Albemarle County Planning Commission
Work Session and Regular Meeting
Draft Minutes May 27, 2025

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

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

Members absent none

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Ben Holt, Senior Planner II; Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager; Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager; Andy Herrick, County Attorney; Jennifer Tevendale, Senior Assistant County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Work Session

CCP202100002 AC44 Comp Plan – Cultural Resources

Ben Holt, Senior Planner II, said that he was with the County's Long Range Planning Division, and joined by Margaret Maliszewski, who would present on their cultural resources content. He said that before they began, he would like to briefly review their agenda for today. He said that they would provide a snapshot of their current status in the AC44 schedule, then summarize previous Commission feedback, followed by community feedback, and provide an overview of each topic. He said that after that, they would have a Q&A session, allowing the Commissioners to ask questions and share feedback. He said that they would first handle the Cultural Resources chapter topics, then would discuss the Resilient Communities chapter.

Mr. Holt said that regarding their schedule, earlier this month, on May 6, staff presented the Transportation chapter to the Commission. He said that they would be bringing that Transportation content to the Board tomorrow at their work session. He said that they also had hosted a community check-in meeting last week on Thursday. He said that moving forward, they would be presenting the Cultural Resources and Resilient Communities topics to the Board on June 4. He said that after that, they would have completed each of the topic chapters, and they would move on to other sections of the plan.

Mr. Holt said that they would be discussing plan implementation with the Commission on June 24 and with the Board on July 16. He said that as a reminder, their AC44 Engagement website was the best place to review the content, where staff had published all of their draft chapters and would share their upcoming schedule. He said that he would next move into the Cultural Resources topic. He said that it should be noted that as staff, they were incorporating the request to include

captions for all images within the chapter drafts, as they had heard from both the Commission and the Board. He said that this would be included for the cultural content and would be updated for all other chapters as they completed them. He said that in terms of cultural resources, this topic also encompassed historic and scenic resources.

Mr. Holt said that based on previous feedback, staff heard that they should be including support, strength and protection for their resources, protective measures beyond voluntary preservation compliance, a preservation ordinance, and maintaining an up-to-date inventory of their resources. He said that in terms of equity, it was essential to provide an inclusive history and narratives, including historic Free Town communities and resources built by enslaved labor and displaced peoples, including Native and African American communities. He said that other themes would include leveraging adaptive reuse to preserve buildings, utilizing greater incentives and requirements to prevent demolition of structures, and promoting and supporting cultural tourism, arts, crafts, and music.

Mr. Holt said that the major themes that emerged from their public feedback largely aligned with the Planning Commission's feedback, focusing on enhanced historic preservation and requirements, as well as incentives to achieve it, along with enhancing their entrance corridors. He said that the County's historic marker program had also been recommended to be expanded, and efforts to tell inclusive histories, while leveraging cultural tourism.

Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager, said that before she summarized the topic, she would like to acknowledge the significant assistance she received from the AC44 team on this chapter. She said that she would like to extend her gratitude to Khris Taggart, Mariah Gleason, Scott Clark, and James Van Vranken, who contributed to the text.

Ms. Maliszewski said that in this chapter, staff aimed to highlight the importance of cultural resources in making Albemarle County unique. She said that cultural resources not only established community character but also significantly contributed to their quality of life and supported climate action goals. She said that however, these positive attributes came with significant challenges.

Ms. Maliszewski said that thousands of historic resources had been surveyed with a systematic technical documentation of physical attributes, but many of these surveys were outdated. She said that the early surveys often focused on high-style architecture, overlooking the more modest buildings that comprised the majority of the County. She said that they also neglected the relationship between buildings and their surroundings, as well as the social context in which these properties were developed.

Ms. Maliszewski said that another challenge was the varying degrees of protection afforded to different resources. She said that many resources had some level of designation or recognition, but these designations often offered little protection. She said that for instance, historic resources and scenic roads were not always adequately protected. She said that in some cases, existing protections could be refined to achieve better results, and their entrance corridors were an example of a resource that required more effective protection. She said that some resources, such as their scenic viewsheds, posed challenges due to their vast size.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the goal, objectives, and actions outlined in this chapter aimed to address these challenges. She said that as a reminder, the Cultural Resources Goal stated that

Albemarle County would recognize, celebrate, and promote awareness of its resources, and actively work to identify, preserve, and protect them. She said that this chapter had six objectives. She said that they addressed maintaining accurate surveys of their resources, educating about the resources, increasing protection through local regulations, increasing incentives, and protecting scenic resources.

Ms. Maliszewski said that one of the themes that emerged in this chapter was that Albemarle had a multitude of resources, many of which overlapped. She said that for instance, a historic house situated on rolling farmland might be part of a historic district, located along an entrance corridor, or situated along a scenic stream, and there may be nearby land in a conservation easement. She said that while protecting all of their resources may not be practical, they could examine these abundant resources more holistically and study how they are layered to identify areas where overlapping resources could help set priorities for what might be protected and what type of regulations might be most efficient.

Ms. Maliszewski said that they had a couple of specific questions for the Commission. She said that these questions were whether the Commission supported the concept of conducting an overlay study to help set protection priorities and identify methods of protection, whether they supported establishing regulations to protect cultural resources, and general Commission feedback and any questions they may have.

Mr. Missel said that the first note he took was that he could not agree more with this chapter, as it effectively differentiated and set Albemarle apart as a unique place. He said that he believed the work that had been done here was extremely helpful. He asked if there were any general questions for staff from the Commissioners.

Ms. Firehock said that as a committee member, she was familiar with the discussions they had on this topic, but she did have a question while reviewing the objectives. She said that specifically, she was looking at Objective 5.3, which mentioned evaluating and considering the establishment of a local scenic highway overlay with design standards. She said that in her understanding of scenic highways in Virginia, she believed the original intent was to provide more protections for these routes, which had been weakened over time. She said that her question was, what could they do to implement scenic highways in a meaningful way? She said that they had some designated routes, but she was not clear on how this would actually benefit the County.

Ms. Maliszewski said that this action pertained to local scenic highways, not state scenic highways, and therefore, if they were to pursue it, they would establish local regulations. She said that they had local scenic highways prior to the establishment of entrance corridors. She said that when they implemented the entrance corridors, the scenic highway designation was removed. She said that at the time, it was thought that the entrance corridors regulations would provide sufficient protection, but she believed that what staff were discovering was that there were some streets that would benefit from the scenic highway designation protections that the entrance corridors did not effectively address.

Ms. Firehock said that she recalled that they thought they had more entrance corridors, but the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) clarified that they had designated too many, so they had to remove some from that category.

Ms. Maliszewski said that was part of the issue, and another point she wanted to make was that some of those streets, even those with an entrance corridor designation, could benefit from a more scenic focus rather than an emphasis on architecture. She said that specifically, the rural areas could benefit from this approach.

Ms. Firehock asked if under their local ordinances, they had the enabling authority from the state to establish additional standards for local scenic highways.

Ms. Maliszewski said that that was her understanding.

Ms. Firehock said that she was excited.

Mr. Carrazana said that he thoroughly appreciated this chapter. He said that he had a question regarding their initial conversation about this topic. He said that he was specifically interested in the concept of adaptive reuse as a strategy to not only preserve but also revitalize historic resources. He said that upon reviewing this chapter, he did not see much emphasis on this approach. He said that he was aware that there may have been some conflict with the Board's suggestions on adaptive reuse, but he believed it was worth considering incorporating this strategy, as there were numerous examples of successful adaptive reuse projects.

Mr. Carrazana said that, for instance, a home could be transformed into a restaurant, as he had witnessed firsthand during a conference at Penn State in Pennsylvania. He said that the 1819 home they had visited had a unique character, despite its age and limited accessibility. He said that it was clear that it was a historic building with its own quirks but was certainly usable. He said that he would argue that they could learn from this example and consider adaptive reuse as a viable strategy. He said that Woolen Mills was a notable example of an industrial historic site that had been successfully revitalized. He said that he would include adaptive reuse as a strategy to be considered in their future plans.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wholeheartedly agreed with Mr. Carrazana on his last point. He said that he would also like to extend his congratulations to staff for their excellent work in incorporating past feedback into this draft. He said that upon reviewing the document, he believed that they had done an outstanding job of rolling up the feedback into a cohesive piece. He said that to address the staff’s questions at the end, he firmly believed that yes, regulations and parameters would be necessary to balance competing priorities.

Mr. Clayborne said that considering the integration of solar and data centers, he thought it was essential to establish clear guidelines to protect their cultural resources. He said that one area he did have a question about was the support for cultural and historic tourism. He said that he did not see any mention of partnerships with the City or the University in the document. He said that he understood that this may be a sensitive topic, but he was wondering if this was an intentional omission or simply an oversight.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she believed it was unintentional. She said that she thought staff could review that and explore ways to incorporate it.

Mr. Clayborne said that regarding the historic preservation ordinance, he was wondering if that would be handled internally or by a consultant.

Ms. Maliszewski said that it was a good question.

Mr. Clayborne said that he supposed it was yet to be determined. He said that on another note, he saw staff had included a quote from Carl Elefante, and he believed some context about who he was would be appropriate. He said that he was a great friend of his and past President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), but other readers of the document may not be familiar with him to that degree.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she wanted to include the quote to address the climate aspect of adaptive reuse.

Mr. Clayborne said that he appreciated the inclusion, but believed identifying him with a title to provide context in the report would be helpful.

Mr. Holt asked what Mr. Elefante's title was with the AIA.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was one of the AIA's past presidents but was unsure of the year. He said that he was also a practitioner and an author.

Ms. Maliszewski said that staff could certainly include that information.

Mr. Murray said that he thought this chapter was great work, and he appreciated everything that had been done on this. He said that one thing that occurred to him was that there was often an overlap between biodiversity and historic sites. He said that when this topic was presented to the Natural Heritage Committee, they noticed that there were often overlaps between biodiversity and historic properties in Albemarle County.

Mr. Murray said that some of these historic properties were also among the few sites in the county that supported rare plants and natural communities. He said that considering this, he was wondering how this chapter would interact with the proposed rural area plan and how they could effectively blend those different resources together.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she believed they were very closely related, and she thought they should be considered simultaneously, with one possibly being a subset of the other. She said that it was essential that they examined the issue as a whole.

Mr. Murray said that he would discuss more specific things later when they discussed the items.

Mr. Bivins said that he had found it helpful to understand the history of the preservation ordinance. He said that upon reaching the end, he was expecting a more substantial conclusion. He said that it appeared that an ordinance did not exist at this point.

Ms. Maliszewski said that that was correct.

Mr. Bivins said that he would have lots to say about that when they did discuss it. He said that he also had one specific question regarding the information on page 14. He said that they had listed certain locations of where things happened in their community. He said that he was trying to understand the connection between these events and the cultural resources they would be

discussing today. He said that he did not see a clear link to the objectives. He said that looking at the objectives, he did not see where those regional events may be included or referenced.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she thought there was a connection to tourism, but Mr. Bivins was right that there was not a specific action that was directly related.

Mr. Bivins said that if the focus was solely on tourism, he would suggest looking beyond that, as it was really about the quality of life here and he did not want to prioritize initiatives for people who only passed through, but rather for those who made their homes here. He said that this was the kind of piece they were discussing, which involved identifying the cultural resources that made up this place that everyone claimed was so grand. He said that he appreciated the effort, and he was glad to see it, but he wanted to understand how they could integrate it.

Mr. Bivins said that perhaps this was not the right place to do it, and maybe there was a better fit in the comprehensive plan. He said that he was glad to see it, and he was struggling to find a way to speak publicly about it if he were called to do so at another time in his time here. He said that he also wanted to acknowledge the balance between the County's needs and the work of staff, as well as the Architectural Review Board (ARB), who often dealt with existing ordinances.

Mr. Bivins said that this was where their work came in, as they helped navigate the body of ordinances and address alleged violations. He said that he wanted to thank staff for laying out the tension between some of their structures and the reasons they existed. He said that this took him back to a colleague's comment about a piece they would see tonight, which mentioned the community on Morgantown Road. He said that someone’s response was that slavery had always been a part of the Virginia vernacular, which was a significant point to consider.

Mr. Bivins said that as a result, that he was trying to find a way to move forward. He said that he was trying to get an idea of the cultural resources here, which were truly valuable, but also sat in a complex context, was something they needed to continue to grapple with. He said that he was pleased to see the work they did on page 14, as it captured the tension that he believed Albemarle County faced.

Mr. Bivins said that he was trying to figure out how to incorporate that narrative into their discussion. He said that their approach, based on the notes, he thought, was a great way to highlight the tension. He said that the solar project on Secretary Road, where residents were concerned about their view being interrupted, but the view was of a plantation house. He said that 200 years ago, the view would have been of people working on the plantation.

Mr. Bivins said that it was a reminder that the context and time period in which these historic resources existed today were crucial for them to understand. He said that it was essential for staff and for them to address this issue. He said that he had another point to discuss, but he was particularly struck by page 14 and the opening comments, which openly acknowledged the need to wrestle with this issue. He said that he did not think there was a simple solution, but they must be engaged in this process.

Mr. Moore said that he had a broad scope question. He said that his bachelor’s and master’s degrees were in anthropology and archaeology, so he had a strong interest in the current cultural landscape. He said that in addition to his academic pursuits, he had also conducted some

fieldwork over the years to ensure that potential development projects, such as pipeline construction, did not inadvertently harm cultural resources.

Mr. Moore said that he brought this up because he noticed a page on cultural resources that highlighted various events and locations, including Juneteenth, the Festival of the Book, the Film Fest, the Arts and Crafts Festival, and the Ivy Creek Natural Area. He said that these were all things that he helped with in his day job, and he was glad to be part of that cultural institution.

Mr. Moore said that, however, he noticed a disconnect between the cultural resources and the goals and objectives of the chapter. He said that the goals and objectives were solely regarding historic structures and land, without mentioning the cultural resources that were mentioned on the other page. He said that he was unsure if anything could be done to include them at this late stage, but he felt disappointed that those cultural resources were not part of the goals and objectives.

Mr. Missel said that he had a couple of quick questions. He said that on page 16, they mentioned they would be investigating legal tools for historic preservation, including a demolition ordinance. He said that he would like to know if staff could elaborate on what that entailed and what the ordinance might include.

Ms. Maliszewski said that some historic preservation ordinances include demolition regulations, but they were not always comprehensive. She said that they could consider having a separate demolition ordinance, which would at least require documentation of the resource before demolition, potentially impose fines on structures demolished without permits and documentation and require property owners to attempt to sell the building or property to preserve the resource. She said that these measures would be the primary tools.

Mr. Missel asked if they did not currently have any requirements to document historic resources before demolishing them.

Ms. Maliszewski said that they did not have any requirements or regulations governing this process. She said that the Historic Preservation Committee's policy was to request access to the property, allowing committee members to document it, but it was not required.

Mr. Missel said that Action 4.1 mentioned real estate tax incentives to encourage the retention of historic structures. He asked if that had been discussed beyond this action, or if it was an aspirational goal at this time.

Ms. Maliszewski said that at this point, it seemed more aspirational; it had not been discussed in detail.

Mr. Missel said that Action 4.4 mentioned establishing and making available a toolbox for restoration and reuse, which seemed similar to what Mr. Carrazana had mentioned earlier. He said that he was curious to know if they had a framework in place for this and if it had been used successfully in other areas. He said that he would like to understand what prompted the inclusion of this action.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she believed there was a need for property owners to have access to a place where they could find connections to resources, such as people, documents, or services.

Mr. Missel said that perhaps it could include grant opportunities and tax credits. He said that it was a great idea.

Ms. Maliszewski said yes. She said that it was meant to provide a starting point, as it could be overwhelming for those who are new to the process. She said that having a clear place to begin can make a significant difference.

Mr. Missel said that he wholeheartedly agreed it was important, but he was unsure if "toolbox" was the right word. He said that as Mr. Clayborne mentioned earlier, the partnerships with other local organizations was important to include. He said that in his day job, they were working on the Birdwood Mansion, and he had seen firsthand the value of collaborations with descendants of enslaved communities, genealogists, and other organizations, such as Monticello and Highland. He said that these partnerships had been instrumental in their efforts.

Mr. Missel said that he believed there was an opportunity to leverage this existing work by creating a combined database, potentially even making the County a convener of these groups. He said that this would allow them to build upon the research that had already been done in this area and ensure that information was retained in a central location. He said that partnering with the University could also be a viable option. He said that he thought a repository like this would be a valuable resource.

Mr. Holt asked if Mr. Missel was referring to an inventory of partnering organizations or inventory of the historic resources.

Mr. Missel said that he had been referring to a genealogical database, allowing people to explore their relationships to others and connect those relationships to the history of enslaved labor and that time period. He said that in a sense, having a family tree was crucial as people continued to learn more about this topic every day.

Mr. Carrazana said that he wanted to add to that point. He said that in Action 1.3 - they talked about Geographic Information Systems (GIS) layering. He said that he thought there were other opportunities to collaborate with UVA and others that have that information in order to build on it rather than starting from scratch. He said that existing databases and GIS expertise could help.

Mr. Missel said that that was a great point. He said that regarding Action 5.6 - he would like to clarify the proposed revisions to the Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines. He said that he was curious about how they would define and measure how the elevated quality of design, and how they could ensure that they were not simply adding unnecessary costs. He said that the concept of elevating design quality seemed somewhat subjective, and he would like to understand how this would be implemented and what the end result would look like.

Ms. Maliszewski said that was a good point, and they would revisit that topic and review the ARB's comments to see if they could expand on it further.

Mr. Missel said that aligning them with districts was a great idea. He said that the Commission could now begin answering the chapter focus topic questions that staff had asked.

Mr. Moore said that he was glad to hear the interest in focusing on modest buildings, workers' homes, and the relationship between those homes and the land. He said that in terms of Objective 1, he thought it was a straightforward question, essentially taking an inventory. He said that he believed it would be beneficial to have a more updated inventory, as it would be crucial for historic preservation and historical awareness of their existing structures.

Mr. Moore said that he also thought it was essential to provide education that allowed people to learn about and engage with their cultural resources through impactful interpretive events, programs, and public sites, as mentioned in Objective 2. He said that however, that when it came to Objective 3, establishing regulations to protect cultural resources, he had mixed feelings. He said that he was skeptical because he had seen how some other places had used historic preservation as a means to freeze everything in place, preventing any progress or development.

Mr. Moore said that he supported regulations that protected certain sites, as long as they were narrowly tailored and served the needs of people today. He said that however, he was skeptical about preserving 83,000 acres of the Southern Albemarle Historic District in its entirety. He said that what he saw here was a potential issue with preserving a particular aesthetic in a way that felt like it was putting everything in amber and furthermore were giving tax breaks to landowners with means along the way.

Mr. Moore said that fundamentally, he asked: what were they preserving, and was it primarily the aesthetic that white people with means had fetishized, or was there something more impactful for how people lived today? He said that he thought the County should strive to be a place that evolved and grew to serve people's needs, rather than just preserving the past. He said that they could certainly preserve certain things, tell their stories, and maintain meaningful public historic sites that people visited and learned from, while also incorporating historical understandings into their future development. He said that he was not sure if that meant preserving everything in its current state but rather finding a balance between preserving the past and building a better future for today's residents.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to elaborate on his previous narrative regarding his pushback against Monticello's ability to control what was in front of it. He said that during his time on the Commission, he had made it clear that while Monticello was not explicitly mentioned in the ordinance, they effectively gave it a "bully pulpit" to control what was visible from its mountain without extracting any taxes for it. He said that this, to him, was an affront.

