**Albemarle County Planning Commission**
**Final Minutes Work Session**
**June 10, 2025**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: Corey Clayborne; Nathan Moore.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Stacy Pethia, Assistant Director Housing; Andy Herrick, County Attorney; Jenny 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.

## Consent Agenda

Mr. Murray moved that the Planning Commission adopt the Consent Agenda. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0). (Mr. Clayborne and Mr. Moore were absent.)

## Work Session

### Affordable Housing Report

Mr. Missel asked if this work session would be more of a briefing on the current status of affordable housing, or if it would also cover the work underway to support affordable housing and housing initiatives in the County.

Stacy Pethia, Assistant Director of Housing, said that it was a bit of both.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that this item was a reaction to the Commission’s request for more information on various efforts the County was making on affordable housing. He said that he believed it was a priority, so they began with this topic, and they would attempt to cover other ones in the future when they had room in their agendas.

Dr. Pethia said that she would provide an update on Housing Albemarle, covering the housing policy and activities since its adoption in 2021. She said that to begin, she would like to provide a brief overview of the definition of affordable housing, how it was measured, and who qualified. She said that they would also discuss the housing needs in Albemarle County, which were mostly based on the 2019 Regional Housing Needs Assessment performed by the Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership. She said then they would look at the County’s response to date.

Dr. Pethia said that affordable housing was housing that an individual or family could afford with their income; it was really that simple. She said that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recommended housing costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income, including rent, utilities, mortgage payments, property taxes, and insurance. She said that this 30% guideline was established in the 1980s to ensure that households had enough income to cover housing costs and other essential expenses, such as food, healthcare, and transportation.

Dr. Pethia said that to measure affordability, they used the fair market rent, which was set annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and based on the 40th percentile rents for the metropolitan area. She said that for Albemarle County, it included the City of Charlottesville, Greene County, Nelson County, and Fluvanna County. She said that in 2025, HUD set the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment at $1,729 per month.

Dr. Pethia said that in comparison, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in April 2025 was around $1,900 per month. She said that in Albemarle County, the Office of Housing increased the fair market rent or voucher payment standard for their housing choice voucher program at 110% to account for the high rents in the area, in order to offset the greater challenge families had in finding affordable housing options.

Mr. Missel said that overall, it seemed like rents were increasing. He asked Dr. Pethia if it was a steady increase, and if there were goals to increase the 110% to account for anticipated future increases.

Dr. Pethia said that ideally, their voucher payment standards would be set at the fair market rents, with a maximum assistance level of $1,729 per month. She said that this would enable them to assist more people, as the higher they set their voucher payment standards, the fewer people they could serve. She said that they were allocated a limited budget each year and were informed by HUD of the expected number of vouchers they would serve. She said that ultimately, the market dictated their ability to meet this goal. She said that examining more recent data, rent fluctuations varied by bedroom size, so there had been some decreases in two-bedroom rents over the past year, but they were not very significant changes.

Mr. Missel asked if that was because more were available.

Mr. Murray asked how vacancy rates for apartments had changed over time.

Dr. Pethia said that the current vacancy rate remained relatively low, hovering around 2% or 3%. She said that this was below the 5% mark, which was the ideal rent vacancy rate for all housing units. She said that having a vacancy rate below 5%, particularly around 2%, could lead to a significant increase in housing prices as demand outstripped supply.

Dr. Pethia said that an alternative measure of housing affordability was the housing wage, which represented the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent of $1,729. She said that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a single worker would need to earn $33.25 per hour to afford this apartment comfortably, including utilities.

Dr. Pethia said that based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data, approximately 25% of households in the County had incomes below the housing wage, meaning that they could not afford that modest $1,729 apartment. She said that for comparison, an employee earning the minimum wage in Virginia, which was $12 per hour, would need to work 107 hours per week to make the $1,729 monthly rent at 30% of their income.

Mr. Missel asked if the $33.25 was based on a 40-hour workweek.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct.

Ms. Firehock said that meeting that hourly housing wage would require an annual salary of approximately $68,000.

Dr. Pethia said that moving forward to the topic of affordable housing, it was primarily geared towards low- and moderate-income households. She said that low-income households were defined as those earning 50% or less of the median income. She said that moderate-income households fall into the 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) category. She said that as of April 1, the area median income for the Charlottesville metropolitan region had risen to $125,800 per year, an increase from approximately $122,000. She said that examining the provided graph, the 80% AMI threshold was equivalent to an annual income of $70,000 for a household of four. She said that to qualify as low-income, a family of four would earn $44,000 or less per year, based on the 50% AMI threshold.

Mr. Missel asked if low-income was not defined as 60% or below; rather, it was defined as 50% or below.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that the HUD definitions set those income levels. She said that for low-income households, 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) was considered the threshold, with 50% AMI considered low income, and 30% AMI was extremely low income. She said that she believed they had all seen the next graph before, which illustrated their housing affordability spectrum.

Dr. Pethia said that it moved from the extremely low-income category, which included individuals experiencing homelessness and those living in emergency shelters or transitional housing, to permanent supportive housing and housing choice voucher programs, which focused on households at or below 50% AMI. She said that affordable rental housing fell within the 60% AMI category, encompassing low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) projects, up to affordable home ownership, which they set at 80% of area median income for the County. She said that this category extended to 120% AMI, generally defining workforce housing.

Dr. Pethia said that the Housing Albemarle policy primarily targeted households at or below 80% AMI. She said that by examining income limits, they could determine who qualified for affordable housing, which were typically set by HUD annually. She said that the current area median income of $125,800 meant that a family of four at 80% AMI would need to earn no more than $100,650 per year. She said that with the increase in area median income, this had expanded the range of households eligible for affordable housing.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the $33.25 was measuring an individual income or a household income.

Dr. Pethia said that it was an individual income, but it would also qualify as a household.

Mr. Carrazana said that with the 80% AMI column on the income limits chart, they had a single person earning $70,500 and then added income with additional people in the household, so it ultimately the household income that was measured.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that HUD set these guidelines, which they adjusted periodically. She said that they started with a four-person household, and that was the base percentage. She said that an 80% AMI was 80% of $125,800, but HUD rounded up to the nearest $50 or $00 and then adjusted downwards for smaller household sizes. She said that HUD would take the four-person household amount and multiply it by 0.7 for a single person. She said that this adjustment was intended to even out the buying power of households.

Dr. Pethia said that the provided information came from HUD, based on data from 2021. She said that it was the estimated number of households split up by percentage AMI. She said that HUD's data on household categories tended to be about three to four years behind, so they did not know the exact categories for their County. She said that however, this data from HUD suggested that a majority of households in the county fell below 100% AMI, with many of those at the 80% AMI and below categories.

Mr. Bivins said that the graph indicated that all of the households under 100% AMI had a majority which were renters. He said that it would be interesting to see the composition of owners versus renters across the different districts in the County.

Dr. Pethia said that she was unsure if that information was available through census data, but she could try to compile it.

Mr. Barnes said that it may allow them to assess the different needs throughout the community.

Mr. Bivins said yes. He said that they often discussed the quality-of-life issues that arose during their comprehensive plan discussions. He said that he believed that individuals living in denser communities would like to have more access to green spaces rather than those living in single-family or single-family occupancy homes. He said that single-family homes and multi-family developments had different challenges.

Dr. Pethia said that the Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership was set to update their housing policy, and their consultant would have access to more data sources than County staff due to their budget. She said that this may limit their ability to review the specific data the consultant was seeking. She said that they could attempt to gather information and provide it to PC the policy update was finalized.

Mr. Carrazana said that this data was from 2021, and they knew that there had been a significant increase in the AMI since then, so he would assume the number was quite a bit higher than what the graph presented.

Dr. Pethia said that that would be her guess, but she could not verify it yet. She said that HUD collaborated with the Census Bureau to conduct special data tabulations, which provided insights that were not readily available through their public data sources. She said that she would explore what information they could gather. She said that when considering the cost burden on households, they were focusing on those that spent 30% or more of their income on housing. She said that this data was based on the 2021 numbers, as that was the most recent available at the time.

Dr. Pethia said that according to that data, two out of every 10 low- and moderate-income homeowners were housing cost-burdened, which included households with incomes at or below 80% of the AMI. She said that nearly every two out of four renters with the lowest household incomes were severely cost burdened, meaning they paid more than half of their income towards their housing costs. She said that this category included renters with incomes below 50% of the AMI.

Mr. Bivins said that to clarify, that number was not just rent but also included utilities.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct; it was the gross rent and not the net rent. She said that projecting out to 2040, based on the 2019 Housing Needs Assessment, they estimated that one out of every four households would experience housing cost burdens, with that burden reaching 100% of the Area Median Income, not just 80% or below.

Dr. Pethia said that additionally, three out of every four households with incomes below 50% of the area median income would experience housing cost burdens by 2040. She said that this meant that those households would pay more than 30% of their income towards renter costs. She said that next, she would discuss what Albemarle County's response was to all those numbers.

Dr. Pethia said that in July 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Housing Albemarle policy, which included 12 objectives and 93 strategies or action steps. She said that to date, staff had achieved or implemented 20 of those 93 strategies, representing 22% of the total. She said that currently, staff was working on 43 of those strategies and action steps, which accounted for 46% of the total. She said that however, 30 of the strategies remained unaddressed, primarily due to either the need to complete existing steps before moving forward or the lack of available funding to implement them at this time.

Mr. Missel asked Dr. Pethia if she felt that they had made reasonable progress in terms of their original goals, or if they were falling behind. He asked if they had started with higher aspirational goals or if they had made more progress than initially anticipated.

Dr. Pethia said that she had hoped that they might be further ahead than they were currently. She said that the Commission may recall that the housing policy was not fully implemented until March of last year, and that was when the Board approved the developer incentive program. She said that moving forward from that point, they were hoping to build upon that to make progress.

Dr. Pethia said that they were also looking ahead to updates in the housing needs assessment, which may bring significant changes to their approach. She said that one recommendation that was not included in the Housing Albemarle report, but was a good idea, was to review the situation every five years or so and make adjustments as needed. She said that staff was always examining what was happening, what could be improved, and what changes may be necessary. She said that as a result, they would be working on that.

Dr. Pethia said that she believed that initial data from the Housing Needs Assessment would be available within the next 12 months. She said that it did not make sense to undertake a thorough update of the housing policy until they had that information. She said that this would help them make informed decisions moving forward. She said that they were always looking for opportunities to make changes that could improve their approach. She said that they had a list of things that they believed could be implemented to better serve their needs.

Mr. Missel asked how they were prioritizing the 93 action steps.

Dr. Pethia said that a significant portion of their efforts had focused on determining what needed to be put in place to ensure everything else functioned properly. She said that this was their top priority, and as a result, the developer incentive program was one of their key objectives. She said that they were also working to make the affordable housing fund more sustainable over the long term, and staff was working on that now.

Dr. Pethia said that by establishing a solid foundation, they could then assess what had worked and make adjustments as needed. She said that their goal was to initiate a more concerted conversation among Planning Commissioners, the Board of Supervisors, developers, and the community about how they could work together to move forward in a better way. She said that this conversation had not occurred in a coordinated manner in the past, but they believed they had made a significant start in setting the stage for meaningful progress.

Mr. Murray said that he had a question regarding the housing preservation item. He said that in his own neighborhood, he found it intriguing that there was a significant disparity in property values within a short walking distance of his house. He said that properties adjacent to his were assessed at under $140,000, while those just a short walk away were valued at over $1.5 million.

Mr. Murray said that he was fascinated by the rural area properties that were currently affordable and was familiar with some of the programs they had in place to preserve those properties. He asked what they were doing to take stock of the houses people were currently living in that were affordable to those folks and working to preserve those, so they did not displace those people, and when those properties changed hands, they remained affordable in the future.

Dr. Pethia said that to date, they had been working very closely with the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP), to ensure that AHIP could provide assistance to households in need. She said that although there was not enough funding to cover every household, they were working with AHIP to get out into the community and make necessary repairs to help people stay in their homes over a longer term. She said that once funding was provided, a lien was placed on the home, requiring it to remain affordable for a specified period as long as the current homeowner remained in the property.

Dr. Pethia said that the County recouped the money either through the sale of the property or, in the event of a homeowner's passing, through the sale to surviving family members, if one of their family members was income-qualified, they allowed them to remain in the home, ensuring the property remained affordable for the longer term. She said that in terms of rental housing, they also worked with local nonprofits to assist in purchasing properties, such as the Mallside Apartments, which had been on and off the market for several years. She said that they were open to collaborating with other organizations to secure funding for a down payment and bid on the property, as the County did not always have the money on hand to do it alone.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to know how many people had been served by AHIP in the past year.

Dr. Pethia said that she was not sure. She said that in the past, they had used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for these projects, particularly in rural areas. She said that however, they had not been using that funding source in the last couple of years. She said that instead, they had been receiving funding through the Planning District Commission and their Home Investment Partnership. She said that the Planning District Commission had access to those numbers, so she could obtain those and provide them to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Carrazana said that he believed that preserving the existing affordable housing stock was crucial. He said that they needed to track the numbers to determine if they were losing them overtime. He said that it struck him when he looked at Objective 1.14, which talked about housing preservation, that it was listed as something that had “not yet been considered/not yet started.” He said that it concerned him, because he would have thought that that item would be one, they had highly prioritized.

Dr. Pethia said that it was certainly considered a high priority, but it required a substantial amount of money.

Mr. Carrazana said that yes, it did, but there were other partnerships they could explore. He said that the Department of Historic and Cultural Affairs (DHCD) had a preservation program, and there were also partnerships with the state of Virginia and federal agencies.

Dr. Pethia said that yes, there were. She said that there were competitive grants available, and some of those, along with the Community Development Block Grant Program, were not accessible to local governments for application. She said that nonprofits had to apply for these funding streams. She said that AHIP did apply for these funding streams when possible. She said that there were alternative approaches to consider, but it did require a substantial and consistent source of funding. She said that once they had a funding source established, particularly through the Housing Fund, it would make the process easier moving forward. She said that to reiterate, the only reason they had not started on that objective was due to funding barriers.

Mr. Bivins said that in 1.4, they were discussing establishing preservation zones. He said that he imagined that there would be multiple preservation zones not located in the development area, where most of the housing was situated. He said that they had been somewhat uncomfortable replicating that type of housing in the Esmont area recently. He said that as a result, he suggested that at some point, they would need to address what this meant for their body. He said that he would suggest that most of the affordable single-family housing was not located in the development area.

Ms. Firehock said that during community meetings about the comprehensive plan, people discussed the desire to have some condominiums and more dense housing, in Esmont which would allow them to stay in their community, particularly as they aged in place. She said that she wholeheartedly agreed with that.

Mr. Carrazana asked why housing preservation had to be tied to development zones or non-development zones.

Mr. Bivins said that that was not his point. He said that the housing preservation was about preserving a unit that was at risk of being vacant. He said that this was not about adding to the unit, but rather about keeping the family and individuals who were currently residing there. He said that that was a fine approach, but if they were looking to enhance affordable housing in their community, he believed that this type of housing, whether modest or situated on a specific tract of land, would be more prevalent in the rural areas than in the development area. He said that if it was acceptable to preserve one house, then why not also add to the inventory in a smart and cautious manner, building upon the existing preservation efforts to create a more comprehensive approach that addressed the needs of those units that were naturally falling on hard times.

Mr. Murray said that this topic needed to be discussed further. He said that one paradox to consider was that one of the reasons the rural areas were affordable was because it lacked the ability for certain uses. He said that for instance, if they allowed public water and sewer, they may also be able to build duplexes, apartments, or other types of housing. He said that this could increase the property values, potentially leading to the displacement of existing residents. He said that in other words, attempting to create more affordable housing could inadvertently push out the people who were currently living in the existing affordable housing.

Mr. Bivins said that what he was suggesting was not bringing public services to the site. He said that there were alternative ways to create a community without requiring public water or public sewer. He said that for example, he could list numerous examples of existing communities with multiple units that were desirable to live in, yet did not have these services. He said that he hoped that whoever implemented this would not use the lack of public services as a test for determining whether to approve additional housing in the non-development area of their community. He said that he believed that this was a crucial consideration, as it was likely that the cost of housing in their area would continue to rise, making it increasingly difficult to afford.

Mr. Bivins said that if they looked at the weekly numbers of housing costs, they could see that the gap between what they could afford and what they needed to pay was significant. He said that currently, a regular house cost around half a million dollars. He said that if prices were to drop significantly, perhaps to $100,000, it would still be unaffordable for most people because it would be the result of an economic disaster. He said that he was trying to consider the realities of what it would take to create truly smart communities, and he believed that these types of communities were more likely to be found in non-development areas.

Mr. Murray said that he believed the major issue with that was their method of subdividing land in rural areas, which typically resulted in 21-acre lots. He said that there was no way to make a 21-acre lot affordable. He said that he thought they should reconsider how they approached subdivision development. He said that in his neighborhood, he had noticed that many affordable lots were actually two-acre lots, not 21-acre lots. He said that, for example, he saw many people purchasing two-acre lots and placing trailers on them, making it an affordable place to live. He said that; however, by limiting the ability to create smaller, more affordable lots and encouraging oversized subdivisions, they were inadvertently creating an unaffordable housing situation.

Dr. Pethia said that she wanted to clarify that, now that she had located the page they were referring to, housing rehabilitation zones were a specific designation allowed by state code. She said that these zones were typically created not to preserve existing housing, but to encourage housing preservation and development. She said that as a result, they enabled localities to offer a range of incentives that they would not normally be able to provide.

Dr. Pethia said that it had been a while since she had read that part of state code, but she recalled that they could provide certain incentives to developers such as forgiving overdue taxes on properties so that an abandoned property could be brought back into use. She said that those benefits would last for ten years. She said that it would be similar to an overlay.

Mr. Missel said that he had a quick process-related question. He said that he would like to get a clear roadmap of the process. He said that when considering Housing Albemarle, there were several phases. He said that the drafting and adopting phase was complete and got reviewed every five years, as Dr. Pethia had mentioned. He said that the implementing phase was currently underway. He asked how often the assessing phase, which was the Housing Needs Assessment, occurred.

Dr. Pethia said that the last time this was done was in 2019. She said that she believed the Planning District Commission staff would work with Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Housing Studies to receive training on data usage, data analysis, and how to perform updates on a more regular basis. She said that this may enable them to update the data every other year or annually, rather than waiting five years. She said that they were also sending two Housing staff members to these trainings. She said that with more trained staff, they could break down the process into smaller steps and complete updates more frequently.

Mr. Missel said that the process of discussing and workshopping was an ongoing aspect of this. He said that it was also an ongoing process of adjusting and refining. He said that regarding the workshopping piece, considering the development community, he had been a part of during some of the work sessions staff had with developers. He said that he would like to know how they were engaging with the development community to understand the impact of factors such as executive orders, canceled federal funds, and other relevant issues, so that they could adapt to these changes.

Dr. Pethia said that the nonprofits, County, and City governments had been meeting weekly to discuss the changes in federal funding and its impact on local nonprofits. She said that the

Community Foundation was also involved in these discussions, allowing them to understand the funding needs. She said that if the proposed changes in the current budget were implemented, local governments would be unable to locally fund the resulting shortfalls. She said that it was essential to understand how local developers and nonprofits were being affected by these cuts and explore potential ways to mitigate the impact, possibly with the help of other partners.

Mr. Murray asked if they had conducted an analysis on the return on investment for dollars spent and what their best return on investment was for different programs in terms of how much affordable housing was generated.

Dr. Pethia said that yes, they had. She said that she did not include it in this presentation but could certainly provide the data to the Commissioners. She said that staff believed that the best investments they could make were in affordable rental housing. She said that this was where the County's investment had the most impact. She said that generally, County investment came out to be around 10% to 11% of the total project cost, thanks to the low-income housing tax credits and other funding sources. She said that this resulted in a return of approximately $30 for every dollar the County put into those projects, leveraging funds effectively.

Dr. Pethia said that this was the best option for the County, as it provided more units than homeownership. She said that it was not to say that homeownership did not matter; there was great work being done at Southwood. She said that, however, from a funding perspective, rental housing was the best investment. She said that Housing Albemarle had taken a multifaceted approach to affordable housing, incorporating rental assistance programs, housing for special needs populations, a density bonus program, an affordable rental housing incentive program, financial support for new construction and preservation, and an affordable dwelling unit program waiting list.

Dr. Pethia said that internally, they were working to bring the community in, which could be challenging due to the random availability of proffered units. She said that it could take five years for one unit to become available, so staff was working on building a system to make these units more frequently available. She said that they were collaborating with developers and property managers who had experience working with these types of programs, particularly in northern Virginia and Fairfax County. She said that she believed they would build this system better than before.

Mr. Bivins said that there were a lot of items listed under the multifaceted approach of their housing program. He asked which item staff felt had given them the most leverage.

Dr. Pethia said that out of all the options, she would say that new construction was the most viable solution, as they needed to create new units. She said that this approach allowed for better investment leverage for rental units. She said that there had been an increase in developers partnering with the Piedmont Community Land Trust. She said that one of the challenges had been that many developers struggled to identify income-qualified households to purchase proffered units.

Dr. Pethia said that to address this, some developers had started working with the Community Land Trust, selling units to the Land Trust, which had established relationships with income-qualified individuals. She said that the Land Trust assisted these individuals in finding down payment assistance and securing affordable units, ensuring that resale prices remained restricted in perpetuity. She said that this collaboration had been a significant success, and she believed it was one of the key outcomes of the Housing Albemarle initiative.

Dr. Pethia said that the County's funding of a housing navigator with Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) and their Financial Opportunity Center had also been highly successful. She said that this program had enabled them to connect lower-income renters with affordable units, providing them with personalized assistance in finding suitable units, navigating conversations with landlords, and addressing credit issues and other barriers to renting.

Mr. Missel asked how the Community Land Trust was doing.

Dr. Pethia said that they were quiet, so they did not hear much from them. She said that she had recently learned that they had presented it to the Charlottesville Association of Realtors (CAAR) and now had 40 units in their portfolio. She said that it appeared that they were expanding into Fluvanna County. She said that they were collaborating with the Fluvanna Louisa Housing Foundation to build units in the area. She said that while their expansion was slow, it was clear that they were expanding their reach.

Mr. Bivins asked if developers were able to provide cash proffers to the Land Trust in lieu of building an affordable unit.

Dr. Pethia said that no; they would construct the unit and then sell the unit.

Dr. Pethia said that Victorian Heights was a good example. She said that she believed that they had eight units that were being sold through the bonus density program. She said that Greenwood Homes would build these units, which would then be sold to the Piedmont Community Land Trust. She said that the trust already had buyers lined up for these eight units. She said that they had done the same thing for 15 proffered units that were built and purchased by income-qualified buyers through the Community Land Trust. She said that as a result, these units would remain affordable forever.

Mr. Bivins said that this seemed like a reasonable alternative to get people into affordable housing without the Housing Office worrying about the housing voucher list. He said that it seemed that the Land Trust was successful at matching people with housing.

Dr. Pethia said that most property managers who had relocated from Northern Virginia to their area understood how to effectively advertise the units. She said that they had been advertising on the websites, highlighting that they had income-restricted units available. She said that they did not publicly disclose the rent prices, and prospective tenants had to contact them to inquire about the prices. She said that they had worked with them to ensure that they were aware of the necessary income qualifications.

Ms. Firehock said that while they appreciated the model of the Land Trust, which ensured affordability in perpetuity, she wanted to consider a theoretical scenario where the Land Trust did not have the necessary funds to acquire all the properties. She said that in that case, something similar could be achieved through another housing provider, such as Piedmont Housing Alliance, or perhaps another entity could step in.

Ms. Firehock asked if they had seen that happen.

Dr. Pethia said that before the Land Trust came on board, a lot of developers were working with Habitat. She said that the developer would proffer 15 units, which Habitat would then build and sell. She said that that had been the case so far. She said that the Community Land Trust was actually a subsidiary of Piedmont Housing Alliance, so they worked together. She said that this recent change had been helpful in getting the waiting list of potential buyers in order.

Dr. Pethia said that she thought it would be beneficial to discuss the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which was not often talked about in the County. She said that their program was relatively small. She said that currently, they had 345 households receiving Housing Choice Voucher assistance. She said that 30 of those were project-based vouchers. She said that the Housing Choice Voucher Program allowed the County, through the Office of Housing, to provide a voucher to a family or individual, which they used to secure a place to live.

Dr. Pethia said that the family then paid 30% of their income towards the rent, and the County paid the remaining 70%, up to the voucher payment standard, which they had discussed earlier. She said that with project-based vouchers, the voucher assistance was tied to a specific unit, and the County maintained waiting lists for those units. She said that when they reached a certain level, they began pulling people off the waiting lists, ensuring they qualified for assistance and placing them in the units. She said that this way, when the family left the unit, the unit remained affordable.

Dr. Pethia said that in this case, the general time period for project-based contracts was 15 years, although they could extend them if needed. She said that they currently had 30 project-based vouchers in place, and they would have 47 at the Premier Circle Apartments, now called Vista 29, as part of the permanent supportive housing project. She said that this would ensure that more than half of the 80 units received rental assistance through the County. She said that Piedmont Housing Alliance also had a project in the City that they were partnering with the city and PHA on, with five vouchers and eight at Hickory Hope Apartments.

Ms. Firehock asked what the gap was between how many people were staying on a waiting list for vouchers versus those that they offered in the City and County.

Dr. Pethia said that they had just opened the waiting list. She said they had approximately 1,200 to 1,500 applicants. She said that they would perform a random lottery drawing for 800 applicants to move forward. She said that assuming that not all of these selected individuals would fully qualify for the program, they could process approximately 800 applications within a two-year timeframe. She said that this was based on the information provided on their applications. She said that once an applicant reached the top of the waiting list, a more comprehensive certification process was conducted, which included a thorough review of their income and criminal backgrounds to ensure compliance with HUD regulations. She said that if an applicant met all the necessary criteria, they would be eligible to receive voucher assistance.

Ms. Firehock said that the takeaway seemed to be that the demand was still way higher than the amount the County and City were allocating to the problem.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked how people learned about these programs. He asked if the Office of Housing proactively advertised and promoted them.

Dr. Pethia said that they did advertise when the voucher program waiting list opened. She said that through their partnership with local media, announcements are made on Channel 29 and CBS 19, as well as in the newspapers, radio, and through the County's official channels. She said that from her personal experience working with housing authorities in the past, she had seen firsthand how a single person could spread the word about this program, making it a huge opportunity.

Dr. Pethia said that in reality, they did not need extensive advertising to reach their target audience. She said that websites like Section8.com actively scoured the internet daily to find waiting list openings, and this was because the program was open to applicants from anywhere in the country, as long as they were willing to relocate. She said that although they had not had any applicants from outside of Virginia, they had had individuals from northern Virginia apply for vouchers through their program.

Mr. Bivins asked if the average apartment rents were the upper level the unit could be leased for through the program.

Dr. Pethia said that if one examined the table above that data, the fair market rent of $1,729 per month for a two-bedroom unit was what HUD would pay for, and the County's program would pay for 110% of that amount.

Mr. Bivins asked if they had any sense of whether 110% of that amount was adequate to achieve cost neutrality for the owner. He asked if they were having to eat a portion of that to be in this business.

Dr. Pethia said that they frequently negotiated with landlords and property managers. She said that they were limited to 120% of the fair market rent; they could not pay above that. She said that voucher holders could, if their income allowed, pay up to 40% of their own income towards rent. She said that they tried not to let that happen, but they could not prevent them from doing so if that was their preference. She said that they did a lot of negotiating, and some landlords refused to budge. She said that they also based the payment standard on comparables.

Dr. Pethia said that for every application that came in, they conducted rent comparables to ensure that they can justify the rent. She said that if someone wanted to set the rent at 120% of the $1,729 fair market rent, but the comparables showed that comparable units were renting for $1500 a month, the rent must be lowered to $1500. She said that however, some landlords may argue that they could not go that low. She said that as a result, there was a significant amount of negotiating involved in this program. She said that she wanted to provide some information about the participants in their program. She said that approximately 20% of the households in their program included a family member with a disability.

Dr. Pethia said that about 30% of the program participants were senior citizens, aged 62 or older. She said that the average household income of their program families was around $19,600 a year, making them low-income households. She said that if they were to issue 10 new vouchers today, 75% of the households would have to have incomes at 30% AMI or below. She said that households could earn up to 80% of AMI before they left the program, so as their income increased, they paid more and more of their rent. She said that ideally, they would like to serve all households at 70% of AMI, but the program was primarily focused on the most vulnerable households.

Mr. Missel asked if the numbers regarding age and disability were target numbers or observed numbers.

Dr. Pethia said that these were the numbers in their program. She said that however, they did have priorities, which allowed them to set priority households that could move up the waiting list. She said that these priorities included individuals experiencing homelessness, for whom they received referrals from the Homeless Services Community. She said that to qualify, individuals must have a certification from BRAC or another organization, rather than simply claiming to be experiencing homelessness. She said that families with children under the age of five and senior citizens were also prioritized. She said that as a result, when they reviewed the waiting list, they prioritized these families, pulling them off first.

Dr. Pethia said that they also had 105 special purpose vouchers, which assisted non-elderly persons with disabilities. She said that these vouchers could be used by households that included a member with a disability, regardless of the household's senior status. She said that additionally, they had family unification vouchers, which they worked with the Department of Social Services to provide to families whose children were in the care system and were at risk of being removed due to a lack of housing. She said that these vouchers helped families secure housing and stay with their children. She said that they also had housing for special populations, targeting specific groups, such as seniors and persons with disabilities.

Dr. Pethia said that these programs included Scottsville School, Crozet Meadows, Woods Edge Apartments, and permanent supportive housing initiatives. She said that they collaborated with these organizations to ensure that families in their area had access to affordable housing options. She said that moving forward, she would like to discuss the County's investment in affordable housing over the last four to five years. She said that the total investment was approximately $20 million, sourced from the housing and Affordable Housing Investment Fund. She said that this fund had supported projects such as Southwood, Hickory Hope Apartments, Vista 29, and others.

Mr. Missel said that the line graph that depicted the investments in affordable housing was not a steady line; it fluctuated drastically year to year. He said that it seemed like it was because they may have funding opportunities arise that were not available before.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that the highest numbers on that investment graph were due to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Mr. Missel said that this year's funding was a bit of a mixed bag, as it had been pulled from various sources. He said that if he was correct, there was a portion that would be retained over time, which was a small portion of the $3.8 million allocated, around $1.4 million. He said that the remainder was similar to a reserve, but it was actually temporary funding.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that she believed there were a few slides at the end that provided more information on this topic, so they could delve into it further. She said that this would be the general outline of how the potential Housing Trust Fund would be structured.

Mr. Missel said that it was also worth considering that part of their goal was to have a clear vision of what they aspired to achieve, and how they planned to get there.

Mr. Bivins said that there was a reasonable solution if Richmond were to allow counties to propose a tax on their population to support schools. He said that this would at least enable some portion of the 60% of the County's budget to be allocated elsewhere. He said that when the County was forced to allocate 60% or more of its budget to support schools, there were solutions available. He said that some of these solutions were available, and if they wanted to have more flexibility, they needed to shift the mindset in the capital to allow Counties to make these decisions or, at the very least, allow Counties to put such proposals before their populace.

Dr. Pehtia said that the next chart focused on the number of households served since 2022. She said that in 2022, they were serving approximately 881 people, primarily through funding shown on the previous slide. She said that since then, the number of households served has steadily increased. She said that as of the current fiscal year, they have served around 1,200 households through this program, which includes rental housing assistance, owner-occupied housing assistance, shelter services for survivors of domestic violence and homeless people, and housing counseling services.

Dr. Pethia said that the County Office of Housing had been focusing on three major projects over the past couple of years: Southwood, Hickory Hope Apartments, and Vista 29. She said that in phase one of Southwood, the funding from the Housing Fund and property tax rebates through the performance agreement has subsidized 211 units. She said that this did not include the additional 121 units at Hickory Hope Apartments. She said that the total number of units in phase one of Southwood is 332. She said that Vista 29 would have a total of 140 units, and currently, 80 units were under construction, as demolition at the site has been completed. She said that once the phase was completed, Piedmont Housing Alliance would build an additional 60 units reserved for seniors and families.

Dr. Pethia said that looking at the existing units in the County, the data represented the number of units as of the beginning of this year. She said that this included subsidized units, bonus density units, proffered units, and units preserved through AHIP. She said that there were approximately 2,200 units in the housing stock that were affordable. She said that however, this number only included officially designated affordable units. She said that units like those at Cavalier Crossing were not included in the count. She said that they were working to develop a way to track these unofficially affordable units. She said that additionally, there were over 3,000 units in the pipeline, including subsidized rental units and proffered units. She said that the number may change when construction actually happened.

Mr. Missel asked what constituted a unit "in the pipeline." He asked if this meant they were proffered and approved.

Dr. Pethia said that those units had been proffered through rezoning approvals that had been approved.

Mr. Missel said that it was a lot of units. He asked if it was reasonable to expect that all of the proffered units would be built.

Dr. Pethia said that staff regularly monitored the data at least quarterly to identify what was under construction and what was not. She said that they were also working with the Community Development Department to improve their tracking capabilities. She said that to achieve this, they had been working with various spreadsheets from different groups, aiming to consolidate the data into a consistent and reliable system.

Mr. Missel said that he would be interested in seeing how long approvals had been sitting on the books without being realized. He said that he believed it would be helpful to understand the timeline of these approvals and the reasons behind their delay. He said that specifically, he would like to know if it was due to the cost of construction, a lack of LIHTC funding, or other factors.

Dr. Pethia said that if the projects were 100% affordable, the Office of Housing had a good handle on those because they communicated with them all the time. She said that Vista 29 had been delayed for about a year, but they were pretty good at keeping the Office of Housing updated on the situation, which was mostly about funding difficulties. She said that the proffered and approved units were much more difficult to track because they did not know when they would start construction.

Mr. Missel asked if those numbers were based on 15% of the total number of units being proffered as affordable housing.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that these were all the proffered units approved prior to March 1, 2024.

Mr. Missel said that if this was only 15% of the total units, that was a lot of residential units sitting out there.

Dr. Pethia said that it was. She said that it was important to consider that the maximum number approved through rezoning was not always the final number that actually got built.

Mr. Barnes said that to clarify, part of the build-out analysis involved determining the carrying capacity of a property by taking 15% of the land and multiplying it by the maximum density, which yielded the potential number of units. He said that this approach was distinct from what staff was trying to convey, which was that these projects had undergone rezoning.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that these rezoning applications had been approved. She said that staff had reviewed them and determined the maximum number of units approved for each rezoning, as well as the 15% affordability. She said that if, five years from now, the developer submitted a new site plan, and instead of building the maximum 400 units they were approved for, they decided to build only 300, the affordable units would decrease.

Mr. Barnes said that it would be a mischaracterization to say that this was 15% of the total units out there waiting to be built.

Mr. Bivins said that a number of projects from non-local developers had been abandoned by the developers because of community pushback. He said that they may have developers who were willing to make a development an affordable community, but if the community was unsupportive, that could affect the outcome and ultimately the number of affordable units.

Mr. Murray said that he wished the County had the ability to put a time limit on rezonings. He said that they had seen projects sit for years without being built, usually so they could sell or rent units at the peak market value. He said that he would like for them to stipulate that a project must be built within a certain number of years or the rezoning expired.

Mr. Bivins said that they also must consider there may be variables that a developer could not control which would affect the timeline of building a project. He said that maybe the County could consider giving a refund to the developer if an application did sunset.

Mr. Murray said that a lot could change over a decade, including ordinances and plans. He said that there needed to be some expiration date for a rezoning when the original plans did not make sense anymore.

Mr. Missel said that he understood Mr. Murray's theory, but he did not believe the County should be able to decide that. He said that it was important to bring units to market as quickly as possible, but developers were subject to many variables that were outside of their control that would impact that. He said that site plans may expire after five years, but that was different from the zoning. He said that he was part of a project recently that was on track to provide affordable housing, but when one piece of funding did not come through as expected, it changed their ability to progress through the project, and they had to adjust their plans accordingly to be able to finish it.

Mr. Bivins said that the Planning Commission had seen many projects that seemed like great opportunities from the outset, but then the developer sold it, and the finished project was not nearly as exciting as the initial proposal. He said that most of these projects were looking for a maximum return on investment, so it behooved them to push the project forward or sell it to someone else who could do it as fast as possible.

Dr. Pethia said that to clarify, the affordable units in the pipeline were all units that were approved as proffers at 15% of the total units. She said that Housing Albemarle had made some changes to the profit unit requirements. She said that specifically, they had increased the percentage from 15% to 20% of the total residential units in a rezoning and adjusted the target affordability levels to 60% for area median income for rental units.

Dr. Pethia said that the requirements for sale units had remained at the 80% AMI level, but the affordability periods had been extended from 10 years to 30 years for rental units, and from the first sale only to 40 years for sale units. She said that this change was intended to help ensure that they were not constantly chasing after units, which was what they had been doing for years prior.

Mr. Bivins asked if staff had a sense of what this change had done for their housing inventory yet. He said that many of the housing developments before the Commission had not been asking for a lot of new proffers; a lot of them had been grandfathered in under the older policy. He asked what the reality of these changes would be on developers' perspectives.

Dr. Pethia said that several rezoning applications and pre-application meetings had included compliance with these requirements. She said that the 30-year affordability period was a standard across localities nationwide, as it aligned with low-income housing tax credits and affordability periods for rental housing. She said that localities that had been implementing this for a longer period had reached a similar point, where they acknowledged the need to address the issue of constantly chasing units every 10 years. She said that at some point, they realized that they needed to fix this.

Dr. Pethia said that there had been interesting initial conversations with a few developers about potentially alternative ways to meet the 20% affordability requirement. She said that one idea being explored was having a range of affordability levels, which was not a bad concept. She said that she was hoping that this conversation would happen, but she found it challenging for staff to determine what range should be used. She said that the 20% was based on community need, derived directly from data analysis from the housing study and census data.

Dr. Pethia said that the target affordability levels were also in line with what the County needed and were considered best practice across the country. She said that to meet the 20% requirement, it could be as low as 10% in some areas while as high as 60% in others. She said that she was trying to figure this out without input from developers, and she was hoping that this would kickstart those conversations, which it had.

Mr. Bivins asked if preserving more units for a longer period of time was seen as a barrier to private developers. He said that his assumption would be that they would see fewer private developers want to pursue housing developments because of the lacking return on investment.

Dr. Pethia said that it was at that point where the Albemarle Rental Housing Incentive Program (ARHIP) would fill that gap.

Dr. Pethia said that the RHIP program was designed to help developers meet the 20% affordable housing requirement at 60% AMI for a period of 30 years. She said that according to the Virginia Code, the County was only permitted to offer this incentive for rental housing production, not homeownership. She said that there had been initial discussions with developers regarding this program as well.

Mr. Missel said that he understood the slide and would try to keep the discussion concise. He said that the first three items were not incentives, but rather requirements.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct.

Mr. Missel said that this meant that there was only one incentive on the list. He said that they had mentioned the Commission had seen many projects come through their process that were grandfathered in because their zoning was done before the new 20% affordability requirement. He asked if staff had a sense of the 15% of total taxes due for 30 years was helpful in closing the gap.

Dr. Pethia said that she believed it depended on the specific project. She said that there had been instances where the affordability range was acceptable, but in other cases, it became a concern. She said that if they could allocate a percentage of the AMI for a project, it would likely resolve the issue. She said that staff had been hesitant to proceed without having these conversations, and she thought this was one of the primary factors that would influence the housing policy recommendations and potential changes.

Mr. Missel said that there were several other variables at play in terms of the project's costs.

Dr. Pethia said that staff was also attempting to establish a specific range of affordability that could work for everyone. She said that the Board of Supervisors had expressed a preference for flexibility in this matter. She said that, however, this could lead to problems when different developers submitted proposals with varying levels of affordability. She said that for instance, if the first developer offered 15% at 60% AMI and 5% at 70% AMI and that was approved, but then a second developer offered 10% at 80% AMI, 5% at 70% AMI, and 5% at 60% AMI, that was a better deal than what the first developer got. She said that this inconsistency would add another barrier. She said that staff was working to identify the ideal range.

Mr. Barnes said that the Commission had previously asked about how many rezonings they were receiving, and he wanted to clarify that the number was actually increasing. He said that they had received nine this year, which were after the change in policy.

Mr. Bivins said that this was a reduction in income for the County in order to provide affordable units, similar to the reduction in income the County received for Agricultural Forestal Districts. He said that the County had limited ways of generating revenues, so he must question if this was the most efficient way to bring these affordable units to market when it resulted in the County receiving lesser benefit.

Mr. Murray asked how they could shift the system to prioritize more permanent affordable units. He said that if they were required to remain affordable for 30 years, it meant that they would be gone after 30 years. He asked if staff had any ideas about how to incentivize offering permanent affordability.

Ms. Firehock said that the Land Trust partially achieved that because they kept the land forever in the Trust.

Mr. Murray asked how they could encourage people to participate in the Land Trust model, since they could not require it.

Ms. Firehock said that it was a purchase model, so someone had to be in a position to own a home, and there were a lot of hurdles to that as opposed to renting. She said that theoretically, it was a lot easier to get someone in an affordable rental than purchasing a home.

Dr. Pethia said that there were community land trust in other areas of the country where they provided rental housing. She said that she was not sure if their local community land trust was currently offering this service. She said that however, it may be something they planned to implement in the future. She said that the key factor was that there was always the option to extend the affordability period. She said that any private developer could choose to maintain the affordability of their units, and there were various ways to make this happen.

Dr. Pethia said that, for instance, they could offer loans or low-cost loans to help with rehabilitation after 30 years, which would be beneficial for everyone. She said that this was a consideration, but it was not a priority at the moment. She said that nevertheless, there were successful examples across the country. She said that some localities even required that all affordable units remain affordable forever. She said that she did not think Albemarle was at that point, and she would need to research how localities were able to get developers to commit to 99 years of affordability for all units.

Mr. Bivins said that it was difficult to make private housing take on the responsibility of social housing. He said that Albemarle did not have the mechanism to own social housing, but they might in the future. He said that nonprofits may have more success in doing that.

Mr. Murray asked if there was a way they could leverage public money to assist nonprofits and encourage them to take some of those into permanent affordable housing.

Dr. Pethia said that they already did that, particularly if they were initially financed with low-income housing tax credits, the affordability period was 30 years. She said that there was generally an expectation that nonprofits would reapply for another low-income housing tax credit loan to substantially rehab the project, at which point the County may be able to invest, if funds were available, similar to what they had done with the original construction.

Dr. Pethia said that another aspect of their housing policy was the Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Program. She said that in June 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution of intent to potentially amend the zoning code with an ADU ordinance, a type of inclusionary zoning commonly used in northern Virginia and other areas nationwide. She said that this ordinance would serve as a mechanism to enforce changes in Housing Albemarle, which was a priority of their housing policy. She said that it remained a priority, although it was delayed due to several factors, including the need for the Affordable Rental Housing Incentive Program, which took longer to develop than anticipated. She said that they were expected to revisit this topic with the Commission and the Board later this year.

Dr. Pethia said that another tool that the Housing Office had put together was the Affordable Housing Evaluation Form. She said that this was a way for the Housing Office to track the proffered units that were planned.

Mr. Missel said that he felt like the form was somewhat incomplete.

Dr. Pethia said that she had attempted to create a template that would allow them to grow into it, so that it was already established and they had room to expand, rather than having to hastily create a form in a short amount of time that was not functioning properly. She said that they had previously discussed the ADU and the affordable unit interest list, which was now up and running. She said that however, it was slow to grow due to the difficulty in convincing people to sign up for something without a guaranteed date. She said that staff was working on addressing this issue.

Dr. Pethia said that they had been discussing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which was an Objective 6 for Housing Albemarle. She said that this fund differed from the County's current

Housing Fund in that it had a dedicated source of revenue. She said that the County's current Housing Fund had always had a dedicated source of revenue, which was the cash-in-lieu of affordable unit payments provided by developers. She said that with the upcoming fiscal year budget, a percentage of the tax increase would be allocated to the Trust Fund, ensuring a consistent source of revenue. She said that however, the actual amount deposited could fluctuate due to changes in property taxes, resulting in varying revenue amounts.

Ms. Firehock asked if the CDBG grants were anticipated to continue, considering the federal government was reducing most federal grant opportunities. She asked if they would have to zero that grant out for the next four years.

Dr. Pethia said that it may potentially come to that. She said that according to the proposed federal budget for Fiscal Year 2026, the CDBG program was completely eliminated, except for disaster relief grants through the CDBG program. She said that all other funding, including the Home Investment Partnership funding, was eliminated.

Ms. Firehock said that when considering the Planning Commission's role, it was clear that they did not have control over funding. She asked what staff's understanding was of the Board of Supervisors' focus on whether the County would seek to bolster funding from its own coffers or absorb the impact by cutting the budget. She said that she was unsure how far these conversations had progressed.

Dr. Pethia said that they found the conversations challenging to have because they did not have a clear understanding of the situation at this point. She said that in the past, there had been efforts to completely eliminate the CDBG and HOME programs, but they had always been saved. She said that the purpose behind the nonprofits gathering every week was to discuss this topic. She said that they were exploring various options to address it. She said that they were also concerned about funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program and its potential impact. She said that she would argue that the Housing Office's number one priority would be to keep people in the homes they were currently in, but it would be great to expand it if possible.

Dr. Pethia said that because the County needed to apply to the state for CDBG funds, they were limited in how much grant funding they could have at any point in time, approximately $2.25 million. She said that in the broader scheme of construction, it was not a huge amount. She said that it was something the Housing Fund could potentially take care of, but there were a lot of other things the Fund could take care of as well. She said that to summarize, they did not have a good answer at this point.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought it was worth noting that many nonprofit housing providers relied on a variety of funding sources, including both local and federal funds. She said that as a result, they would likely be in a more challenging position for the next four years, given the current economic climate.

Dr. Pethia said that there was a significant amount of concern all over about what could potentially happen. She said that moving forward, she would like to clarify a few points regarding the draft guidelines for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund included in the packet. She said that the proposed guidelines would turn the Affordable Housing Fund into a competitive annual application process, where the Office of Housing would issue a request for proposals, and a review committee would assess the applications based on a scoring matrix.

Dr. Pethia said that the funds would be allocated as a mix of grants and loans, with grants specifically earmarked for non-profit developers providing 100% affordable housing, as well as for-profit developers. She said that grants could be awarded to both types of developers. She said that the proposed interest rate for these loans at 2% simple interest, with a repayment term of 60 months, could be adjusted.

Dr. Pethia said that a portion of the fund would be reserved for emerging needs, which could include initiatives such as purchasing properties, providing security deposit assistance for lower-income households, or addressing situations like the potential sale of Cavalier Crossing to a for-profit developer. She said that to oversee the application and funding process, a fund oversight committee would be established, scoring applications against a matrix and recommending funding to the Board of Supervisors, who would ultimately make the final decisions on allocations.

Mr. Missel asked where the funds for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund would come from.

Dr. Pethia said that they would come from cash-in-lieu payments from developers and a portion of property tax revenue. She said that she believed the tax revenue was 0.004%, which came out to be $1.2 million in FY26.

Mr. Missel asked if this Trust Fund was the initiative that Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together (IMPACT) had been promoting.

Dr. Pethia said that that was correct. She said that there had been a lot of community advocacy for this.

Mr. Carrazana said that Mr. Barnes had previously mentioned that the County had received an increased number of rezoning applications. He asked if these applications were denser developments than what they had generally received in the past.

Mr. Barnes said that broadly speaking, yes, there were several applications that proposed large, multi-family buildings and duplexes. He said that he believed there was an effort on the side of developers to bring in relatively dense housing projects.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought about Fashion Square Mall and all of the potential housing that could go above that mall's empty real estate.

Mr. Missel thanked Dr. Pethia for presenting this information to the Commission today.

Mr. Barnes said that it was great to hear the Commission's feedback on this topic. He said that he hoped they could have similar work sessions in the future.

Ms. Firehock said that it was really helpful to hear this information, and she was excited to learn about the Housing Trust Fund and what they were doing with rentals.

**Committee Reports**

There were none.

**Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: June 4, 2025**

Mr. Barnes said that in the June 4 Board meeting, they had a work session on the AC44 Cultural Resources Chapter in the afternoon, and there was a significant amount of discussion on that topic. He said that the conversation centered around historic preservation and the need to prioritize it, as well as the use of County resources and adherence to Architectural Review Board (ARB) guidelines. He said that it was an interesting conversation, and he thought the Board may have viewed some of these issues differently than the Commission did when it was presented to them. He said that staff was digesting all of the opinions presented in order to determine how to move forward.

Mr. Barnes said that in the evening, there were two public hearings. He said that the first was for the Living Earth School off of Red Hill, which was approved unanimously by the Board. He said that the second was a meeting on the Woolen Mills Industrial property, located off Franklin Street. He said that this proposal failed in a tied vote due to the floodplain issue. He said that during the discussion, it became clear that staff may not have effectively communicated the details of the floodplain to the Board.

Mr. Barnes said that the Commission may recall that this property was located near Moores Creek, which emptied into the Rivanna River. He said that the Moores Creek drainage area was fairly small relative to the Rivanna drainage, so during a rain event, Moores Creek rose and fell, but the Rivanna took longer to hit the flood stage mark. He said that by the time the Rivanna flood was coming down and got to Woolen Mills, it created a backwater condition in which water backed up into Moores Creek. He said that the floodplain in that area was influenced more by Rivanna than Moores Creek, and as a result, the water moved slowly in the area.

Mr. Barnes said that this led to the conclusion that the floodplain could be filled in and there would be no direct impacts to adjacent properties. He said that this was seen as a favorable factor, along with increasing the amount of industrial property and potential of jobs in the area. He said that however, concerns about the environmental issues with filling in the floodplain and the impact on adjacent property owners, particularly during the fill operations, were seen as factors unfavorable. He said that ultimately, the Board voted based on those considerations, and a 3-3 tie was equivalent to the proposal failing.

Ms. Firehock said that Supervisors Pruitt, Andrews, and Mallek voted against the motion to approve the project.

Mr. Missel said that he recalled the Commission voted 4-3 to recommend approval of that application.

### New Business

There was none.

### Old Business

There was none.

### Items for follow-up

Mr. Barnes said that as they worked to complete AC44, they were currently in the process of finalizing the topic chapters and were trying to bring the rest of the document to the Commission. He said that their intention was to meet on June 24 with a work session to provide documentation for part one, which was the introductory section of the chapter, part two, which was the growth management policy, and then the majority of the content, including the appendix, which included plans and other supporting materials.

Mr. Barnes said that they had made some changes and tweaks as they progressed, and he believed it was essential to share these updates with the community. He said that the fourth part of the document they planned to bring to them consisted of nine chapters that they had been writing about, focusing on implementation. He said that after reviewing their progress this week, staff felt that they needed a bit more time to refine this chapter.

Mr. Barnes said that therefore, he respectfully requested that the Commission consider canceling the meeting on June 24 and rescheduling the work session for July 8. He said that he believed this would allow them to better prepare and ensure that they got the implementation chapter right. He said that he believed they could start at 6:00 p.m. rather than 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission cancel the June 24, 2025, regular meeting of the Albemarle County Planning Commission. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0). (Mr. Clayborne and Mr. Moore were absent.)

**Adjournment**

At 7:55 p.m., the Commission adjourned to July 8, 2025, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

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

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| Approved by Planning Commission |
| Date: 07/08/2025 |
| Initials: CSS |