challenges had been addressed and how they would be implemented in the common area.

Mr. Missel said yes. He said that using the composition of the comprehensive plan as a guide for structuring the work session.

Mr. Barnes said that he believed that was the intent. He said that it was intriguing how the concept of unlocking development potential in activity centers or discussing rural areas had been mentioned in various forums over the past couple of days. He said that it was likely that the document itself would have been the primary focus.

Mr. Missel said that he believed clarity will emerge as more information becomes available regarding the proposed comprehensive plan structure. He said that he hoped that Part 2 will become less confusing for him as it applied to a specific subject and followed through consistently. He said that understanding how Part 2 fit in and can be longer than Part 1 was important to him.

Mr. Missel said that regarding areas of focus for future work sessions, they had discussed that extensively. He said that a few things they did not cover include resilience and solar energy. He said that although he did not hear much about solar during this discussion, he knew that they will have a solar ordinance. He asked how it will fit into the comprehensive plan. He said that crossroads, traffic, schools, infrastructure, natural resources, aquifers were big-picture resource-related items that often pertained to rural areas but also applied to growth in certain areas.

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she would propose an idea for consideration, which may change over time as they progress. She said that they would identify additional topics not yet discussed that they might want to address during a future meeting.

Mr. Barnes said that they might still refine and clarify some of the terms they discussed based on feedback. He asked that they allow staff some flexibility as they moved forward to create the best possible document for everyone involved.

Mr. Murray said that he had one more thought, which related to the discussion about unlocking. He said that from a planning perspective, overall, what guides future land use was identifying the most economically viable allowed use on a property. He said that over time, whatever proved to be the most profitable use of that land would eventually come to pass. He said that he thought it was an important conversation to have.

Mr. Murray said that if the most profitable allowed use was solar, then it would become solar. He said that if the most profitable allowed use was a farm stand or a shopping center, those would be the resulting land uses. He said that he questioned how they could remove barriers and make the desired uses the most viable options for those locations.

Mr. Bivins said that he would add a caveat to the statement. He said that the caveat being that taxes have economic implications for an individual, and their income determined the land's classification. He said that if one had the ability to minimize taxes to the County and others by utilizing land use, there would be no incentive to develop the land. He said that no external factor would compel development due to income-based tax advantages gained through agricultural and forestry designations.

Mr. Murray said that the change in incentives had made what was most economically viable different.

Mr. Bivins said that it was not necessarily the highest value of the land that matters. He said that one must consider the ownership of the land because a person with limited access to discretionary income or wealth will not be as aggressive in seeking ways to shield their assets. He said that there were several provisions in the County's tax code that enabled people to protect their wealth, which could remove the land from its best and highest use. He said that these were the types of issues he wanted to examine because removing the static from the system involved addressing wealth preservation rather than the economic use of the land.

Mr. Missel said that a significant aspect of that subject was related to location. He said that if one considered certain areas, it may make sense and align with the growth area's mission to maximize development in a specific spot that increased the profit potential for developers. He said that this could be different in rural areas. He said that he believed it was worth considering.

Committee Reports

There were none.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting

Mr. Barnes said that he had no updates to share as there had been no Board of Supervisors meeting since their previous gathering. He said that they took a July break and would resume on July 17. He said that they would provide this presentation to the Board at that meeting.

AC44 Update

There was none.

New Business

There was none.

Old Business

There was none.

Items for follow-up

There were none.

Adjournment

At 8:15 p.m., the Commission adjourned to July 23, 2024, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium.

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Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: