Albemarle County Planning Commission
Work Session
Final Minutes October 25, 2022

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a work session on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 241 of the County Office Building.

Members attending were: Karen Firehock, Chair; Julian Bivins; Luis Carrazana; Lonnie Murray; and Fred Missel.

Members absent: Corey Clayborne, Vice-Chair.

Other officials present were: Charles Rapp, Director of Planning; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; Kevin McDermott; Cameron Langille; Alberic Karina-Plun; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Ms. Firehock established a quorum.

Work Session

Mr. Cameron Langille stated that today their work session was for a potential zoning map amendment application and some questions that staff and the applicant had for the Commission about some of the comprehensive plan recommendations. He said the property in question was Tax Map Parcel 61W-02-0A-2, 3.227 acres located on the east side of Route 29. He said that it was currently zoned C1 commercial and was located on the boundary between Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. He stated that there was a wide range of uses that surrounded this parcel, most of them nonresidential, along with some retirement and assisted living facilities to the northeast. He said this parcel was the former site of the CVille Oriental Grocery Store, and at the rear of the property was an existing business that did automobile service work.

Mr. Langille stated that the property was located within the Places29 Development Area, and the slide showed the future land use classifications recommended on the property. He said that the letters "NS" stood for Neighborhood Service Center, which was a center type in the Places29 Master Plan that was meant to recognize areas or nodes of activity that would occur within this development area. He said that Neighborhood Service Center was the least intense center type recommended by the master plan, but for purposes of the discussion today, one thing he wanted to call out specifically was that the master plan recommended a maximum building height of three stories for any structures that were in a Neighborhood Service Center.

Mr. Langille stated that there were two other colors within the property, one orange, which represented the urban density residential future land use classification and allowed for any type of residential use at a density between 6 and 34 units per acre. He said that it also had a maximum three-story building height, which might be an error in the presentation, and was actually a maximum of four stories of building height for urban density residential. He said he apologized for that. He said that the last color seen was the pink and white hatching, which covered most of the parcel, and represented the urban mixed-use in the centers land use category. He said that it was

a mixed-use land use classification that could include commercial, retail, general nonresidential like office or institutional, and also allowed residential uses between 3 and 20 units per acre.

Mr. Langille said the slide showed one of the images from Attachment A, which was included in the staff report, and was meant to show the general development that could be done with this parcel and this proposal. He stated that this would be a zoning map amendment to change the zoning district of the property from C1 commercial to Neighborhood Model District, a multi-use district that allowed for commercial and residential uses. He said that the form of this development would be a single structure that would primarily be multi-family residential dwellings at 275 units.

Mr. Langille stated that there would be an interior structured parking lot, which was represented on the center-left of the image in a grey color. He said that there was a retail component the developer was looking to do, shown in a salmon pink color on the lefthand side of the screen, approximately 740 square feet in the write-up provided by the applicant. He said that the building would be five stories tall, which came out to 85 dwelling units per acre, which exceeded the 20 units per acre recommended in the urban mixed-use category and the 34 units per acre recommended in the urban density residential.

Mr. Langille stated that he had some slides to discuss, which the applicant could also give information on if necessary. He said that there were images representing each level of the structure in the staff report. He showed levels 1 through 5, followed by some façade renderings to show the form of the building from the roadway. He said that the street seen at the bottom of the image was Route 29, and Hillsdale Drive was at the top, looking from the northwest to the southeast. He showed another image that showed the rendering from another angle, looking from the southwest to the northeast.

Mr. Langille stated that the purpose of the work session today was to discuss two questions. He said the first was that given the density that was proposed by the applicant, would that be generally acceptable although it exceeded the master plan's recommendations? He said the second was if the building height proposed would be generally acceptable considering the limitations that the master plan recommended based on the land use classifications. He said that his presentation had concluded and asked if they should discuss hearing from the applicant.

Ms. Firehock stated that she would like to hear from the applicant but wanted to ask first what the age of the master plan was that recommended the 20 units per acre.

Mr. Langille stated that the Places29 Master Plan was adopted in June 2010. He said he was sure it was the year 2010 but was unsure of the exact month.

Ms. Firehock asked to hear from the applicants. She asked if Ms. Long was representing the applicants.

Ms. Valerie Long with Williams Mullen stated that she was representing the applicant, and also present were her colleague, Megan Nedostup, and David Deeds with Basis Living, the contract purchaser of this property. She said that Mr. Langille had covered most of the issues. She said that when Mr. Deeds and his colleagues came to them with this property, they were very interested in investing in the County, helping to address the shortage of multi-family housing in the County, and identified this property and shared their vision. She stated that from an urban planning perspective, they believed it made sense, and the company believed it made sense from a market perspective, but the biggest issue was the density issue.

Ms. Long stated that their initial thought was that the density was twice as much as the comprehensive plan's recommendation, but it made sense for the parcel. She said that it was right on the line of the City-County border, the City's comprehensive plan, adopted last fall, had the parcels to the south given a designation that contemplated up to 10 stories along major corridors, and had not gotten into density levels, but speculated from the drafts that it would be a higher density on their side and potentially no limits on density.

Ms. Long stated that from their perspective, that was another reason why it was another good opportunity for the County to think about how this property could be most efficiently used and address the shortage of housing. She said that the density limits were the only challenging aspect given the 12-year-old master plan, and since that plan had been adopted, there had been a lot of change in terms of density limits, how a built environment was done, the Rio 29 Plan down the street, and the character of a plan called for a much higher density and urban, compact development. She noted that they looked at that and saw a lot of similarities; it was not within that small area plan, but there were lots of potential benefits due to its location on a bus line, near sidewalks and trails, and other amenities.

Ms. Long stated that the slide shown was included to visually demonstrate that this property was on the boundary of the City. She said that everything on the east side of 29 was in the City of Charlottesville, and the other side was the County. She showed an aerial photograph and said that the old Comdial building, now Seminole Place, was the property across the street, and backed up almost to Hillsdale Drive. She said the next slide showed the comprehensive plan designations, which Mr. Langille had already mentioned. She said that concerning the uses in the comprehensive plan, they believed it was an exact match because it contemplated urban density residential, some type of Neighborhood Service Center level of mixed-use, and as indicated, the concept plan was for a retail component in the front.

Ms. Long showed a slide of their proposal items. She stated that when they were looking at this, they noted and acknowledged that the density that was proposed was more than the current comprehensive plan's recommendation, which was the reason they wanted to have a work session. She said that they believed there was a lot of merit and hoped the Commission agreed. She said they would like feedback if this were something that the Commission would even entertain before going through the expense and time of preparing a full application, waiting months for it to get to the Commission before finding out it was dead on arrival.

Ms. Long stated that the proposal was for a five-story building containing 7,400 square feet of nonresidential space fronting Route 29, 275 multi-family apartment units, a structured parking deck, and modern amenities for a multi-family project such as this. She said that they were considering a multi-use path along the frontage of Route 29, which was recommended in the Places 29 Master Plan. She said they had a pedestrian and vehicular connection to Hillsdale Drive proposed, and a small plaza area adjacent to the retail and commercial space as part of the concept.

Ms. Long showed a map and said that the area in the salmon pink was a proposed retail space on Route 29, with a shared-use path shown and a grass strip between the path and Route 29. She stated that the parking deck was gray in the center, and the site would be entered either through the bottom left, an in-only entrance with no exit. She said that if someone was picking up or dropping off someone who lived there, they would go in, drop off at the circle, and exit through the parking garage. She said that there was a right out at the northern edge that would coordinate

with the future Wawa gas station that was proposed on the parcel immediately to the north, with the interconnection shown. She stated that they were also proposing a walking trail along the entire southern boundary of the parcel that would run from Route 29 all the way to the back of the parcel.

Ms. Long said the slide shown was of the various floors of the building and their layouts. She stated that it was more residential, with a parking deck in between. She said that the rendering of how the building would lay out pertained to future uses, and the future Wawa site was drawn in to show what that would look like. She said in the top-left of the map was a future parking lot that would provide a vehicular and pedestrian parking connection to Hillsdale Drive. She said that several months ago, they brought the Virginia Institute of Autism Special Use Permit, and what was currently a vacant lot could potentially be future overflow parking for when they built out the second phase of their expansion. She said that those plans were able to be incorporated with the inter-parcel connection that allowed for enough parking spaces and provided for future redevelopment if needed.

Ms. Long showed a rendering of the other side, and the center corner where the red met the orange had the vehicular tunnel or corridor to drive through the parking deck to reach the northern edge of the parcel and be able to proceed north on Route 29 or into the Wawa. She said that looking at the consistency with the comprehensive plan, they asked that the Commission consider that, while the master plan and its density recommendations were important, there were many components of the comprehensive plan, and they asked the Commission to consider those components that were relevant to this application and all those applications.

Ms. Long stated that the issue of density was just one of many recommendations or guiding principles in the comprehensive plan, and as she noted, the use was exactly consistent with the plan's recommendations. She said that when they analyzed it internally against the neighborhood model principles, it met all of them, and was based on the concept plan. She said the growth management section of the comprehensive plan encouraged approval of new development proposals in the development area, and at the designated location and with the mixture of uses, it was obviously a relevant component.

Ms. Long stated that also in the development section of the comprehensive plan, there were a number of other objectives that were very relevant to this proposal and supported the proposal in terms of consistency. She said that those were to provide sidewalks and pedestrian paths in the development areas, promote redevelopment, and take advantage of existing investment in development areas, such as the infrastructure that existed on Route 29, to use the development area land efficiently to prevent premature expansion in the development areas, to promote density within the development areas to create new compact, urban places, promote infill and redevelopment that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and uses. She said that they felt this development met all of these objectives.

Ms. Long stated that as Mr. Langille had indicated, there were a variety of uses surrounding this parcel, with no single-family residential uses immediately adjacent, the furthest one being the far side of the Virginia Institute of Autism in the Brookmill community, or perhaps the Branchlands community, so this would not adversely impact those neighbors. She said that the parcel to the south, in the City, which was currently a Chinese restaurant, had a lot of extra parking, so that parcel could potentially be redeveloped in the future, the Wawa was being redeveloped, and the Virginia Institute of Autism was going to the east with their expansion as well, so they believed it worked well with all of those adjacent uses, with the Seminole Place property across the street,

which was a mixture of warehouse uses. She said that School Center 1 was there, a brewery, and Stonefield down the road, so they felt it was a desirable location for a use like this.

Ms. Long stated that one of the most important topics was Housing Albemarle and the comprehensive plan goal of increasing the supply of housing to meet the diverse housing needs of current and future Albemarle County residents, and a strategy defined as allowing, encouraging, and incentivizing a variety of housing types. She said that there was a provision that also discussed what the exact need was, that the County was projected to grow 25% in the next 20 years, and there was a need for 2,719 additional units to accommodate that increase.

Ms. Firehock said that they would begin with questions before addressing comments.

Mr. Missel said that where the red met the orange on the slide and where the entrance to the garage was shown, it appeared that there was a stepback along the road there. He asked if that was accurate.

Ms. Long confirmed that it was, and she asked to see the slides again.

Mr. Deeds asked if they were talking about a stepback from Seminole Trail.

Ms. Long said no, it was between the retail.

Mr. Deeds said he believed it was 15 feet in length in order to provide room for the sidewalk and room for landscaping and plaza scenarios.

Ms. Long asked if Mr. Missel was referring to the building height stepback.

Mr. Missel said yes.

Ms. Long said that the fact that the retail was one story, and the multi-family was stepped back.

Mr. Missel stated that it said that retail was double height, and there was a white stepback. He asked if it was accurate that that was a stepback.

Ms. Long said yes. She stated that some of that was to reflect the different recommendations in the comprehensive plan on building height for the neighborhood services designation of the parcel compared to the urban density residential.

Mr. Missel thanked Ms. Long. He commented that related to the retail, he did not want to refer to it as gratuitous, but it was ground floor and adjacent to the main circulation pattern of the pedestrians. He asked if it was retail that they were envisioning to support this development or retail for other developments as well. He asked what the concept was around that.

Mr. Deeds asked if it was a requirement.

Ms. Long responded that it was not necessarily a requirement. She said that they could do a different zoning.

Mr. Deeds stated that it was a retail corridor, so doing some retail played into the context of the corridor itself. He said that they were setting aside some parking and the internal parking garage for these retailers. He said that he could not predict what retailers would do, but they envisioned a delicatessen and an outdoor space for people to congregate. He said that for a building this size, it helped to have internal retail so that residents could get coffee or sandwiches. He said that by trying to meet the wishes of the Commissioners and the planners to make things interconnected, the retailers ultimately helped their building by providing a flow of people. He said that it would be desirable space, and they were unsure if they would use 7,400 square feet.

Mr. Missel stated that he asked because they had seen retail backfire, in which there was a desire to bring life to a street but could not find anyone to fill the retail so there was a dead space in the front of their building.

Mr. Deeds said that he did not envision that with Route 29. He said that they would not propose a mixed-use project with this much retail here if they did not think it could be filled.

Mr. Missel said that there was surrounding retail, and he mentioned Stonefield as an example.

Mr. Deeds said that there were many big-box retailers like REI, and a lot of small shop retailers liked to fill in around those larger ones.

Mr. Missel asked how stormwater was being accommodated.

Mr. Deeds responded that they were assuming underground stormwater management.

Mr. Missel asked if their vision for affordability followed County policy or City policy.

Mr. Deeds said that from what he understood, they would be meeting it.

Ms. Long said that her team had explained the affordable housing requirements, knowing there was a lot of uncertainty there.

Mr. Murray asked if they had considered flexibility in terms of that ground floor and the future ability to expand retail if there was more room for retail on the first floor. He asked what the adaptability of the first floor was with the ability to adapt as demand changed.

Mr. Deeds responded that they could always convert it to residential units, and he could not foresee them wanting more retail. He said that the City, the County, and the country in general had housing needs but did not necessarily need more retail space or office space. He pointed out that 7,400 square space for retail was a lot. He said that if he had a use that he could put on .75 acres, it could not be a lot, but if they built it spec, as they planned to, it was a decent amount of retail. He said that they believed it to be attractive, but to answer Mr. Murray's question, it could always be converted to office or residential. He said that they did not envision creating more retail.

Mr. Murray stated that a big, flat building such as the proposed one was a great candidate for a green roof.

Ms. Firehock asked if there were any other questions. She said that the applicant had talked about access through the parking lot in the back of Hillsdale Drive, but that was not the applicant's property, so they would have to work out some sort of ingress and egress agreement and easement.

Ms. Long confirmed this.

Ms. Firehock said that that would need to be determined.

Ms. Long responded that in working with the Virginia Institute of Autism and the owner of that parcel, while they had not worked out the details, it had been part of the plan since prior redevelopment plans.

Mr. Deeds stated that they had already had discussions with the developer of the Wawa property, and because they were trying to meet VDOT's recommendations with regards to limiting new Rt. 29 access, they currently had two in- and out-access points on Route 29. He said that he understood the limits imposed, but they were working with the Wawa to combine their in-and-out to the north of the property, and so far, had been cooperative, but two things had to happen before they all could work together. He said that they all had to work together to make the fire marshal and VDOT happy and to provide marketable access.

Ms. Firehock stated that in looking at the parking lot that went to Hillsdale, it did not seem conducive as a throughway. She said cars were backing out and pulling in, and they were trying to sneak through. She said that it was a situation she knew could get difficult, so the parking lot needed to be designed a different way.

Ms. Long stated that it was not intended to be a regular interconnection for the very reasons Ms. Firehock indicated, but an option. She said that if someone needed to get to Hillsdale and did not want to make multiple turns, they could get there relatively easily. She said that the challenge with that site was that there was a stormwater management facility in one corner, steeper slopes in other areas, and it was the only way that the footprint worked, per the civil engineers that designed it, that provided enough parking for the Virginia Institute of Autism's long-term needs and allowed for vehicles to circulate through. She said that it was only on paper in plans, and was not ideal, but was done as best as possible with the options available.

Ms. Firehock asked what types of units the applicant was envisioning.

Mr. Deeds responded that it would be mostly one- and two-bedroom apartments with a small number of studios, and it would be marketed that way.

Ms. Firehock said that she was seeing it that way. She said that she did not imagine a lot of families wanting to live in this spot.

Mr. Deeds said that was fair to say. He said perhaps some young families would. He said that it would be 1-bedroom apartments, 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom apartments, and some studios.

Ms. Firehock asked if the parking deck was open to the sky.

Mr. Deeds stated that yes, it would be open to the sky. He said that it was wrapped on three sides, so it would be aesthetically more pleasing.

Ms. Firehock stated that she had seen in some developments that the building would be accessible from the upper deck. She asked if Mr. Deeds was trying to do something similar.

Mr. Deeds said that was correct.

Ms. Firehock asked if one would enter at the bottom and park on the floor where your unit was.

Mr. Deeds said that they had not planned that far, but in some instances that was the case. He said that there would not be 16 doors on the outside.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not mean that.

Mr. Deeds said that there would be three access points.

Ms. Firehock asked if they would lead to common areas that led to the hallways.

Mr. Deeds said that was correct. He said that most of the first floor would be parking dedicated to the retail on the first floor, as outlined in their plans. He said essentially for security reasons, they would FOB (what is FOB) off the upper floors so that no one would get into the apartments.

Ms. Long said that was for residents of the apartments.

Mr. Deeds said that yes, it was for residents.

Ms. Firehock asked if it was two stories for retail or if it was just tall.

Mr. Deeds said that it was just tall. He said that most retail was 14 feet or 15 feet clear for tall ceilings.

Ms. Firehock asked if there were any further questions.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the top level of the parking deck was for apartments.

Mr. Deeds confirmed that it was.

Mr. Carrazana said that they were not showing the spots.

Ms. Long explained that it would not be on the top of the building. She corrected herself and said that they would be on the roof.

Mr. Carrazana said that it was showing levels. He said that it was a very preliminary massing, but right now it was showing levels at the apartment complex.

Mr. Deeds said that on the top, it would sit just below the top of the building.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the highest point of the garage would, in general, be lower than the roof parapet.

Mr. Deeds said yes.

Mr. Carrazana stated that the roof would be full of mechanical systems. He said that he also would echo his colleague's remarks about installing a green roof for a building of this size because it would show how they could build sustainably. He said they would have issues with both their quality and quantity of stormwater, so anything they could do to show how they were looking forward with construction technology would be helpful.

Mr. Deeds said that their civil engineer was not present for the work session, but that was something that they were thinking about. He said that it was 100% impervious, so they understood they would have to do some sort of underground retention and meet the County's requirement.

Ms. Firehock noted that they were in the first quarter of the comprehensive planning as well as working on rewriting the zoning ordinance, and as part of that, perhaps looking at some incentives for green technologies, such as had been done in neighboring vicinities to give density bonuses, such as putting in a green roof, using permeable pavers in parking spaces, and things like that. She said that they were not at that point yet, so they did not have things to present as ways to get additional density bonuses or get those other things. She said that she wanted them to understand what they were looking for. She asked to hear other Commissioners' comments.

Mr. Missel asked if, because it was five stories, it would be stick-built, and they were avoiding a high-rise.

Mr. Deeds replied that both were reasons why. He said that building anything larger than this would be a big swing in the County, not that it would be unsuccessful, but because of many reasons. He said that yes, it would be stick-built. He said it was a five-story slab concrete with a concrete deck.

Mr. Missel commented that he understood, and he asked if they were phasing this at all or if it would be one-and-done.

Mr. Deeds responded that it would be a one-and-done, unless it were a raving success, and they bought the parcels next door and wanted to do it again.

Ms. Firehock said that she had ideas about the design that she would leave aside for the moment. She asked the Commissioners what their thoughts were about the height and density proposed there.

Mr. Murray said that he was fine with it because it met their goals with the comprehensive plan in terms of the density they were looking for. He said that he liked the idea of the internal parking garage, and they were not wasting space with a parking lot. He said that it was redevelopment, which they were trying to encourage, so he saw all of those things as big points of favorability.

Ms. Firehock asked how others felt about the question of density.

Mr. Missel stated that he appreciated the time that they took to look at the stepback from Route 29. He said that for a number of reasons, that road already felt like it was uninviting for pedestrian use, so if they wanted to really enliven the street edge, which was inevitable, it was not so much the height but how they felt along the corridor as a pedestrian and making sure there was landscape and perhaps retail.

Mr. Deeds stated that all of those things also helped their building. He said that having that retail and space made their building more desirable and made the streetscape for Albemarle and Charlottesville better. He said that they had a few iterations back and forth with the planners and had given them notes on more landscape. He said that as a developer, they did not want to plant a lot of trees, but he understood, and being next to a gas station could be seen as undesirable. He said that he believed it would serve them well to landscape and create an experience and place.

Mr. Missel said with sun-angle relationships, there was a minimum stepback, and the rising sun would be east, and the building would shade Route 29. He said that considering a sizable stepback would make a difference.

Ms. Firehock said that there could be balconies for people. She asked if Mr. Bivins had a comment about the density of this plan.

Mr. Bivins stated that he did not have much to say because she already had. He said that he was pleased to hear it—and in his walk-around to see the elevations, even at five stories, it would be a small building.

Ms. Firehock said that across the street was a rise and the Comdial building sat on top of that.

Mr. Bivins stated that it would still be a small building. He said that he took a photograph from the front of Comdial and said that there was absolutely nothing there. He said that he was looking down the road. He said that he imagined if the present person in charge of the post office remained in place, their post office there would not be there, because the piece of property was too valuable for that use. He said that from the new opportunity, the Seminole Square shopping center would have a building there. He said that he hoped that Fashion Square would have a several-story building there at some point in time. He said that he had given up on the other one when they were talking about it.

Mr. Bivins continued that he was attempting to establish what the parameters of this part of Route 29 might be, and on their terms. He said that he would like to see buildings that were a little taller as well as office buildings on the second floor. He said that going up Route 29, there were not many community office spaces in that location. He said that they had an opportunity to send a signal if they wanted to see that part of Route 29 redeveloped, thinking in terms of 10 or 15 years down the road. He said that staff had told them that they were about 55% below density whenever new applications came in, so when they gave them the density report, they would be looking at zone density.

Ms. Firehock asked what zone Mr. Bivins said.

Mr. Bivins explained that he said zone density, which was, in his mind, how they captured the density they did not get—because once it was gone, they could not get it back.

Ms. Firehock said that then they would have to redevelop in another 30 years.

Mr. Bivins stated that the idea he had was if there were places where it was not noxious to think that there might be an opportunity for a higher density. He said that when he was standing at Comdial, looking right, and left, he thought that he did not get it on the John Warner Parkway, where he really wanted it, but this would be a place where it would be hard for them to say that a

little bit more density would be problematic. He said that they would never be able to capture that 50% of lost densities on other projects, so he wanted to know how they would do it. He reiterated that he did not have a problem with the density and asked if there was a square pool located on the map.

Ms. Long said it was a possibility.

Mr. Bivins said that the geese would end up living there.

Mr. Carrazana concurred that there were a lot of geese in that area.

Mr. Carrazana said that they had certain sites that lent themselves to this density, and this was definitely one of them. He said that when they did that, there were financial incentives. He said that they could be bold. He said that one was retail, but one was commercial, and perhaps that entire block that faced Route 29 wanted to be a combination of retail and commercial, and that could have a larger residential component to it. He said that this could serve as a model for what they could do in the rest of the County.

Mr. Carrazana stated that some people feared the density, but it was acceptable if it was done well, and they would challenge them to do this and make it a model project so that others could see that they could have high density in areas where they needed it, which would help them with other areas they wanted to preserve. He said those higher densities also helped with infrastructure, and they had infrastructure there. He said that his only problem with the density was that it was not enough for this area.

Ms. Firehock stated that she would conclude this topic and then they could talk about elements of the building itself. She said that she completely agreed, looking at the building height and wondering why they did not have six levels. She said she understood that other things affected this, and looking at what was going on around it, she was not worried about offending the post office with the building, and because of what was all around it, they were not towering over someone's single-family bungalow. She said they had none of those issues, and Comdial was at a raised elevation across the street, so the height would not feel out of place in terms of the roof lines.

Ms. Firehock said that she liked the notion of considering some office or commercial for stores above the retail, and they could rent out those units as apartments, there would be people with a an undesirable view of Route 29—but for an office, it would be a benefit to be near the coffeeshop downstairs. She said that there was a dearth of spaces for smaller firms and a high demand for that, and a lot of firms could not afford or did not want to be on the Downtown Mall, which did not have much available space to offer. She said that having an office on the front and retail underneath it could be the work part of the building, and the back could be more of the residential, where they could not necessarily look at cars driving by.

Ms. Firehock stated that in terms of the site itself, when she saw the flat top that she thought was a roofed parking garage, she wondered whether or not they could put a green roof on top of that. She said that if they went up another story or two, there were some award-winning designs of interior parking garages, which could have windows looking down on a courtyard space, which became a huge amenity. She said that she knew of builders in Jersey City, New Jersey, which had very little green space, who had made green rooftops activated spaces, and it became a huge amenity. She said that they rented the places easily, and it was worth the cost to them. She said

that the green roofs cost two to three times more than a conventional roof but lasted three times longer. She said that there were ways that they could do something with that space, because they were trying to create an internal courtyard with turnaround spaces and an amenity zone.

Mr. Deeds noted that the light blue would be amenity space such as a lobby, sports court, or pool.

Ms. Firehock said that there were so many gorgeous views in the area, and maybe the most beautiful were the parking lots in Pantops or near the jail. She said that she wondered why no one wanted to do anything with their rooftops.

Mr. Deeds stated that a lot of his background was multi-family in downtown Chicago, and roof decks were almost always included in new construction.

Ms. Firehock said that she grew up in Washington, D.C., and many buildings of neighborhoods she lived in now had rooftop amenities. She said that if people were on rooves, they hopefully were looking into the distance to see beautiful views. She said that they were in a very urban space, so the idea that they could go up the elevator and be outside on a beautiful day, the space would be enlivened, and much more so than down in the courtyard. She said that she was unsure if the courtyard was big enough in this development to give the same feeling, so other spaces to feel open and free would be good. She said that there was space going toward the park in the direction of Hillsdale Drive, but that was a farther destination, so it would be neat to ride the elevator up.

Mr. Missel stated that for the view from southbound traffic on Route 29 on the edge of the building, especially where the parking garage was exposed, the ARB and the viewshed would need to be considered, and if there were potentially ways to wrap it.

Ms. Firehock said that in downtown Staunton, they put in parking garages where it just looked like another building.

Mr. Missel said that it would be an expensive edge to be a parking garage.

Mr. Deeds said that it did not help them to have an open concrete block. He said that they would not build one beautiful side and one open.

Mr. Bivins stated that there were several six-story structures in Stonefield, including the hotel and the most recently built building. He said that the older structures were four stories, so this building was not out of the question to be made higher and was not breaking new boundaries in that area.

Ms. Firehock said that it would be useful in the formal presentation to include the larger buildings that were just as tall.

Mr. Murray said that Stonefield was originally proposed to be a much better project.

Ms. Firehock said that there was living space on top of the stores originally proposed.

Mr. Bivins said that changed in 2008.

Ms. Long stated that there was a multi-family building that was under construction adjacent to Hydraulic that the Board granted an exception for, so there would be eight floors on one side, and another that was proposed but not under construction that would be at least seven floors.

Mr. Langille said that one of the structures, the one just north of the movie theater, when finished, would have portions six stories tall, some that were seven stories, and one end that was eight stories tall.

Mr. Carrazana asked if that was where the parking lot was in the hotel.

Mr. Bivins said it had the film under it currently.

Mr. Langille confirmed this.

Ms. Long said it looked like a prison.

Mr. Carrazana said that going to those higher densities allowed them to create amenities and allowed them to do something with the affordability of those units. He said that those were the kind of things that density brought, so they would encourage them to look at that.

Ms. Firehock stated that their land costs were set, and while it cost more money to build more floors, they were also saying that more density was not necessarily always better, and they wanted them to do something innovative that was less polluting and provided opportunities for a unique outdoor experience. She said that to do that, while they did not yet have the policy, they would like to challenge them to do this, so they could say to the public that they were allowing something past what was allowed in the outdated master plan that did not envision the modern-looking and forward-thinking design aesthetic for this corridor. She said that if they gave plenty of green designs and add recreation, this was the sort of thinking that made them really like this project versus just that it was tall.

Mr. Missel said to honor the street edge and pedestrian scale. He said that they could go high and completely lose the pedestrian scale. He commented that the University had done a good job with stormwater management on Brandon Avenue with a green street, and there was potentially room in front of the building and those courtyards where they could do stormwater management.

Ms. Firehock said that they could do stormwater management in their tree wells, which were structured cells that would hold stormwater and run utilities through, so they would get stormwater quality credits. She said that they could buy offsite water quality credits, but it would be nice to treat some of the stormwater being generated onsite and not only volume through underground storage.

Mr. Bivins said to remember that the property sat on the edge of two 55-years-and-older communities, so there would be an interesting set of clientele there. He said that he knew they were talking about young professionals, but situating it there meant they should look at the community to see what was there. He said there was a lot of space there that could be used for them.

Mr. Deeds stated that when they first looked at the site, they were interested in age-restricted housing. He said it was more difficult to capitalize on. He said that he understood Mr. Bivins' comments and agreed. He said that they knew the greater Charlottesville area was not only young

professionals who would be living there. He said that the space would be beautiful and a phenomenal space to live that would serve a number of different communities.

Ms. Firehock stated that she knew many people who had moved into a condo to be nearer to their parent who was in a care center.

Mr. Bivins asked how many parking spaces were necessary, and why there were no Tesla chargers.

Mr. Deeds said that there was a Wawa next door.

Mr. Bivins said to put regular chargers in for people who did not buy Teslas.

Mr. Deeds said that was noted.

Mr. Bivins asked if the number of parking spaces was necessary.

Ms. Firehock said that along those lines, she was unsure if there were bus stops or bike-riding around the area.

Ms. Long said that Hillsdale could be biked on.

Ms. Firehock said that for crossing Route 29, there were a lot of amenities, and Stonefield was within walking distance.

Mr. Bivins said that they would be able to walk, because there was going to be a bridge that went over Route 29 between Stonefield and Zan Road.

Ms. Long said that they could walk down Hillsdale through the parking lot, up Zan, and to the future cross-bridge.

Ms. Firehock said that the walking trail that went along the side and showed going through the parking lot, and she wondered if it was possible to get an easement for the trail to not go through the parking lot to get there.

Mr. Deeds said that once they began speaking with them, it could be established.

Ms. Firehock said that it was not very inviting to walk through the parking lot.

Mr. Deeds said that the intention was to extend it to Hillsdale, and they did not want to bump into a truck at the corner. He said that it made a lot of sense.

Mr. Rapp said that not related to the specific development, but when he met with Ms. Long and Ms. Nedostup for this, they were discussing the application package, and they had a lot of discussions last night about applications, and they saw this as a great example of what was important with the rezoning, showing building massing, the relationship to adjacent buildings, showing diagrams for what uses were going in the building without getting into the dimension of apartment spaces and other things.

Ms. Firehock said there were also circulation patterns for vehicles and for people. She said that the point she just asked about regarding getting to Stonefield could be included in the graphic information related to the neighborhood center. She said it could be shown that those facilities did not need to be on the exact site because it was easy to walk across to where those things were located.

Mr. Rapp stated that they should think about that with the zoning ordinance update and what they wanted to see with the applications. He said that his recommendation was that this was where they should go, although it would not be perfect. He said it was very different from what they normally saw. He said that it provided a lot of clarity to some of the questions they often had without diving into unnecessary details.

Mr. Carrazana stated that with this project, they were talking about more density, so something that would be helpful to have included would be the elevation that showed the height. He said that they sometimes dealt with things that required sensitivity with height regarding the surroundings, and in some cases, they did not know how high they were exactly, so having something in writing would be good to have that sectioned. He said in this case, it was not about sensitivity as much as it was about knowing how high off the street and how deep was the setback that was being proposed.

Mr. Rapp said that perhaps what was missing was an actual elevation relationship to the street and building height.

Ms. Firehock said that they could get the height of the Comdial building as a reference.

Mr. Deeds said that they could put that together with their architects in D.C. He said that those were requests that were usually for areas surrounded by towers.

Ms. Firehock said that the Commission did not necessarily need to see it, but the community members who were averse to tall buildings and with some of the conversations around the form-based code meant that those measurements could be helpful in dialogue.

Mr. Carrazana said that staff was trying to put together minimum requirements for most applications, which was not as critical for this application, but it was for others when they were asked for special use or variance on a setback without the information all being available.

Mr. Murray said that about the comments regarding the green roof, he felt that the attempt to provide green amenities alleviated his concerns about such large density because there was an opportunity here to provide housing space and amenities, which they would like to see. He said that as they got to other sites with large density, the other thing that concerned him was emergency vehicle access, which he did not see as much of a concern about here but was something he would like to see.

Mr. Bivins said that all of that in the process went to the Board of Supervisors and then to staff before the site review process. He said that Fire and Rescue played an enormous role, and he had witnessed Fire and Rescue explain when there were sites their trucks could not access. He said that things would stop if a particular person did not think a project was meeting regulations until the applicant fixed what they needed to fix.

Mr. Murray said that it was not true that there were people building houses that they could not get firetrucks to.

Mr. Bivins stated that they did not get involved in that. He said he used to listen to people at the site review meetings.

Ms. Long pointed out that the fire marshal was included in pre-application meetings. She stated that this plan had evolved based on the Fire Chief's comments and concerns during their meetings so that they would know on the front end and not in the middle of getting the zoning approved.

Mr. Langille said that usually with a rezoning like this, all of the members on the site review committee for a by-right site plan or subdivision were sent copies of the ZMA. He said they tried to catch the big issues, so they did not approve a legislative action and create a situation to deal with later.