Mr. Bivins said that as he had shared the numbers, it was clear that Monticello generated a significant amount of revenue, with an annual income exceeding $100 million. He said that the intent behind its endowment should support the community, not dictate what developments should or should not occur. He said that he found it particularly galling that Monticello could dictate the color of roofs, the height of buildings, or even reflective surfaces within the viewshed, all while they had two magnificent magnolia trees that blocked those views anyway.

Mr. Bivins said that his answer to the question of, “Does the Commission support the concept of an overlay of study and cultural resources to set protective priorities and identify targeted methods of protection?” was, of course, yes. He said that however, the subtext was who was on the committee, how broadly they reached in, and what they were looking at as they tried to evolve and do what was necessary. He said that the current transportation situation was, in part, a result of wealthy individuals blocking the eastern and western bypasses from being constructed.

Mr. Bivins said that there were many reasons for this, both good and bad. He said that today was not the time to relitigate that, but he did need to add that the western bypass would have come within 200 yards of his property, but it would have preserved a main street in Albemarle County, and ultimately, people would not have known he was there. He said that his question was, at the end of the day, what were they doing with their historic preservation?

Mr. Bivins said that this echoed a concern his colleague to his right had expressed. He said that if they were not preserving it as amber, he thought they should consider auctioning it, as it could then be sold and repurposed in various ways. He said that the key issue was that they needed to reevaluate their shared history if they were going to engage in this process.

Mr. Bivins said that currently, it felt like their history was imposed upon them by another time and set of people, which did not feel sustainable for the future. He said that those who remembered the events of August 2017 may recall that part of the conflict was over what constituted history, what should be prepared and what should be preserved.

Mr. Bivins said that he did not believe this would go away, so he wanted Albemarle County to be in a position to consider how they would have these conversations about their shared history. He said that the action items listed were a good start, but his focus was on the agendas that accompanied them. He said that he wanted to know who was involved in these conversations, how they could lift these topics to the forefront, and how they could engage the public in these discussions.

Mr. Bivins said that he had a couple of specific areas he wanted to elaborate on, but for now, he was satisfied with the general approach. He said that he agreed that they should move forward with this, but he was concerned that the enthusiasm would be lost in the details and work plans surrounding these objectives.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to build on that for a moment. He said that he completely agreed. He said that for him, the definition or the special consideration that some of their historic resources had would likely lead to a more level playing field with this approach, which he believed was the goal. He said that this approach avoided the subjective treatment of certain properties, such as the presidents' homes, where it was easy to imply, they deserved extra consideration.

Mr. Missel said that he had pointed out that this approach was more comprehensive and objective. He said that the idea of a comprehensive inventory, followed by a list of those items, and then including but not limited to, seemed to be a good starting point. He said that he thought the definition of what that was needed to be further discussed and worked out.

Mr. Bivins said that he previously shared with several institutions the work that they and the Foundation had done on Birdwood, as he was involved with the site when it was still in a state of transition. He said that at the time; he was concerned about the potential costs involved. He said that seeing the presentation on Birdwood and the adaptive reuse of the mansion, as well as the genealogical survey of the people who lived and died there, struck a chord with him.

Mr. Bivins said that he shared this information with others, highlighting the possibility of transforming a place that must eventually turn a profit into a narrative-driven experience. He said that this approach could help alleviate some of the burden associated with the property, rather

than adding to it. He said that as they moved forward, he was particularly concerned about the potential for ordinances to become a hindrance to property owners, rather than a benefit.

Mr. Bivins said that he recalled a situation where a farmer in White Hall had wanted to install a cell tower on his land, but the wine enthusiasts in the area opposed it. He said that he wished that farmer could have been able to pursue his original plan. He said that it was essential that they balance preservation with the need for progress and innovation, rather than allowing one to impede the other.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to add one final point to that. He said that he believed that the good aspect of this was that it presented a value proposition, which was identifying the value of historic resources and understanding their diversity. He said that this aligned with cultural Objective 2, which was educating the public about the importance of these resources.

Mr. Missel said that Objective 1 was about documenting and comprehensively thinking through these resources, and cultural Objective 2 was about making this information accessible and understandable. He said that he thought that this approach paired well with the preservation of not just the presidents' homes, but all other historic resources.

Mr. Murray said that regarding Action 1.2, he wanted to highlight the importance of specifically identifying and protecting African American cemeteries, which was a noble goal. He said that he thought it was essential to recognize that they should not only be limited to cemeteries, but also to the communities of living people, who were equally worthy of protection and support. He said that as he had mentioned earlier, Black Americans were 75% more likely to live near hazardous waste facilities compared to other racial groups.

Mr. Murray said that if they did not classify these communities and provide them with the same level of protection as historic resources, there was a real risk that they could be targeted for new industrial development, such as a chemical factory. He said that for instance, they may consider the case of Greenwood, where a chemical plant exploded and contaminated the community. He said that this was not a hypothetical scenario; this was a Black community that was situated nearby and directly impacted by an environmental hazard.

Mr. Murray said that he believed they needed to create action items specific to engaging their historic African American communities in the rural area and gather their input on their needs. He said that they should also ensure that their concerns were taken into consideration during special permit processes, just as they did for other historic properties.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to ask staff a question regarding that. He said that they specifically mentioned County cemeteries as an action item. He asked if there was a reason why this was carved out.

Ms. Maliszewski said that the Historic Preservation Committee had been interested in creating a database or GIS layer of cemeteries, an important initiative that had been pending for a long time. She said that they had previously called it out as a separate item in their discussion.

Mr. Missel asked if there was an action item that addressed the concept of living cultural resources.

Ms. Maliszewski said that she believed that staff could find a way to emphasize that point further. She said that it did not appear to be included in the current document.

Mr. Bivins said that he would suggest that they also include the last one in the discussion because it seemed that in Action 1.4, they were essentially talking about the people who were landed here. He said that he was not trying to dismiss the work on cemeteries, which had been a topic of discussion for a long time. He said that it also appeared that there was a group of people here who had been forgotten, so this should let them focus on the work of not forgetting them in the long term.

Mr. Carrazana said that he had the same thought when he saw the line item with the cemetery. He said that it was great to include there was a lot that could be learned from cemeteries. He said that it occurred to him, because where he used to live near Morgantown was a Free Town, and there was an old single-room Black schoolhouse in the area. He said that he was sure those types of structures were scattered throughout Albemarle County, and they were losing them along with other freedman buildings. He said that there was one near his current residence, and it was in a state of disrepair.

Mr. Carrazana said that they were also losing the people who had a connection to those buildings, as they could no longer afford to live there or pay property taxes and were forced to move. He said that as a result, they were losing that cultural heritage. He said that he believed there was an urgency to completing this project and starting the survey, study, GIS mapping, and most importantly, documenting the conversations and recorded history of those who still had memories of attending the schoolhouse, and what those buildings meant to their ancestors, which were still present but in a state of disrepair. He said that therefore, he strongly advocated for expansion on the point that mentioned the cemeteries.

Mr. Murray said that under the section on current cultural resources, page 14 was essential to highlight the importance of community events, such as the Batesville Apple Butter Festival and other agricultural events that still thrived in their community. He said that these events were crucial to their heritage and were often hosted by local organizations, including the rare and unique community groups that made their County so special. He said that he agreed that reducing litter and enhancing the appearance of County roads was a good initiative under Action 5.4.

Mr. Murray said that he thought they needed to be more specific in their approach to maintaining landscape and vegetation. He said that he suggested changing the objective to preserve native vegetation, as this would help prevent the misuse of herbicides and protect the natural habitats and communities that existed along their roadsides. He said that many localities had already implemented policies that had led to the loss of native plant species, and their County's resources were at risk of being compromised if they did not take a proactive and specific approach.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to revisit the topic of cultural events and the role of County resources in supporting them. He said that many of these events relied on County resources; sometimes they may require the assistance of police to manage traffic or other community resources. He said that he believed it was beneficial to state upfront that the County was supportive of these events and willing to contribute to maintain cultural traditions. He said that by doing so, when people or organizations came forward and requested support, they could justify the necessary expenses to help support the community when it was needed.

Mr. Clayborne said that he had offered most of his comments earlier in the conversation, but he was curious about the comment regarding a sense of urgency and with their budget, which had been recently passed by the County. He asked if they could determine how much money had been allocated to some of the items listed here. He asked if, for example, they had a rough estimate of how much had been budgeted for cultural resources for this upcoming fiscal year or future years? He said that knowing this information would give them insight into the priority level, as the budget did convey the level of importance.

Ms. Maliszewski said that nothing had been budgeted at this point.

Mr. Carrazana said that his comments were mostly regarding the first question, and his answer was basically yes. He said that as he had mentioned earlier, he believed there were resources available to partner with. He said that regarding the second question, he believed it was a given that they were supporting this chapter. He said that the only other questions he had were already addressed in his previous reading of the chapter. He said that he had a question regarding Action 3.1, which stated to establish a historic preservation ordinance with broad eligibility criteria. He said that he was having trouble understanding what they were getting at.

Ms. Maliszewski said that at one time, the focus was on detailing high-style architecture, but this was intended to demonstrate that the County's approach should be more inclusive and address the issues that were deemed important.

Mr. Carrazana asked if they were essentially taking a wider lens.

Ms. Maliszewski said that that was correct.

Mr. Moore said that that broader view was actually what concerned him. He asked if everything would be considered historic.

Mr. Bivins said that they had brought up this conversation before, when the cell tower and cell tower overlay project was presented to the Board of Supervisors. He said that there was a lot of discussion about whether they should exclude a tower from a historic district simply because of its title. He said that it was questioned whether they should not allow any type of development in a historic district or if they should conduct an analysis to determine the potential impact of installing a tower in the historic district.

Mr. Bivins said that he believed this was similar to the issue at hand, and he wanted to draw a parallel to his previous point. He said that given that the majority of the County's financial resources came from residential property, he was concerned about providing tax breaks to entities that may be engaging in other kinds of behavior. He said that he was not comfortable with the idea of minimizing the amount of funds the County derived from its limited resources until other Supervisors were elected who could bring more economic development to the area.

Mr. Bivins said that every time they provided tax breaks, they were making a decision that may not be shared by the bulk of the community. He said that he believed in democracy, but he did not think they should rely on polls to make decisions. He said that in today's complex tax code, the average person may not know how to navigate it to receive the desired level of rebates. He said that he wanted to be cautious about using the tax code to give people an unfair advantage.

Mr. Missel said that he wondered whether the wording of Action 4.1 was limiting. He said that instead of having language focused solely on real estate taxes, it could be about adopting a range of incentives to encourage the retention of historic resources.

Mr. Carrazana said that he believed retention was acceptable, but revalidation was even more beneficial, especially if it was being utilized for a commercial purpose. He said that this would provide additional benefits, as it would be a more active use of the property. He said that in his opinion, this was where adaptive reuse could be particularly effective, bringing new life to the location and attracting more people to the area. He said that while a museum was acceptable, he thought revalidation for a commercial use could be a more valuable outcome.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to highlight the importance of an ordinance in this matter and had an additional action to suggest. She said that as part of their monthly tasks, the Historic Preservation Committee reviewed the list of demolition permits and discussed which resources they would be allowed to go and document before they were destroyed.

Ms. Firehock said that this process was disheartening, as it felt like a funeral march watching things disappear. She said that she wished she had brought her copy of Lost Virginia, a book that chronicled the lost general stores, schools, and buildings in Virginia. She said that while she did not want to preserve the County in amber, she firmly believed they needed to have more teeth in an ordinance to protect their historic structures.

Ms. Firehock said that during her time in Charlottesville, she presided over the creation of five historic districts. She said that she had worked with individuals who claimed they could not protect a historic structure, pointing to its structural flaws as evidence that it should be demolished. She said that however, when it was stipulated that the resource must be preserved, with the right resources, they were almost magically able to restore it. She said that this often resulted in the developer becoming proud of the restored site that they once neglected and wanted to destroy.

Ms. Firehock said that they needed to have more teeth to achieve this in the County. She said that there were many tools and ordinances to conserve their historic sites, including a demolition permit or a code that required conservation. She said that in Charlottesville, they ran into the issue where in low-income neighborhoods, residents may not be able to afford necessary repairs, such as replacing a metal roof or slate. She said that instead, they created a lighter conservation plan that allowed for the installation of a roof, while still maintaining the integrity of the structure. She said that perhaps a porch was not allowed to be ripped off but could be modified to allow better access.

Ms. Firehock said that this modification relaxed some of the traditional historic preservation district standards, making it more affordable and practical so that at the end of the day, many structures remained standing. She said that it was often repeated that a structure could not be saved and there was no feasible way to make it work. She said that she disagreed, as she believed there were often ways to save these structures, even if it was not the preferred method of developers; it was simply a matter of finding a way to make it work.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to be able to tell the living history of their community by preserving these structures for future generations. She said that she envisioned a future where people could still understand and appreciate the story of Albemarle County. She said that she

would like to be able to see that their community had a rich history and that their preservation efforts were making a positive impact.

Ms. Firehock said that regarding the dialogues the Historic Preservation Committee had had, they discussed historic schools, Rosenwald schools, and everyday structures like traveler motels. She said that these structures were an important part of their community's story, and many of these structures had been lost over time. She said that they took a comprehensive approach to their preservation efforts, considering all aspects of their community's history and experience.

Ms. Firehock said that on another note, she would like to suggest a new action for the Dark Skies Ordinance, which was an issue that affected their community's quality of life. She said that they had an ordinance in place, but it was time for an update, and she was glad they were finally moving forward with that effort. She said that she would like to suggest that they add an objective to their plan to create a community education program to discourage excessive outdoor lighting and promote dark sky-friendly lighting fixtures.

Ms. Firehock said that currently, they only discussed these fixtures when new developments came forward, but many of the properties of concern were pre-existing developments that were not going through a planning and zoning process where the lighting would be evaluated in terms of the ordinance. She said that she had noticed individuals with spotlights on their houses that glared directly up into the sky, and she had seen sports fields in the County that were left on for extended periods at night when no game was happening. She said that this was particularly concerning, as it could be seen from a plane flying overhead.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought they needed a comprehensive campaign to encourage individuals to voluntarily adopt dark sky-friendly practices. She said that this could include partnering with local volunteers to promote the benefits of reducing outdoor lighting and exploring grants to assist individuals in upgrading to more energy-efficient lighting options. She said that she believed this should be focused on the private sector and would otherwise go unaddressed with the new ordinance.

Mr. Bivins asked if they could include that the idea under Action 6.1 that it was not just community partners who are involved in this process. He said that in addition to community partners, the three local jurisdictions, meaning the City, the County, and the University of Virginia, must commit to preserving the darkness of the night sky. He said that it also should be included in the chapter on biodiversity because of the lighting’s effects on wildlife.

Mr. Murray said that he had some concern that the Dark Skies Initiative being included in the Cultural Resources Chapter may be interpreted as being an aesthetic issue rather than an environmental one.

Ms. Firehock said that it was definitely for both reasons, the environmental health of their wildlife and insects, as well as human enjoyment.

Mr. Murray said that there had been a precipitous decline in bird populations, particularly birds that depend on large forest blocks. He said that recently, he had been hearing a whippoorwill at his house, which was one of those birds affected by deforestation and light pollution. He said that he was certain that the reason they still had whippoorwills in Sugar Hollow was because of the lack of night lighting and relatively lesser fragmentation than other areas.

Mr. Carrazana said that Action 6.1 included LED lights, and there was a significant amount of research being conducted on the impact of LED lights on birds. He said that the University of Virginia had conducted research on this topic, and Helen Wilson in the Office of the Architect could provide more information on their findings.

Ms. Firehock said that they were fortunate to have the opportunity to tap into the expertise of nationally renowned individuals, who were volunteering their time and expertise to help them craft this ordinance. She said that unlike solar ordinances, cell towers, or data centers, they had the benefit of having experts available to them for free because they cared about this issue.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that the plan they had attempted to organize into separate chapters avoided mentioning certain topics multiple times. He said that the lighting issue, for example, was already addressed in the environmental section. He said that they had discussed the importance of lighting in some activity centers to facilitate pedestrian traffic, which was a related topic. He said that this particular issue was mentioned in multiple sections, highlighting its relevance to various aspects of the plan.

Mr. Missel said that he believed the positive aspect of reiterating it was that it encouraged people to review other chapters to see how things were connected. He said that he wanted to mention a couple of quick points before moving onto the next chapter topic. He said that he wanted to reiterate the significance of partnerships, as they had previously discussed. He said that he believed it was crucial to clarify whether partnerships should be included as an action item or not. He said that secondly, that he wanted to inquire about the presence of arts-related content in this document.

Mr. Bivins said that on page 17, Action 2.7 referred to arts programs and spaces.

Ms. Firehock saud she wanted to inquire about the picture of Findowrie on page 8. She said that Findowrie was actually one of the County's success stories. She said that the picture on page 8 did not accurately represent the property today. She said that the Historic Preservation Committee, in collaboration with the owner, worked together to learn about this resource and, with no existing ordinance, coaxed the owner into restoring it to an outstanding condition. She said that this was a notable example of the impact of education and preservation efforts. She said that she would highly recommend replacing the current picture with one of Findowrie before and after the restoration, which would serve as a compelling argument for the importance of education and preservation.

Mr. Bivins said that that was something he was struggling with. He said that in other parts of the country, there was a network of skilled craftsmen and suppliers who could provide materials that had been reclaimed, rather than new ones. He said that this approach was often part of the natural process of renovating a house. He said that when renovating a house, it was generally more desirable to find materials that were a bit older, as they could add character and history to the space. He said that he could relate to this from personal experience, as he lived in a house that was approaching 100 years old.

Mr. Bivins said that when he first moved in, he could not find many of the original fixtures or materials, and even when he tried to find them now, he was often told that they were no longer available. He said that part of what they were discussing was whether they had the necessary

ecosystem to support people making informed decisions about how to renovate their homes, or if they were being forced to rely on big-box solutions. He said that having a directory of skilled craftsmen and suppliers who could provide the materials they needed would be incredibly valuable.

Ms. Firehock said that she believed that was all part of education. She said that if they had a robust program, it would also provide opportunities for artisans and craftspersons. She said that they did exist in this community, but one had to go digging around to find them.

Ms. Firehock said that she recently had brickwork done on her 1740 house, and the first question for the work was whether she had any old bricks available. She said that fortunately, she did have piles of old bricks, so she was able to complete the project, but she knew that not everyone would have old materials on hand.

Mr. Missel asked if staff would like to present their information on the Community Resilience section.

Mr. Holt said that he would like to rewind their discussion and touch on some related chapters for cultural resources. He said that as they had discussed earlier, this topic overlapped with Thriving Economy in terms of their recreation and tourism economy, Transportation, Rural Area Land Use, Environmental Stewardship in terms of their dark skies, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, such as their public land preserves for historic resources like the Ivy Natural Area. He said that staff appreciated the feedback on this, as they did a good job of highlighting these cross-chapter items.

Mr. Holt said that moving on to Resilient Communities, their analysis revealed that this chapter had less content than others, with significant overlap between it and the Environmental Stewardship and Community Facilities and Services chapters. He said that to address this, they had relocated the Resilient Communities content to those chapters. He said that the crosswalk provided explained where the content was being moved. He said that previous feedback had emphasized the importance of utilizing community hubs for disaster relief, leveraging Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding, and setting carbon sequestration targets.

Mr. Holt said that the content also highlighted addressing wildfire threats, evaluating fire risk overlays, protecting trees for carbon capture, and supporting local agriculture and community gardens. He said that additionally, feedback from the community stressed the need for coordination with regional and state agencies for climate resilience, improving disaster preparedness, and utilizing community hubs for emergency relief and disaster response. He said that in terms of these subtopics, community resilience hubs and local food systems, these would be moved to their Community Facilities chapter. He said that the relevant objectives were services and programs that benefited community health and well-being, as well as healthy and affordable local food systems.

Mr. Holt said that for the content being moved to the Environmental Stewardship chapter, the subtopics included environmental resilience, climate adaptation and mitigation, findings and trends detailing risks and vulnerabilities, climate change and natural hazards, and renewable energy and solar. He said that the related objective was for the preparation and recovery from natural and man-made disasters, as well as the impacts of climate change. He said that the related chapters to this topic included transportation, particularly in providing different modes of

transportation, reducing vehicle emissions, land use, both within development areas and rural areas, in terms of limiting sprawl, supporting rural and environmental resources, protecting those resources, and utilizing efficient use of infrastructure.

Mr. Holt said that in addition to the previous discussion, parks, recreation, open space, and preservation of natural areas and green spaces would be considered, as well as housing, which should be located in proximity to employment areas and services to reduce vehicle miles traveled. He said that their focus questions for this topic were: Did the Commission support expanding urban agriculture as a shared resource, focusing on public land, or focusing on what was allowed on private property? He said that staff welcomed any general questions or feedback on the topic content, objectives, and actions.

Ms. Firehock said that she was thrilled to see all of these elements included, and she was quite happy.

Mr. Moore said that he agreed that he liked the crosswalk and the way things had been rearranged was well taken. He said that he agreed that incorporating resilience sections and environmental stewardship was a sensible approach; this aligned with the shift from just preserving and aiming for carbon neutrality to actively addressing the issues that were oncoming. He said that the idea of urban agriculture was intriguing, but it was essential to consider the limitations of land availability.

Mr. Moore said that while it was a promising concept, it often did not translate well to areas with limited space. He noted that there were instances where it had been successful, such as in marginal or flood-prone areas like the Azalea Park Community Gardens or other community gardens in cities with abandoned buildings. He said that these types of spaces could be repurposed for urban agriculture. He said that in Albemarle's development area, gardens and community spaces were a good fit, but if they had public land suitable for a large-scale urban agriculture project, he would prefer to utilize it for social housing.

Mr. Murray said that he wanted to push back on that point, using Charlottesville as an example. He said that he believed the local Urban Agricultural Collective did remarkable work, particularly in partnering with lower-income communities to provide access to fresh produce. He said that he thought that kind of effort would be highly valuable in Albemarle County.

Mr. Murray said that on the other hand, Charlottesville had missed an opportunity to establish a permanent farmers' market. He said that if Charlottesville was not willing to pursue this, he believed that Albemarle should consider establishing it. He said that other towns, such as Roanoke, had successfully implemented permanent farmers' markets, generating significant economic activity and attracting visitors.

Mr. Murray said that this type of market also served as a great incubator for local businesses, allowing them to start as small stalls or shops and eventually grow into full-fledged operations that employed local people and promoted local agriculture. He said that in the urban area, access to fresh produce was particularly important, as space for production was limited. He said that therefore, initiatives like farmers' markets were crucial for providing this essential service.

Mr. Moore said that he believed Mr. Murray was correct about the urban agriculture program in Charlottesville, which not only provided food but also delivered social and educational benefits,

distinct from simply providing food. He said that if they were to implement it more efficiently, they could simply purchase a large quantity of tomatoes and distribute them to those who would otherwise not have access to them. He said that the investment in efficiency was what he was referring to. He said that he agreed that the social and educational aspects were valuable and should be considered in this case.

Mr. Bivins said that at some point, they would be examining the programming that would take place around community centers. He said that he hoped to develop a more robust and less structured definition of what a community center was, despite the potential discomfort the word may cause among their citizens. He said that he thought it was essential to think about community centers as not just places for after-school sessions or other activities, but also as potential natural magnets for the community, particularly for those living nearby.

Mr. Bivins said that he hoped they would start exploring this concept. He was trying to provide some context on page three of the previous document, where they had discussed green spaces. He said that to quickly summarize, they had approximately 4,500 acres of parkland, not including the Haywood track, Buck Island, and Arrowhead. He said that if they were to include these areas, the total would be around 5,000 acres. He said that this raised the question of how they could program these spaces to meet the needs of the community. He said that for example, they had heard from many advocates for horse riding.

Mr. Bivins said he wondered what would happen if they had advocates for gardeners or similar groups who could come forward and express their desire for a garden or other amenities. He said that referring to a highly valued area in his own district, if they were to carve out a small space in Charlotte Humphreys Park, which sat directly across the street from a large number of people, they could potentially create a center and a garden. He said that he believed that it was a crucial time for them to figure out how to allocate their resources effectively.

Mr. Bivins said that they needed to look for solutions that multiplied their assets, rather than simply adding to them due to funding constraints. He said that furthermore, that they also needed to consider the concept of discord, as they discussed resilience. He said that when events such as August 2017 happened, they should be prepared rather than making things up on the fly. He said that instead, that they should be proactively addressing these issues and developing strategies to handle them. He said that it was essential for the well-being of their community, and it was crucial that they had a plan in place to deal with these challenges.

Mr. Missel said that he had a general question, and he was not sure if it was relevant, but reviewing the objectives, particularly the actions to be added to the environmental stewardship chapter, made him think of something that Commissioner Carrazana had mentioned earlier in response to an application that drew on rural groundwater. He said that given their limited groundwater resources in Albemarle County, he wondered if there should be a mention of this in the environmental stewardship chapter or perhaps in a separate section that addressed these limited resources.

Mr. Bivins said that they had previously discussed identifying the aquifers in the County using newly available technology. He said that this information could provide very valuable data about the usable land in the County.

Mr. Missel said that he was referencing Action 1.15 in general, specifically regarding Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) and Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA). He said that this pertained to rural water resources, aquifers, mapping, and other related topics.

Mr. Clayborne said that, regarding what his colleagues were discussing regarding community gardens and similar initiatives, he was wondering if there was a way to incentivize these types of projects through residential development. He said that for example, community gardens could be offered as an alternative option to requiring tot lots. He said that this could potentially increase the appeal of these developments. He said that in his neighborhood, they had a community garden that was highly sought after, and the process of being selected to participate could be lengthy and highly competitive. He said that if they could incentivize community gardens in urban areas, it could lead to more successful and sustainable projects.

Ms. Firehock said that it was possible that this use was permitted under their enumeration of allowed uses for open space in their guidelines.

Mr. Clayborne said that children could play in the garden, and they could pick the strawberries.

Mr. Missel called for a recess until the Commission's 6:00 p.m. meeting.

Recess/Reconvene 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Missel called the meeting back to order at 6:00 p.m.

Establish Quorum

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Mr. Missel asked if Mr. Herrick would like to address their new attendee.

Andy Herrick, County Attorney, said that he would like to formally introduce Jenny Tevendale to the Planning Commission. He said that she was their newest attorney, at least for the next week, and brought a wealth of experience to their office. He said that although she was new to their office, she was not new to the practice of law. He said that she began her career in James City County, where he also started, and worked with that County's Planning Commission.

Mr. Herrick said that Ms. Tevendale then spent six years in Albemarle County before taking an extended maternity leave. He said that she joined their office in April and that he would be transitioning not only the Planning Commission but also the Community Development Department to her in the coming weeks and months.

Public Comment on matters pending before the Commission but not listed for a Public Hearing on this agenda

Diane Brown-Townes, Rivanna District, said that during her time on the County's Historic Preservation Committee's Cultural Heritage and Educational Subcommittee from 2019 to 2022, they contributed to Phase 1 of the County's AC44 comprehensive plan. She said that since then, she had been conducting research studies on the migratory patterns of free and enslaved families during antebellum and postbellum American history.

Ms. Brown-Townes said that through this research, she had gained a deeper understanding of how these families contributed to the economic growth of Albemarle County, dating back to approximately 1764. She said that she was returning to Lane High School Auditorium today, her alma mater, to discuss the need for a repository to highlight and preserve the history of free and enslaved people in antebellum and postbellum Albemarle County and Central Virginia.

Ms. Brown-Townes said that a UNESCO-rated museum would serve to support biodiversity by integrating historic preservation and environmental conservation. She said that she had a full plan outlined for the museum and was prepared to fully engage the Planning Commission's Rivanna District Commissioner in the planning process. She said that she thanked the Commission for giving her the time to speak today and looked forward to speaking with them again in the future.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Public Hearing

SP202400024 Spring Hill Farm Subdivision

Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager, said that she would provide an overview of the Spring Hill Farm subdivision request, which the Commission previously discussed in March. She said that due to the significant changes since then, she would focus on the key updates and staff's revised recommendation. She said that as a reminder, this property was located west of Charlottesville, near the Ivy Interstate Interchange off Dick Woods Road. She said that the property spanned over 340 acres and featured multiple access points, including Grassmere Road, Dick Woods Road, and sections of Spring Hill Village that were already developed, such as Loblolly Lane and Spring Lane, which would provide access to new lots.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the parcel contained a great deal of history, but the main point to emphasize was that the original Special Use Permit was approved in 1981, under a different comprehensive plan and ordinance. She said that the key restriction that had carried forward was that the remainder of the tract could not be developed without special use permit approval. She said that the primary focus was on how this property would be developed under this unique provision of the ordinance.

Ms. Ragsdale said that there was special use permit activity in 2000 and 2002, but those expired. She said that in 2022, a special use permit was approved to allow the development of two lots, located off Dick Woods Road. She said that the parcel's boundaries were defined by open space along Dick Woods Road and Ivy Creek. She said that staff’s primary concern during the review of the concept plan was to minimize development and preserve as much area as possible in conservation zones, such as critical slopes, Little Ivy Creek, and Grassmere along Dick Woods Road. She said that it was currently entirely wooded.

Mr. Ragsdale said that when they reviewed the previous concept plan in March, staff expressed concerns about the length of driveways, the number of driveways, and the location of building sites. She said that they also discussed the balance between residential lots and acreage under

common ownership in conservation areas. She said that in response to these concerns, the applicant has made significant changes, including reducing driveway lengths, reconfiguring lots, and decreasing the acreage in residential tracks.

Ms. Ragsdale said that this was not a site plan, and as acknowledged in the staff report, they did not believe it will impact critical slopes, but if it should, it would go through a separate process. She said that staff would formulate a review and act on the waiver to a single point of access. She said that a single point of access would not make sense given the configuration of this parcel, which was noted in the staff report.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the applicant had provided a summary of their changes, which included reducing the number of residential lots from 263.77 acres to approximately 193.94 acres and decreasing the number of driveway links. She said that these adjustments had led to some reconfiguration of the lots and building sites on the revised plan. She said that staff had reviewed the criteria for this special use permit, which was a key aspect of their review process. She said that based on their evaluation, they did not believe that this proposal would cause a substantial detriment to adjacent properties.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the community meeting attendees were generally satisfied with the layout and approach, and they did not identify any public health, safety, or welfare concerns. She said that their primary goal in rural areas was not to further residential development, and they did not anticipate any issues with this proposal. She said that they believed the applicant had addressed their concerns with their revised concept plan and their refined conditions of approval, which she could elaborate on in more detail. She said that staff were now recommending approval.

Ms. Ragsdale said that given the complexity of the project, which involved residential development in a rural area, they had included several detailed conditions. She said that the conditions built upon the previously approved conditions for lots one through five, which were included with the original approval in 2022. She said that they added a condition to ensure that they could review grading and erosion and sediment control measures. She said that this allowed them to review the project regardless of any exemptions that may be claimed.

Ms. Ragsdale said that staff also added a condition regarding driveway length, as the ordinance covered the design of driveways. She said that, however, after consulting with the fire marshal, they determined that they needed to ensure there was adequate emergency vehicle turnaround at the end of the driveways. She said that with these conditions and the revised concept plan, staff had recommended approval. She said that they had also noted the plan's consistency with lot patterns, its conservation and critical resource features, and its increase in conservation areas.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to clarify Condition 2 regarding dwelling units. He asked if when they stated that only one dwelling unit was permitted on each new tract, that included or excluded accessory units.

Ms. Ragsdale said that this ordinance did not address accessory apartments, which meant that within a single-family detached dwelling, they would be permitted an accessory apartment, but it must be within the footprint of the existing single-family dwelling and was restricted in size.

Mr. Murray said that in staff’s item about stream buffers, they stated that the stream buffers may be protected consistent with the County's ordinance for stream buffers. He said that currently,

their ordinance allowed for the removal of streams wholesale, after which they no longer enforced the stream buffers. He said that he assumed this would not be allowed. He said that it would make more sense to specify that the stream buffers as described on this site plan were protected.

Ms. Ragsdale said that there were additional conditions beyond their ordinance that applied to riparian buffers, mitigation plantings, and additional regulations on agriculture. She said that she believed Condition 3 would apply to stream buffers. She said that although she did not believe these streams could be piped, staff could verify this before the Board took action. She said that they could review the conditions and make any necessary adjustments before the Board acted on the Special Use Permit.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing. He asked if the applicant had a presentation.

Ethan Miller said that he was joined by his wife Diane. He said that they were the owners of this property through their company, Blue Springs Land Corporation. He said that he would skip the majority of the history that had already been heard. He said that to summarize, this property was acquired by his grandmother, Nettie Marie Jones, in 1980. He said that originally, it was 695 acres. He said that she applied for and received special use permits in 1981 to divide the property into 33 lots, containing approximately 153 acres, plus 10 acres of roads and residue parcels totaling around 531 acres.

Mr. Miller said that one of the key features of the plan was preserving the original Spring Hill farmhouse, dating back to the 1830s, and the surrounding acreage. He said that essentially, the plan kept the farm in the center and placed residential building lots around the edges. He said that his grandmother passed away in 1991, and his wife and he acquired the property two years later. He said that they held the residue of approximately 500 acres for nearly 30 years. He said that in 2022, they subdivided the southern 100 acres, which was topographically different, and entered it on Dick Woods Road, across from Bloomfield Road.

Mr. Miller said that in 2024, they submitted this plan, which was previously heard by the Commission on March 27. He said that this plan included six new lots, approximately 264 acres, with an average lot size of 44 acres. He said that the total driveway length to serve the lots was approximately 8,400 linear feet, including 2,200 feet of existing farm road. He said that in response to staff concerns, they reduced the acreage in the lots by 70 acres, resulting in an average lot size of around 32 acres. He said that as required, the lots must be at least 21 acres in size.

Mr. Miller said that another constraint the property was mostly forested and the minimum acreage required for land use taxation was 20 acres. He said that this would allow residents to choose to preserve the forest if they wished. He said that furthermore, they had reduced the driveway lengths by 2,500 feet by using joint driveways. He said that to summarize, they created a joint driveway for lots 2 and 3 from the top of Loblolly Lane, and another joint driveway for lots 4 and 6 from Grassmere Road.

Mr. Miller said that lot 5 would use an existing farm road that had been in place for over 50 years, so it was not a new driveway construction. He said that lot 1 would access a right of way on Spring Lane to the right. He said that the main difference between this plan and the previous one was that they had included a restriction on residential clearing and a two-acre restriction, including driveways, for all areas except lot 5.

Mr. Miller said that this would result in approximately one acre of driveways out of the total 342 acres. He said that what was most important here was the resident support, as Ms. Ragsdale had pointed out in the staff report. He said that the residents of Spring Hill were overwhelmingly supportive of this plan due to several reasons. He said that one reason was that it would preserve the property in its current state. He said that they would only use 12 acres of the remaining 342 acres for residential purposes, with the rest being forest or agriculture use.

Mr. Miller said that additionally, this plan created hiking trails and granted ownership of parcels around the streams, Little Ivy Creek and Ivy Creek, to the homeowners. He said that in response to the question of whether they would eliminate the streams, he believed that was unlikely to happen here and the intent was that it clearly would not. He said that he did not think that it was an issue.

Mr. Miller said that to summarize, the plan resulted in the clearing of only 12 acres of the 342-acre resident parcel, leaving 96.5% of the property in forestal use. He said that in their view; the plan struck a balance between preserving the rural character of the area and allowing for some economic return from its ownership. He said that they were happy to address the staff concerns and were willing to address any other concerns the Planning Commission members may have tonight.

Mr. Bivins asked if the two acres preserved on each lot would be composed of one acre for the driveway and one acre for the residence.

Mr. Miller said that as revised, the total length of the new driveway construction will be approximately 3,600 feet, which is equivalent to about one acre. He said that this new driveway will serve five of the lots. He said that to clarify, it would be an average of 0.2 acres per lot. He said that the only distinction was lot five, which already had an existing road. He said that if the use of each lot was restricted to two acres, for example, the driveway for lot 1 would be included in the construction, so 1.8 would remain after the 0.2 acres for the driveway.

Mr. Moore said that he appreciated the revisions from the applicant; it appeared that some of the concerns they had heard in March were being addressed. He said that he was wondering about the management of Area 1, Area 1A, Conservation Area A, and Conservation Area B, which collectively encompassed a significant amount of acreage. He said that he was wondering who would be responsible for maintaining the trails and other aspects of these areas, and whether they would remain in their ownership.

Mr. Miller said that Area 1 was along Dick Woods Road and Ivy Creek, which would be deeded to the Spring Hill Phase 1 lot owners, so the homeowners in Phase One would own the land along their lots. He said that in section to the south of those lots; those would be owned by those same homeowners or the two adjoining owners. He said that he would not own it.

Mr. Miller said that in terms of Tract 2, which ran along Little Ivy Creek, it would be owned by the Phase 2 Homeowners Association. He said that the conservation areas, initially owned by himself, would eventually be transferred to one of the lot owners, who would assume responsibility for them. He said that their long-term plan was to have the conservation areas owned by the lot owners, with the possibility of revising the arrangement in the future.

Mr. Missel asked if any members of the public wished to speak on this item.

John Hedges said that he was one of the owners of the original Spring Hill farmhouse, from which the farm was developed for the phase one and phase two lots 40 years ago, spoke. He said that the initial plan, conceived by Mr. and Mrs. Miller, was a good one. He said that the plan presented before the Commission today was also a good one. He said that his property was arguably the most affected by any development. He said that they fully supported the applicant and their efforts. He said that the applicant had put together a thoughtful plan, consulting with all of the current residents and being very responsive. He said that he recommended the Commission support this project.

Mr. Missel asked if the applicant had a response to public comment before he closed the public hearing.

Mr. Miller said that he was happy that the residents supported their plan.

Mr. Missel closed the public hearing, and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Murray said that he wanted to bring up a concern he previously raised. He said that the reason for a conservation easement being held by another party was to ensure the conservation actually happened. He said that when a situation arose in Albemarle County, he recalled the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) discussing a piece of park property with Albemarle County, where the County acquired the property after initially holding a conservation easement.

Mr. Murray said that one of the discussions was that, in this case, the conservation would no longer be ensured because the property owner and the easement owner were now the same entity. He said that this effectively nullified the easement. He said that in this situation, if they claimed these conservation areas were truly conservation areas, the ownership issue became a concern.

Mr. Murray said that the fact that there was no third-party owner to ensure the conservation meant that, in essence, they were just other lots. He said that there was nothing that set them apart as truly conservation areas. He said that if they were owned by an HOA or a third party, then that would make them more conservation-oriented.

Ms. Firehock said that she assumed that, when they eventually worked out the details, they would have a deeded easement across the properties for the trail. She said that she understood the point being made, but she did not interpret it as meaning that these open space deeded easements would be conservation easements.

Mr. Murray said that he was informed explicitly that conservation easements would not be included; this was his primary concern. He said that if there was a deeded trail easement owned by the HOA or the community, it would make a lot more sense. He said that in this case, it would appear that they were creating additional lots rather than dedicated open space.

Ms. Firehock said that those zones were set aside specifically for people to recreate and enjoy the natural area. She said that they were not just private lots, but rather designated spaces.

Mr. Murray asked what party would ensure that happened.

Ms. Firehock said that she would imagine that those property owners with access to the easements would have a vested interest in ensuring they could continue to access them. She said that she believed they would have their own recourse to require the space remained open.

Mr. Murray said that there would be no legal recourse.

Ms. Firehock said that no; there would be a deeded easement, so there would be a legal agreement to allow people to continue to traverse the trails.

Mr. Bivins said that they were not creating public space. He said that they were creating private community space. He said that if bad behavior were to occur, he believed the community was small enough that they would be able to work with the perpetrating property owner and alleviate the issue internally.

Ms. Firehock said that she was pleased with the changes that were made by the applicant. She said that she believed the applicant and staff had worked diligently to address the issues and that the outcome was a positive one. She said that although the applicant may have been frustrated with the lengthy process, she thought that they had achieved a better result.

Ms. Firehock said that the revised design was more effective, using less land and having a reduced impact on the environment. She said that it would also provide sufficient habitat for wildlife, such as birds, butterflies, bears, and people, to coexist.

Mr. Bivins said that he wished that accessory dwellings were allowed in this subdivision so that people could live there without being responsible for a large amount of land.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of SP202400024 Spring Hill Farm Subdivision for the reasons stated in the staff report and with the recommended conditions. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

SP202500001 Field School

Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager, said that this special use permit request was a focused amendment to one condition associated with the already-approved Field School on Barracks Road. She said that the proposal was to extend the deadline for Condition 9 from August 28, 2025, to August 28, 2026. She said that this change did not affect the remaining eight conditions that were included in the original Special Use Permit.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the Field School, which was approved for a site located west of town on Barracks Road, near the development area, was situated in a rural area designated as such in the comprehensive plan. She said that this area had a mix of agricultural open properties, residential areas, and wooded areas. She said that the history of this special use permit was relevant, as it had been originally approved in 2017 for a private school with a maximum enrollment of 150 students.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the original deadline for construction had been February 2022, and the deadline had been extended twice since then, most recently to August 28, 2025. She said that the enrollment remained at 150 students, and this proposed amendment would extend the deadline to August 28, 2026. She said that the applicant had submitted a site plan in April 2024,

which had been approved in February 2025, they had completed their two-step site plan process, and the applicant had submitted their initial, which was approved, and had been actively working to obtain approval for their final site plan, which had also been submitted.

Ms. Ragsdale said that this particular special use permit was limited to an amendment to Condition 9, extending it for only one year. She said that staff had not identified any changes in character, circumstance, or traffic on Barracks Road that would warrant concern about the one-year extension. She said that all conditions would remain in place, as outlined in the concept plan, and the site plan had demonstrated consistency with the approved conditions, particularly the need for turn lanes on Barracks Road.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the conditions addressed public health, safety, and welfare, including enrollment, buffers, hours of operation, lighting, and other factors. She said that given the limited request and the lack of changes since the last review, staff had recommended approval.

Mr. Missel said that he would like clarification on the definition of the start of construction, as he may have missed it in the documentation.

Ms. Ragsdale said that they did not include the detailed definition from the ordinance, which was a multi-part definition. She said that it was essentially tied to obtaining a building permit and then initiating those improvements.

Mr. Bivins asked how far they were from receiving a building permit. He asked if it was possible they could get a permit by the end of August.

Ms. Ragsdale said that it was a possibility, but it could not be guaranteed.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing. He asked if the applicant had a presentation.

Bo Perriello said that he was approaching the end of his second year as the head of Field School. He said that they were here this evening seeking a brief extension of their existing special use permit as they worked to start the building process while ensuring compliance with all necessary regulations. He said that they had had a busy year, despite some setbacks, but remained committed to opening the campus for the 2027-28 school year while doing things the right way, as outlined in their SUP.

Mr. Perriello said that for those unfamiliar, Field was not a typical school. He said that they were an all-boys middle school, serving grades five through eight, and one of only three in the country. He said that they had always focused on boys' middle school and would continue to do so moving forward. He said that they were a small school, with only four grades and currently 86 boys. He said that natural outdoor spaces were an integral part of their school ethos and student experience.

Mr. Perriello said that their goal was to maintain as much of the natural beauty and topography of the site as possible, with long-term plans for biking and hiking trails for the boys and community. He said that they planned to build in phases, with the first phase including one building, designed to accommodate up to 95 boys with limited potential for growth. He said that they remained committed to being good partners.

Mr. Perriello said that just last week, they brought their design team to the Colthurst Homeowners Association meeting to provide an update and hear concerns. He said that the meeting was very positive, with the neighbors seeming pleased with the project, including the road widening, left-hand turn lane improvements, and safety concerns. He said that they agreed to prioritize the safest possible travel for their families and the community.

Mr. Perriello said that they were working closely with VDOT and would follow any and all recommendations for traffic safety and flow. He said that they had recently completed a traffic study and were happy to provide copies to VDOT and the Colthurst homeowners. He said that finally, they said that they were not seeking any new changes in this special use permit; they were simply asking for a brief extension. He said that he was aware that this project had a long history, but he could only speak to his time in this position.

Mr. Perriello said that during the past 12 to 18 months, their team had made significant progress and continued to move forward with speed and purpose. He said that as an educator, they preached the importance of lifelong learning, and this project had highlighted the extent of his own knowledge gaps. He said that he was fortunate to have a great team of professionals working with them, including Daniel Hyer and Kendra Moon from Line & Grade, their civil engineers, Kevin Schaefer from Design & Develop, their architects, along with Pete Morris from Faulkner Construction.

Mr. Perriello said that they also had a dedicated group of committed volunteers running their building committee, consisting of Wick Knox, a current parent and principal at VMDO downtown, Jay McNeely from Eagle Corps, Matt Wilkinson from Beck Cohen, and their board chair, Will Sowers. He said that this committee met every two weeks to ensure they were consistently making progress and had been doing so for over a year now. He said that he wanted to extend his gratitude to the County staff for their assistance in expediting the process. He said that they currently had their final site plan and Virginia stormwater management plan in for review, with the initial building plan to follow in the coming weeks.

Mr. Perriello said that they had a potential path to completion by their sunset clause, but he was aware that things did not always go as planned, and this extension request was to ensure they could stay on track. He said that their ultimate goal was to build a single building school that could house up to 95 students on this beautiful piece of land. He said that currently, they were housed in a 100-year-old building that they rented from Albemarle County and shared with Crozet Arts.

Mr. Perriello said that every time they experienced heavy rains, they lost a third of their classroom space, displacing faculty and students. He said that the technology was subpar, and large parts of the building were inaccessible due to asbestos. He said that given that the majority of their families resided in town, this move to Barracks Road was crucial for their school community. He said that they were eager to provide these boys with a permanent space to learn and grow. He said that there was no shortage of news highlighting that boys were falling behind educationally, making the need for a place like Field School more pressing than ever. He said that this move would enable them to have an even greater impact on the local area.

Mr. Missel asked if the Commission had any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Bivins said that it sounded like they were making significant progress, and that was good. He said that he offered congratulations on their tenure and the success they had achieved during

that time. He said that he believed that they should be able to complete the project by September, if not by December, January 1. He said that he was struggling to understand why they needed a year extension.

Mr. Bivins said that personally, he was less concerned with the end of the year and more concerned with the fact that they seemed ready to move forward and pull a permit. He said that they should keep the pressure on him and his donors to ensure they could facilitate the permitting process. He said that he needed to hear more about the specific challenges he was facing and why he required additional time. He said that if he would like to defer to one of his previous comments.

Mr. Perriello said that he would defer to the professionals if he misspoke, but he would summarize that most of this had been a result of conversations with the County. He said that they had an initial meeting where they collectively discussed the project, and the County was trying to be creative to help them meet the deadline. He said that they left that meeting with a sense of uncertainty, feeling that they needed to request an extension to protect themselves. He said that since then, they had another meeting, and the County had allowed them to expedite the review process, which was helpful. He said that they would now be meeting with the County every couple of weeks.

Mr. Perriello said that as someone relatively new to this process, he had learned that timelines could be unpredictable. He said that nevertheless, he believed they had a path forward, and this was primarily done to ensure the project's success and timely completion. He said that they had their permits in place, and their architects were close to submitting the foundation and footing plan, which should be ready within the next week to two weeks. He said that they were moving forward with the project.

Mr. Murray said that the National Bike Route 76 went right in front of this property. He said that they did not typically receive special use permits along that route. He said that it was currently used by cyclists, so he was wondering if the applicant had considered the safety of that bike route's traffic.

Mr. Perriello said that he was aware that they would be widening the road and adding turn lanes for safety. He said that biking was an incredibly important activity in their school programming, so they could certainly in tune with the biking community, but he was unsure of any specifics about that route.

Mr. Missel asked if any members of the public wished to speak on this item.

Robert Humphreys, Jr., Jack Jouett District, said that his property was adjacent to the school. He said that he was here tonight to respectfully yet firmly urge them to deny the Field School's request for an extension on their mandatory construction start deadline for the property on Barracks Road. He said that the project had had more than enough time and opportunities. He said that since purchasing the land in 2019, the school had experienced multiple changes in plans, at least three hits of school, and had already missed two previous deadlines to begin construction. He said that in six years; the project had yielded little more than turnover and delay.