Mr. Bivins said that the Stonefield project was approved in 2008 and was just now being built. He said that the rules had changed, so they should analyze how long things would sit fallow before coming back for reevaluation.

Ms. Firehock said that was new business for tonight.

Mr. Bivins said that was his homework, to comment.

Mr. Murray said that he wanted to get back to that topic at some future point because he had seen some things in Charlottesville like a project that was 100 years old.

Ms. Firehock said that she was trying to respect the applicant's time. She asked if there was any further discussion. She said that she appreciated the applicant's willingness to work in this session.

Ms. Long said that she did not think there was anything further.

Mr. Deeds said that he greatly appreciated everyone's time.

Mr. Missel said that these work sessions should be required for each applicant.

Ms. Firehock said that perhaps for more complicated projects.

Mr. Missel said that the applicant's information had given the Commission enough to chew on and give good feedback.

Ms. Long said that it gave them comfort to know that a project could work if the Board and Commission were open to it, so supporting the concept was important.

Ms. Firehock said that the Commission did not approve anything but was discussing directions.

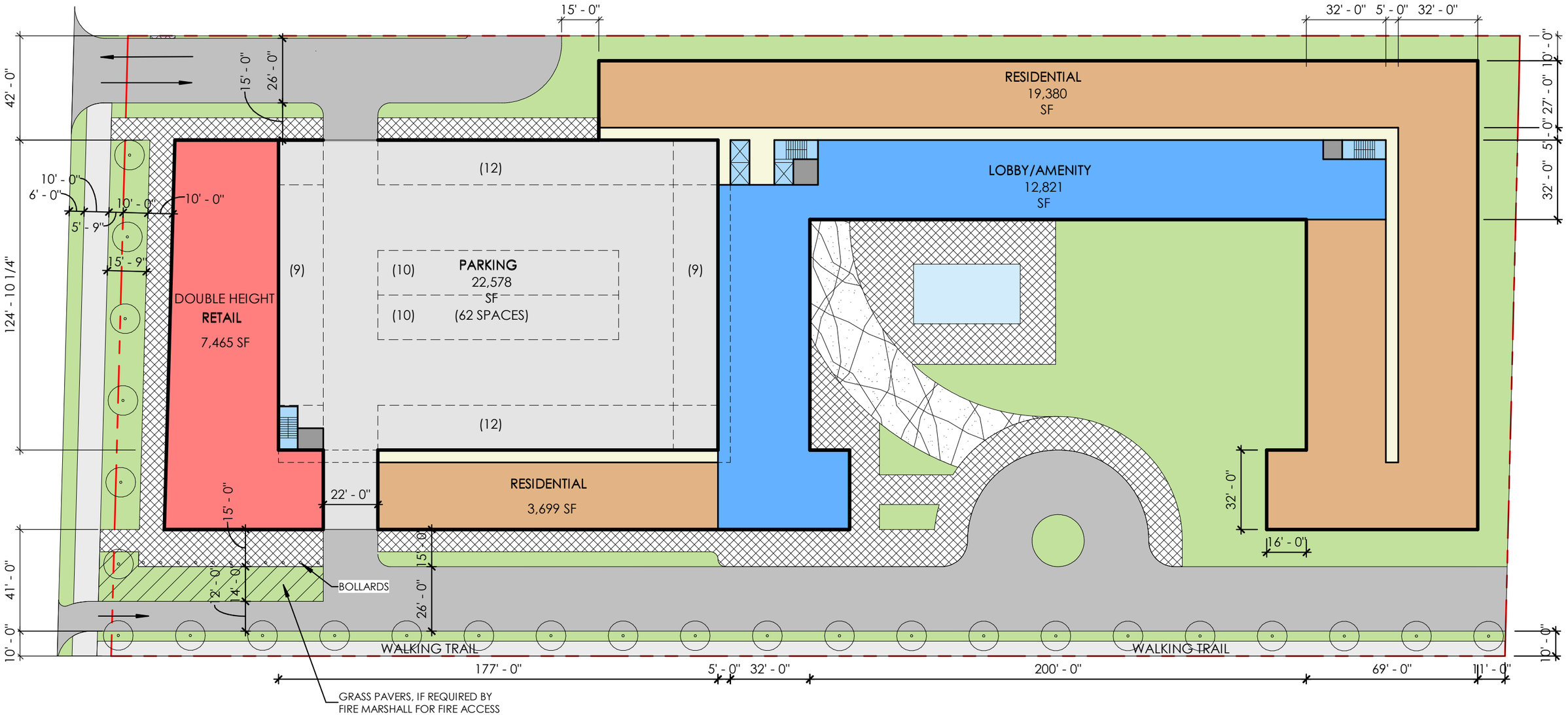
Adjournment

At 5:30 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 25, 2022, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m., Lane Auditorium, County Office Building.

Charles Rapp, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 11/22/2022
Initials: CSS



SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"

LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN T.4