Mr. Humphreys said that when they last requested an extension, they cited COVID-19 as the reason, but no visible fundraising effort was made, and they had no website page dedicated to

the cause. He said that in contrast; local organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club successfully raised millions and completed a 52,000 square foot facility during the same period. He said that the difference was in the follow-through and commitment, which the Field School had not demonstrated.

Mr. Humphreys said that the latest site plan moved the entrance halfway up the eastbound hill on Barracks Road, away from its original location across from Magnolia Ridge. He said that this change required a commercial entrance, necessitating both a right turn and a left turn lane, and expanding Barracks Road to four lanes at that spot. He said that this new layout introduced a hazardous traffic situation, particularly for drivers on the westbound side of the road, which picked up speed after clearing city congestion.

Mr. Humphreys said that predictably, this would lead to a future request for a school zone and a 25 mile-an-hour speed limit, which would significantly impact thousands of daily drivers. He implored the Commission not to reward inaction with yet another extension. He said that this project had stalled for years, and it was time to bring it to a close. He asked that they deny this request and please consider his concerns.

Mr. Missel asked if the applicant would like to respond to the public comments.

Mr. Perriello said that he wanted to be respectful of Mr. Humphrey's comments and concerns while also highlighting that they had recently completed a traffic study, which they were happy to share. He said that if the Commission had not seen a copy, he knew that the staff had access to it. He said that additionally, he would like to reference the significant amount of work they had done in the past year to demonstrate that they were working diligently to move the project forward as quickly as possible, as evident by their site plan and stormwater management plan. He said that he would further note the wonderful meeting they had with the Colthurst community and HOA, during which they received very supportive reactions to this project.

Mr. Missel closed the public hearing, and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Bivins asked if it was possible to amend staff’s proposal to change the extended date to January 1, 2026.

Mr. Missel said that having been through this process many times as an applicant, he believed the intent was most important. He said that it should be clear that the intent was to get this project done sooner rather than later; however, the reality was unclear, and it could take much longer than expected to get things done. He said that another issue to consider from the applicant’s perspective was the budget. He said that the faster the process went, the easier it was to get real numbers, but it also could result in unexpected costs that the budget could not cover, and value-engineering would take additional time.

Mr. Bivins said that in his experience, value-engineering should occur after permits were approved. He said that the condition mentioned that they just needed to start building, which meant they just needed the permit.

Mr. Missel said that building permits were taking significantly longer than they used to, and they were paying for third-party reviewers to supplement the process. He said that these reviewers reviewed their documents, stamped them, and then came to the County, where the County then

turned them around. He said that there were challenges with the timeline, which could take multiple months.

Mr. Bivins said that even if it took multiple months, it seemed reasonable that they should have it by the end of the year.

Ms. Ragsdale said that in terms of the overall process and the various individuals involved, she wanted to clarify that expedited did not guarantee a specific timeframe. She said that they had to consider the reviews from VDOT and the Health Department, which could take as long as those agencies needed. She said that this process was not just limited to the site plan; it also included the building permit process.

Ms. Ragsdale said that given this, she felt it was reasonable to expect a one-year extension of the special use permit. She said that she did not foresee any circumstances that would change staff's perspective on granting a year-long extension. She said that she would not want to extend it for too short of a time period, because then they may end up in the same position if there were any unforeseen circumstances. She said that staff was comfortable with a one-year extension.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was supportive of the request. He said that upon reviewing the application, he did not see anything that would suggest the applicant would be dragging their feet with this project.

Ms. Firehock said that she felt much more comfortable having heard from the applicant, as she was concerned about their ability to fulfill the requirements. She said that upon reviewing the applications, she noticed that they were submitted year after year, which led her to wonder if they truly had the necessary funds for this project. She said that it seemed that the applicant was creating a safety net, in case VDOT or the Health Department took a long time to complete their respective tasks, rather than simply not having the capability to execute the project. She said that therefore, she was less worried now that she had heard from the applicant.

Mr. Bivins said that hearing staff's presentation and seeing the new information in this application, it seemed likely that this would be completed by the end of the year. He said that he was concerned that this extension was excessive, considering that the planning and zoning processes itself already was seen generally as lengthy and slow by the community. He said that he did not believe that getting these applications processed should not be a liability on their staff.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of SP202500001 Field School for the reasons presented in the staff report. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Committee Reports

Mr. Murray said that the Crozet Community Advisory Committee met recently, during which they had a nice workshop about the sustainability action plan toolkit. He said that it was interesting to hear that everyone's ideas about different ways to make their community more resilient.

Mr. Moore said that the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Charlottesville and Albemarle. He said that there was a strong interest in the CTAC to provide meaningful and solution-oriented feedback. He said that over the past

year and a half, he believed that there had been a feeling that they primarily heard staff reports without much action. He said that he looked into the bylaws to understand the committee's purpose and function, and he was pleased to be a part of a robust and engaging discussion.

Mr. Moore said that he was impressed to learn about the Safe Streets and Roads for All initiative, which was applying for a $4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. He said that this grant had not been subject to federal funding reductions, and it was a significant opportunity. He said that he also gained insight into the concept of Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs), which included pedestrians, bicyclists, scooter users, and others.

Mr. Moore said that this initiative brought together UVA Engineering, Applied Biomechanics, UVA Health, and other key stakeholders to study ways to make roads safer for these users and inform their overall plan. He said that at the Rio-29 CAC meeting, where the focus was on Lachlan Commons, also known as the Rio Eco-Village. He said that the original ecovillage concept was no longer relevant, and a new buyer had proposed a plan to develop the site, which would include approximately 75 units on 6.5 acres. He said that the proposed development was located near the old Rio Road, which included a challenging intersection with Agnew Street.

Mr. Moore said that the proposed development was an interesting concept, where one entered on the southern side of the lot, then came back around. He said that the design also curved up the hill, featuring townhouses, parks, and native plants. He said that the developers were very focused on incorporating native plant details and solar farm rooftop features. He said that they were being less detailed with aspects such as road connections. He said that there were still some issues that needed to be resolved with VDOT, which may be addressed in the future.

Ms. Firehock asked when the application would be presented to the Commission.

Mr. Moore said that the project was not currently scheduled, and he was unsure about its status. He said that VDOT had expressed concerns regarding a part of the road planning, so they had to fix that. He said that the developer team received feedback from some of the neighbors, who had concerns. He said that notably, the team included a highly skilled landscape architect.

Mr. Missel asked what organization presented the information on the VRUs.

Mr. Moore said that he was unsure.

Mr. Barnes said that one interesting aspect of that grant was that it was worth $4.6 million, with a 20% local match. He said that of this 20%, half was coming from the University of Virginia and the other half from Honda, a local car dealership. He said that this grant represented an effort to address vulnerable users in their community, as it had been identified that approximately 80 people between the last five years had been classified as vulnerable users who had been involved in accidents. He said that the potential study and funding opportunity from the University and a private entity presented an intriguing possibility for their community to solve this issue.

Mr. Bivins said that there was a public meeting with VDOT last week, during which they laid out various projects that were funded and would be completed within a certain amount of time. He said that there was a host of projects he believed the community was unaware of but would move forward. He said that he was so glad to see the level of work being done to improve the transportation of their community.

Mr. Murray said that before this meeting, he had the opportunity to take a tour of Albemarle County's green roof. He said that one of the interesting aspects was that he had previously conducted a native plant trial project on the green roof. He said that working with County staff, they had selected a variety of native plants to Albemarle County that were chosen for their ability to thrive in extreme environments. He said that they then placed them on trays and installed them on the county green roof to observe their performance. He said that notably, many of the plants were still alive on the roof. He said that this had provided them with valuable data on which native plants worked best, and which ones did not. He said that as a result, they now had reliable information that could be shared with others planning to install green roofs.

Ms. Firehock asked if that information was published on the County's website.

Mr. Murray said that he did not think it was on there, but it was a great idea. He said that he would compile the photographs he took today and give those back to staff.

Mr. Moore said that to answer Mr. Missel's earlier question, he believed Rob Tieman was the presenter on VRUs.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting

Mr. Barnes said that there had been two Board of Supervisors meetings since the Commission last met. He said that one Board meeting was a special session with the Town of Scottsville, where they discussed five different aspects, including AC44, the new Economic Development Strategic Plan, infrastructure updates from the Albemarle and Rivanna service authorities, and some discussion regarding Fire and Rescue operations.

Mr. Barnes said that the Board also held a meeting on May 21, featuring three presentations in the afternoon. He said that the first was a cost study of community services, examining different types of land uses in rural areas and their relative tax rates and costs. He said that there was also a presentation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, as well as a discussion of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. He said that they held two public hearings, one on the County Secondary Six-Year Plan, also known as the Rural Rustics Paving Program, and another on the 400 Rio Road West, which was the old telecommunications building being converted into a Ferguson's Plumbing Supply facility. He said that both matters were approved.

Mr. Missel said that the meeting with the Town of Scottsville was very interesting. He said that one of the questions was how the Board saw the Town of Scottsville and how they worked with them. He said that one area they discussed was tourism, along with a few other comments.

Mr. Bivins asked if the population of Scottsville allowed it to remain designated as a town.

Mr. Missel said that he was unsure; he did not know the minimum.

Mr. Moore said that if they applied today, it would be well under the threshold.

Mr. Herrick said that they would not lose their town status due to population decline.

Mr. Murray said that on the other side, Crozet had a sufficient population to qualify as a city.

Mr. Murray said that regarding Rural Rustic Roads, he was aware that there were staff proposals regarding changes to the policy for these roads. He said that he was waiting for the recording to become available. He said that he would like to confirm whether the recommendation to extend the "do not pave" list to six years for roads on that list was implemented.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, that did go through.

New Business

There was none.

Old Business

There was none.

Items for follow-up

There were none.

Adjournment

At 7:20 p.m., the Commission adjourned to June 10, 2025, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.

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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: