**Albemarle County Planning Commission**
**Draft Minutes Regular Meeting**
**September 30, 2025**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent Corey Clayborne.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Tonya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager; Ben Holt, Senior Planner II; 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.

### Public Comment on matters pending before the Commission, but not listed or a Public Hearing on this agenda

There were none.

### Consent Agenda

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Mr. Clayborne was absent.)

### Public Hearing

## CPA2021-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update – Final Document Recommendation

Mr. Missel said that the AC44 update had been ongoing for the past four years, which had included a lot of public input, and the Planning Commission had received additional public comments in advance of tonight's public hearing. He said that staff had done a great job of summarizing that information in a separate document. He said that in addition to that, the public hearing would provide opportunity for sharing comments tonight. He said that he would like for the Commissioners to take note of public comments that they felt were most important to consider as part of any recommended amendments for the Comp Plan. He said that then they could review the Commissioners' suggested amendments and ensure they could provide them as clear recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. He said that he would stress brevity but completeness as they did that.

Ben Holt, Senior Planner II with the Long-Range Planning Division, said that staff would keep the presentation brief in order to allow plenty of time for public comment and for the Commissioners to share their feedback as well. He said that he would review the upcoming schedule, the project phases, major points of emphasis in AC44 and some of the differences between this plan and the 2015 plan. He said that he would then review some of the notable changes made to the draft document, followed by some details of plan implementation before they opened their discussion period.

Mr. Holt said that in terms of the schedule, they began this current Phase 4 with an initial draft document that was published in August, shortly followed by an open house to community members that was held on August 21, 2025. He said that they went into their work sessions to review this draft document with both the Planning Commission and the Board. He said that they met with the Planning Commission on August 26, 2025, and then took it to the Board on September 10, 2025. He said that they did not finish their work session discussion with the Board, so they were holding an additional work session on October 1, 2025, to continue that discussion.

Mr. Holt said that after that there would be the public hearings, beginning with the Planning Commission hearing tonight. He said that the public hearing before the Board of Supervisors would be held on October 15, 2025, which was their anticipated adoption date. He said that he would also like to note that the effective date of this Comprehensive Plan would be January 1, 2026, which he would discuss in more detail later.

Mr. Holt said that now, he would review the four project phases. He said that in Phase 1, they began with public engagement to acquire community priorities for the plan and establish a vision for AC44. He said that that was captured in their AC44 framework, which included the four guiding principles, which were created to provide direction for the rest of the project, as well as the plan content. He said that also in Phase 1, they reviewed their existing Growth Management Policy to ascertain what aspects were needed to provide updated guidance for both the Development Areas and the Rural Areas of the County. He said that they also completed their 2022 Land Use Buildout Analysis to establish a baseline for growth capacity within the Development Areas.

Mr. Holt said that in Phase 2, they drafted goals and objectives for each topic chapter and developed their planning toolkits to provide coordinated guidance on land use and transportation planning. He said that that, in turn, produced their activity centers. He said that in Phase 3, they drafted actions to support topic goals and objectives, and they also developed their Big Moves to guide plan implementation.

Mr. Holt said that now, in Phase 4, they were drafting and refining the plan document as they approached adoption of AC44. He said that they also recently completed the 2025 Buildout Analysis that would be incorporated into the plan appendix. He said that this phase would conclude with the public hearings to review and adopt the final plan document.

Mr. Holt said that throughout the entire project, public engagement had been a critical component of AC44. He said that they had had more than 40,000 visitors to their AC44 website, and throughout the four phases, more than 2,700 people had participated in

AC44 engagement in the form of online surveys, email comments, chat kit discussions, and attendance through either in-person or virtual events.

Mr. Holt said that getting back to the plan itself, some of the notable points of emphasis for AC44 included integrating Board priorities of equity and climate action throughout the plan document, conducting those two Buildout Analyses to inform their Development Areas utilization. He said that they had further emphasized on increasing density within their Development Areas and multimodal transportation planning.

Mr. Holt said that furthermore, they had updated their plan for activity centers by reducing the previous total number of centers and had better defined the location of those identified centers, so they were not just a letter "C" on a map. He said that they had also consolidated the land use categories that previously had more than 20 categories and now were reduced to 12 categories within the Development Areas. He said that they also incorporated other County plans, including Housing Albemarle, the Economic Development Strategic Plan, and the Climate Action Plan.

Mr. Holt said that AC44 also identified Big Moves to guide implementation efforts. He said that he would also like to note that staff had organized the plan content into a four-part document that they hoped was easier to navigate and use. He said that the overall length of the plan had been reduced to 278 pages in comparison to the previous 406 pages in the 2015 plan, excluding the appendices.

Mr. Holt said that included in the Commission's attachments was a summary of document changes that captured the full list of edits that were made to this latest draft. He said that some of those more notable updates include editing the entire document for consistency and tone, updating the Land Use Buildout Analysis data narrative throughout, and clarification of the criteria for assessing the adequacy of land in the Development Areas in part two.

Mr. Holt said that within the Development Areas chapter, they had created more future land use maps and had enlarged areas showing the various neighborhoods within the Development Areas. He said that this provided a higher level of detail in those future land use maps. He said that they also removed rural interstate interchanges within the Rural Area Land Use Chapter, and they added an action to address childcare within the Thriving Economy Chapter.

Mr. Holt said that they had added actions to promote awareness of affordable housing options and supporting aging in place and housing, updated the existing parks and facilities table to include equestrian and biking trails and also whether a park was accessible by transit. He said that in the Cultural Resources Chapter, they added a call-out box to clarify what historic resources were. He said that for the Big Moves, they had revised Big Move #7 to strengthen social connection and community well-being in the Implementation Chapter.

Mr. Holt said that looking ahead, staff had begun work on an implementation plan to guide AC44 efforts after plan adoption. He said that once adopted, the proposed effective date for AC44 was January 1, 2026. He said that this delayed effective date was intended to

allow time for staff, partner agencies, applicants, and other plan users to get accustomed to AC44 and its requirements, while staff conducted plan education. He said that staff's implementation plan would also include a revised process for future Comprehensive Plan amendment applications.

Mr. Holt said that they would also reinforce the connection between AC44 and the Board's strategic plan to better align implementation policy and funding. He said that staff would also further refine their process for small area plans, including those activity centers and incorporating multimodal transportation plans. He said that AC44 would also continue to inform the Zoning Ordinance modernization project as their county code was updated and rewritten.

Mr. Holt said that finally, they would further develop metrics and tracking processes to evaluate and report on plan implementation progress. He said that to preview the format of tonight's discussion, after they heard from the public, staff would like to hear from the Commissioners about any specific edits that they had to suggest. He said that staff also had a motion to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment, should the Commission wish to forward this to the Board with the recommendation of approval.

Mr. Bivins asked if staff could elaborate on the citizen initiative for updates or modifications to the Comp Plan after adoption. He asked how citizens would bring forward suggestions after the plan was adopted.

Mr. Barnes said that he recalled about 10 years ago when he was working with the County, staff made a decision and worked with the Board to remove citizen-initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments. He said that it used to be part of the process but was removed due to workload issues and other reasons. He said that staff recognized that with the opportunities for amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) being set with the master plans for each area of the County, it may not be frequent enough to meet existing conditions and changes in the market. He said that staff was committed to bringing back a citizen-initiated Comprehensive Plan process; however, they only had general ideas at this time and would need to work through the details. He said that it was identified by staff as a priority for that future work, which they believed would be better to do sooner rather than later.

Mr. Murray said that on page 25, Action 7.1 was removed. He asked if staff could explain what led to that action being removed. He said that the reference of "encourage donations to Albemarle County Parks Foundation" was removed there as well as in Action 7.3.

Mr. Holt said that he believed that was in response to the Board's feedback. He said that they did not want to confine donations to any one group or organization; therefore, they did not want to specify a specific group to submit donations.

Mr. Barnes said that it would not necessarily exclude the possibility of the funds going to the Parks Foundation, but the Board simply did not want to name one specific body when it could potentially benefit multiple bodies.

Mr. Murray said that he appreciated the clarification.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing.

Neil Williamson, President of the Free Enterprise Forum, said that he was disappointed but not surprised. He said that tonight, they would likely advance AC44, a plan that was described as "comprehensive," but in reality, it was a plan for the status quo. He said that the plan would result in further gentrification and less housing affordability across Albemarle County. He said that Virginia state law mandated that all local governments adopt a Comprehensive Plan to guide future development and ensure orderly growth as outlined in the Code of Virginia.

Mr. Williamson said that by evaluating AC44 against this code criteria, it was clear that this plan was a huge, missed opportunity. He said that a failure of this magnitude had many contributors. He said that the Board of Supervisors, who at the outset, prior to hearing from the community, determined that Development Areas would not be altered, bore significant responsibility. He said that the Planning Commission, who were charged by state code to develop this plan, chose to stick with a binary choice of Development Area versus Rural Area, rather than considering a more nuanced approach such as the "lasagna model."

Mr. Williamson said that the Planning staff, who at the outset determined that none of the Comprehensive Plan designations would be altered beyond simply consolidating those in the 2015 plan, also failed to consider alternative options. He said that the AC44 public volunteer planners, including himself, were effectively silenced by being broken into discrete groups and having their input eliminated.

Mr. Williamson said that this concern was not a surprise to the Commission, as the Free Enterprise Forum had spoken and written about the plan's pitfalls since its inception. He said that they had supported and promoted the "lasagna model" repeatedly throughout this process. He said that the Economic Development Strategic Plan called out many of these same problems. He said that with numerous warnings and over three years of public comment, the plan still failed to alter the status quo; it felt like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Mr. Williamson said that considering that this plan was delivered behind schedule and Comprehensive Plans were supposed to be reviewed every five years, he should perhaps take solace that the County was likely hiring planners now to work on AC49. He said that maybe next time, the "Comprehensive Plan" could consider the future instead of perpetuating the status quo. He said that however, he knew which way he was betting.

Rob McGinnis, representing the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), said that he would like to extend his thanks to the Planning Commission and staff, as well as the Board, but particularly the Planning Commission, for their significant contributions to the AC44 process over the past four years. He said that it had been a long and challenging process. He said that although the Piedmont Environmental Council supported many aspects of the latest draft of the Comprehensive Plan update, they had a remaining major concern regarding the proposed process for swapping land between Development Areas and Rural Areas.

Mr. McGinnis said that he had submitted detailed comments previously, so he would not delve into those specifics, but he did want to reiterate that the process for assessing future land swaps should be more effectively addressed when developing Development Area neighborhood master plans, which would be updated and adopted into the Comprehensive Plans. He said that also, there was potential for land swaps to be addressed as part of the process for preparing the proposed Rural Area Land Use Plan.

Mr. McGinnis said that in addition, PEC strongly supported the revised transfer development rights program Action 2.4. He said that PEC also strongly supported the removal of information on sending and receiving zones. He said that furthermore, PEC strongly supported the removal of the narrative text and the related action item regarding the small area plans for Yancey Mills and Shadwell interstate interchanges. He said that land uses at rural interchanges could be addressed as part of the process to prepare the proposed Rural Area Land Use Plan.

Christine Putnam, Scottsville District, said that she was a member of the Natural Heritage Committee (NHC), which was charged by the Board of Supervisors to advise on matters related to natural resource and biodiversity protection. She said that she would like to first congratulate and extend her gratitude to the Planning Commission and the AC44 team for the work that went into developing the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Putnam said that the NHC was able to provide feedback, and they had been pleased to see this feedback reflected in the final draft. She said that at their last NHC meeting, they discussed one important addition to the Environmental Stewardship Chapter that they hoped the Commission might consider. She said that it was a sensible and achievable step to Section 4.4, which would require the County to use locally native trees and shrubs for at least 80% of plantings on County-owned land.

Ms. Putnam said that this recommendation came from the Biodiversity Action Plan, which some County departments were already following. She said that native plants provided the foundation for a healthy ecosystem and were key to protecting biodiversity, which they could see just outside this building. She said that Albemarle County had been a leader in this area, with native plant demonstration beds at both the McIntire and Fifth Street County Office Buildings.

Ms. Putnam said that they also hosted a website and had a native plant database. She said that she was also part of the steering committee for the Plant Virginia Natives Northern Piedmont Region, which involved many other Counties, and therefore they were positioned as a leader in this area. She said that she had brought a copy of the plant guide today to share with the Commission, which included photos and references to the County Office Building demonstration sites.

Doug Holiday said that he was joined by his friend and partner Dick Payne, and together they owned Sweetspot of Albemarle LLC in the Samuel Miller District. He said that they were addressing parcel 7548, which was located southwest of the interchange of Interstate 64 and Route 29. He said that it bordered the Sieg property to the east and the future Hedgerow Park land to the west. He said that they were present to request the

Commission to consider recommending a change to the parcel's designation from industrial to community mixed use on the AC44 Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Holiday said that they believed this change was consistent with the County's vision of having land that supported a variety of desired uses that were more appropriate for this area than the uses supported by the current industrial designation. He said that to provide some background, in 2015, Deschutes Brewery of Bend, Oregon, had an interest in purchasing their property to build an east coast brewery. He said that at the time, there was a shortage of industrial land in the County, and the land map required a change of their property designation.

Mr. Holiday said that they agreed to the County's request to change it to an industrial designation on the land use map; however, as events unfolded, Deschutes did not pursue the property, but their parcel was still designated industrial use on the Comprehensive Plan map. He said that for the last 10 years, there had not been any interest in their land for industrial purposes. He said that however, there had been interest in developing the property for other uses.

Mr. Holiday said that their parcel was part of the Sieg rezoning application for two years, during which the Sieg property developer recognized that a mixed-use plan was appropriate for the property but ultimately decided not to purchase it. He said that given the shortage of available and developable land in the remaining Development Area, interest in this property for uses other than heavy industrial continued. He said that with this background, he would like to introduce his partner, Dick Payne.

Dick Payne said that he would like to briefly summarize the reasons they believed the Future Land Use Map change made sense. He said that they wanted to emphasize that they were not asking for a zoning change, only a change in the future land use map. He said that this change from industrial to community mixed use made sense for the following reasons.

Mr. Payne said that first, while he would not go into further detail on what Mr. Holiday mentioned, but the industrial designation appeared to be outdated. He said that second, the industrial land supply had increased since 2015 when their land was put into the Comprehensive Plan and designated industrial. He said that as they all knew, North Fork now had a 14-acre pad-ready site within the 300-acre zone plan development industrial park, and Rivanna Futures has 172 acres zoned light industrial.

Mr. Payne said that the Sweetspot site was not competitive with these industrially zoned properties, where it was easier to develop with ready access to roads and utilities. He said that third, there was a community benefit to community mixed use – it supported a wide variety of desired uses, including commercial, office, retail, light industrial, research & development (R&D), residential, institutional, and everything but heavy industrial, which it was currently designated for.

Mr. Payne said that fourth, their property was compatible with the Sieg property, which was designated for community mixed use in the FLUM, and its rezoning application proposed a community mixed use development design. He said that designating the

Sweetspot parcel for community mixed use would align with the adjacent land uses. He said that there were also location advantages to a designation change. He said that community mixed use was more appropriate than industrial at the edge of the Development Area, and it was also adjacent to the future Hedgerow Park, where potential pedestrian connections with future zoning were possible.

Mr. Payne said that there was also an opportunity to integrate with Sieg's sidewalk and trail network, shops, and employment centers. He said that fifth, there would be flexibility to develop land more sensitively. He said that community mixed use supported a future rezoning application for mixed use development with smaller building footprints compared to many heavy industrial uses that required a large flat pad site for a single-story facility, allowing more flexibility around steep slopes and other sensitive areas. He said that finally, it supported a future rezoning application for compatible mixed-use development within the development area that supported a more diversified tax base.

Carol Courtenay, Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), said that the SELC appreciated the substantial amount of work that has been undertaken by the Commission and County staff over the last few years to get to this point. She said that there had been significant improvements since the plan's first drafts were released for review, including one change she wanted to speak in support of tonight: a standalone chapter on the County's Growth Management Policy.

Ms. Courtenay said that the County had long been looked to as a model statewide for adopting a growth policy that supported more livable and equitable communities, promoted economic development, encouraged rural enterprise, and protected the environment. She said that a strong Growth Management Policy also delivered significant fiscal benefits to the County and its residents by making it easier and less expensive to provide public infrastructure and effective public services like transit, emergency services, and schools.

Ms. Courtney said that additionally, it protected the County's invaluable natural areas, which safeguarded the quality of their drinking water, drove economic growth and tourism, and helped the County meet its climate goals. She said that ultimately, the principles of responsible growth underpinned almost every issue in the Comprehensive Plan. She said that the SELC strongly supported the County's decision to have a standalone growth management chapter to emphasize the foundational nature of this policy in the County's long-term planning.

Ms. Courtenay said that as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the Board found that an expansion of the Development Areas was not needed at this time. She said that this aligned with the findings of the 2022 Land Use Buildout Analysis and the recent 2025 update, both of which showed significant capacity remaining in their Development Areas, enough to accommodate projected growth over at least the next 20 years. She said that because premature expansion of the Development Areas would undermine the County's Growth Policy, they remained concerned about the inclusion of criteria for Development Area boundary revisions in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Courtenay said that such criteria should instead be developed through a separate planning process in order to give appropriate attention to them and allow for adequate public input. She said that if the criteria were retained in the update, they urged the Commission to consider modifying the title on page 12 of that chapter to make clear that these were simply the initial criteria for assessing underperforming areas in the Development Areas for removal.

Ms. Courtenay said that they also recommended making changes to the title of the table on page 13, so it read that it was the initial criteria for assessing the adequacy of land in the Development Areas. She said that these small changes would emphasize, as the Comp Plan already stated on page 11 of that chapter, that these criteria were simply the starting point for any revisions to the boundaries.

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

Mr. Missel said that he believed they had not received any additional comments verbally here this evening that were in addition to what they received via email.

Ms. Firehock said that if there were emails today, she was out in the field.

Mr. Missel said that that was no problem. He said that they could go through the previously received comments methodically, and there was always time for follow-up as well.

Mr. Barnes said that to clarify, they had been receiving emails from interested parties for several days, and staff had collected those into a single document that the Commission could address today.

Ms. Firehock said that she had read all the emails she received before 7:00 a.m. today.

Mr. Missel said that there were some additional emails that came in, and that was part of the challenge they had with trying to corral all of these and acknowledge the relatively short timeline to turn it around for the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to state upfront that he was going to be resistant to this process at this time because he was disappointed that they would give people who sent last-minute emails the same opportunity to make changes to this document as those who had been involved throughout the process. He said that there were some ideas that had been set aside for various reasons, while others had been conclusively decided upon by the Supervisors, so it was not the Commission's role to reevaluate them.

Mr. Bivins said that an example of the latter was the potential expansion of the Development Areas. He said that he did not want the Commission to wordsmith this very detailed document at the last moment solely based on emails they received last night. He said that he did not feel comfortable considering these newly received recommendations from the public without allowing staff to have sufficient time to review them and determine if they were appropriate or feasible.

Mr. Missel said that he shared some of Mr. Bivins' concerns. He said that however, he was looking at all of these comments received ahead of this public hearing in a similar manner as the other public hearings the Commission heard, meaning that ultimately the Commission would consider them and send their recommendations or relevant comments to the Board of Supervisors. He said that the community had had the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the past four years of developing the AC44 document, likely much more than other developments would receive in this process.

Mr. Missel said that he felt the Commission was tasked to review the public comments that came in ahead of the public hearing, which was the whole purpose of the public hearing. He said that he felt it was only fair to acknowledge these comments had been received as part of this process and would be forwarded to the Board for their review as well. He said that, however, he did see some of these comments and wondered why people had waited until this moment to say them; why not a year or two years ago? He said that these were his thoughts on the matter, and the Commission was free to discuss it further.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not necessarily disagree with what they both said, however, she would say that the comments from the Southern Environmental Law Center about the criteria for evaluating the growth area expansion was not something that was clearly developed a year ago and it had not been something they had been grappling with it all along. She said that her response to them would be that when she read that, she interpreted it as initial ideas rather than being the specific criteria.

Ms. Firehock said that it looked to her like they were just some first thoughts, and she thought it would require a very specific process to develop those criteria into something robust, like what was in the Portland metro region, for example, which she had already forwarded to staff two years ago. She said that she thought that would be a complicated process, and she agreed that it would be necessary to develop that as a separate process. She said that worded in the Comprehensive Plan now was not a fully formed set of criteria. She said that she saw it as vague, but that was because it was not fully fleshed out in the AC44 process.

Ms. Firehock said that she was comfortable with the level of detail that was in there and she did not see that section as something they would take and use to start making significant changes to the growth area boundaries. She said that she thought it would need further fleshing out, but she was comfortable with the level of detail that was in there.

Mr. Missel said that he thought that was exactly the kind of conversation they should be having, because that was addressing one of the public comments and that comment would still go to the Board. He said that the Board would be able to then determine whether or not they felt the same way.

Mr. Bivins said that he thought the key point here was that the Planning Commission was not the initiator of that issue. He said that according to what the Board had said, they would be the ones to ask the Commission and staff to look into that issue, and the Planning Commission would not initiate that process.

Ms. Firehock said that it could be if they wanted it to be.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to address that section as well. He said that as it currently stood, reading it at face value, particularly the page about properties being removed from the Development Area and moved to the Rural Area, it was so vague that a majority of their Development Area currently could meet that criteria. He said that he saw that as very problematic.

Mr. Murray said that there were some factors he thought they really needed to consider with regard to taking properties in the Development Area and moving them to the Rural Area. He said that these may include factors such as whether the property was already developed; if the property being removed from the development area already have water and sewer, and if not, would they deny future connections even if it was in the jurisdictional area; what percentage of tree or native cover the property had currently; what percentage of the site had been graded; and what percentage of the site was impervious surface, including lawn.

Mr. Murray said that most Rural Area properties were downzoned in 1980 to form the Rural Area. He asked if any property removed from the Development Area would also be downzoned to match the surrounding Rural Area, or would they just create a non-conforming area? He said that additionally, they should consider how suitable was the property for Rural Area uses, such as agriculture, forestry, or conservation. He said that perhaps they should zone the property to clearly indicate its intended use as A-1 Agricultural, C-1 Conservation, etcetera.

Mr. Murray said that the development area did not have protections on intermittent streams, except for water supply areas. He asked if they should disqualify properties for removal from the development area if they had already buried their intermittent streams. He said that the Rural Area did not have managed slopes, so he wondered if all managed slopes would then become preserved. He asked what the outcome would be if they had already been built on or otherwise impaired their managed slopes. He asked if the removal from the development area would be voluntary with permission of the owners of parcels affected.

Mr. Murray asked how they would be compensated for the significant reduction of their property value. He asked whether the County would be willing to go to court to defend another downzoning. He said that typically, Rural Areas could expect a lower level of service, so he would like to know which ways services would be reduced for this property being removed. He asked if there would be no more sidewalks or road improvements. He asked what happened to places with Comp Plan designation for greenways and open space, and if they would lose that designation.

Mr. Murray said that his point was that there were a lot of factors at play that were not being discussed here. He said that he thought it needed a lot of work. He said that while he would propose moving this off to another process, if it was to remain, he had submitted some suggested language that they could review. He said that he thought it merited a lot more discussion than it was getting.

Mr. Moore said that they knew that they were getting close to filling up the Development Area that they had. He said that it was not full per se, but eventually they would fill it up. He said that it was just 5% of the County's land. He said that he felt like they should be starting these conversations now about where to expand the Development Area. He said that it felt unwise that they refused to address it ahead of time.

Mr. Moore said that recently, people had brought up the idea of swapping land from the Rural Area to the Development Area, but he would make a pitch and suggest that they start with the designated Development Areas from around 1979. He said that he would be in favor of starting with that as their baseline. He said that it would be a good starting point for how much acreage to move into the Development Areas. He said that back then they had 10% of their land as Development Areas, so he thought they could take those acreages and move them closer to today's Development Area in a way that would make sense, given build-out patterns and water availability and all that.

Mr. Moore said that regarding the idea of some little, small pocket neighborhoods being switched over, he thought they should start with where they started and the swap, they got no swap out of. He said that they should start with that and swap it into the Development Area so they could actually grow in a way that was manageable and sustainable, and so people could afford to live there.

Mr. Missel said that he would suggest a way to approach this, because this was a subject that was kind of front and center. He said that it was one of the main subjects that had come out here and it was also something they could talk about for a whole day. He said that they had talked about it a lot in previous meetings as well. He said that he would suggest maybe looking at GMP 11, where there was a process laid out.

Mr. Missel said that this section was sort of addressing what they had been talking about in terms of the land swaps, potentially having this be part of a more focused study, substantial public engagement, and it specifically mentioned that the need for a Development Area boundary revision would be identified by a future land planning effort.

Mr. Missel said that it stated the Board of Supervisors could pursue a boundary revision independently of a future area land planning effort and should request that the County Executive direct County staff to develop a Development Areas report, and that report would evaluate a variety of factors, provide information through maps, order of magnitude, cost estimates, and other resources as necessary. He said that then it listed the criteria on the following page, which were meant to provide a starting point for consideration of potential revisions.

Ms. Firehock said that that was the way she read it. She said that the listed criteria were some things to consider in the future when they went through this in a more detailed and much more factual and statistically based process than an emotionally based process.

Mr. Bivins said that if there was a way instead of an addendum or some point like that to make a suggestion to the Board that they begin that process as soon as possible, he thought that would be helpful.

Ms. Firehock said that yes; people wanted clarity and investors wanted expectations about what was intended.

Mr. Bivins said that the criteria on the following page was starting to allow for a full breadth of considerations to be discussed, but for today, he thought the language was acceptable without any amendments.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed with much of what Mr. Murray had said, but he also thought that what was written was sufficient in terms of coverage that provided the ability to look in more detail at these areas that were essentially planned and had these initial criteria. He asked if there was consensus from the Commission on that point. He asked if Mr. Murray felt that the language could be changed to reflect the comments they were making about that section.

Mr. Murray said that he absolutely thought so. He said that on page 12, he thought there needed to be more criteria.

Mr. Missel said that it was the starting point for additional criteria.

Mr. Murray said that even as a starting point, he thought the first bullet point should be removed outright because it did not make any sense. He said that he would propose that they replace that section with "locations where Rural Area designation would provide a tangible conservation benefit, including protection of intermittent streams, enhanced protection of critical slopes, or important environmental features or habitats designated in the biodiversity action plan otherwise subject to high-density development."

Mr. Murray said that it could also include "areas with designated green systems where the Rural Area designation would facilitate protection and public access." He said that he thought that this would simply help frame why they would do the swapping process. He said that also, agricultural properties were noted as being more consistent with Rural Area uses; however, there were some farms that were in the Development Area now that he did not foresee being developed in any kind of residential use.

Mr. Murray said that he would also suggest that locations with significant topographic or environmental constraints which reduced an area's potential to meet development recommended densities and intensities of use and the ability to provide an interconnected street network, locations with limited public infrastructure and access capacity, including existing road conditions and capacity where development was contrary to Virginia's Department of Transportation goals and recommendations, connections to existing public roads, water, sewer, and infrastructure would be challenging, locations with existing water and sewer access would be disqualified absent additional factors that made them more suitable for rural uses.

Mr. Murray said that furthermore, current uses and densities should be consistent with neighboring Rural Area properties and not result in non-conforming uses or uses inconsistent with the goals and recommendations for the Rural Area. He said that he thought this was important, so they were not just taking an already developed area and then just moving it to the Rural Area and just changing the color and the map. He said

that locations must have limited impervious surfaces and limited grading, which would otherwise prevent the County from serving Rural Area uses like agricultural, forestry, recreation, and conservation.

Mr. Murray said that it must be contiguous with the Rural Area and would be downzoned to match neighboring Rural Area properties and Rural Area zoning. He said that he thought these were some great criteria to get them thinking about ways to do this process responsibly, and to take into account some of the factors that he mentioned.

Mr. Moore said that at this particular meeting they should not be wordsmithing everything, so he would not support any of those suggested changes. He said that at the most, he would support putting the word "potential" in the title so that it would read "potential criteria."

Ms. Firehock said that she had just made the same comment to Mr. Barnes. She said that the word "potential" would be an improvement.

Mr. Missel said that he had been thinking about something different, but that was fine, too. He said that he was going to say, "criteria for removing underperforming areas from Development Areas include but are not limited to the following."

Mr. Bivins said that he would prefer that.

Mr. Murray asked if they could strike the first bullet point.

Mr. Moore said that he thought "included but not limited to" served the purpose of what he had suggested.

Mr. Murray said that if they did nothing else, he thought it would be beneficial to strike bullet point one because the way it was currently written implied that they had failed to meet their goals for sidewalks and density, and as a result, they were going to abandon it and move it to the Rural Area. He said that it seemed counterintuitive, as it seemed to suggest that areas where they should be investing in more were being given up on.

Mr. Murray said that he did not fully understand that approach. He said that for example, in Crozet, they had been trying to develop a sidewalk next to Crozet Park for a long time. He asked if that meant that they should redesignate that area as Rural Area because it had remained undeveloped for so long.

Mr. Missel said that he understood what Mr. Murray was saying, but he thought he was getting too deep in the weeds. He said that the risk of his approach was that with putting all the criteria out there right now was that they may inadvertently miss something. He said that if they used the wording "included but not limited to" or something to that effect, it acknowledged that some of the listed criteria may not apply. He said that in that regard, the first bullet point may not apply. He said that this would be his suggestion, but he welcomed feedback from his colleagues.

Mr. Carrazana said that this was an imperfect process and an imperfect document; he thought they could all agree on that. He said that nevertheless, there was a lot of good content included in here. He said that this section, in particular, was problematic and he thought they were all wrestling with that here today. He said that it was a relatively new section as well, and they had not been discussing it for the entire four years of this Comprehensive Plan update. He said that now it was an opportunity for them to make some adjustments as they recommended it for the Board.

Mr. Carrazana said that he thought there were a couple of tweaks that they could send along that he thought would improve it. He said that he agreed with the comments that had been made on this section, and he would be in support of the Chair's recommendation because it put it in a way that they were signaling to the Board that this was a section that they needed to pay attention to. He said that they were signaling that they did not think that these criteria were necessarily hitting the mark, so they needed to spend time evaluating and coming up with a better set of criteria for this section. He said that he would be in support of the amendments and edits that the Chair had recommended.

Mr. Bivins said that he would posit, as they looked at this, what were the factors versus criteria? He said that he brought this up because the factors allowed for the kinds of things that Mr. Murray was trying to move forward – they could be integrated into the factors. He said that he thought the factors were something that should be open for a deeper discussion and to drive down into an explicit explanation of, for instance, the potential impacts on opportunities for nearby adjacent properties.

Mr. Bivins said that if they were to move something, they should think about how would it impact the zoning, such as whether it should be downzoned. He said that he believed the things Mr. Murray mentioned there could be very strong and important parts of the factors. He said that therefore, he was trying to delineate between what was a factor and what was a criteria.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought criteria were rules that should be applied, while factors were the many things that should be considered in deliberations.

Mr. Bivins said that he thought there were very few places in this document where they were that prescriptive. He said that when it came to zoning, they could be as prescriptive as they wanted to be, but here, it was a higher level that was meant to provide opportunities to be prescriptive when it was analyzed further.

Mr. Missel asked if Mr. Bivins had a recommended wording change that would help.

Mr. Bivins said that he was somewhat trying to ensure that the record reflected the fact that there had been a conversation about the difference between factors and criteria.

Ms. Firehock said that she would be comfortable with simply adding "potential" before the word "criteria." She said that if they wanted, they could add a sentence at the bottom to clarify that these were things they should consider in the future to develop these criteria. She said that from her perspective, she felt like she would need at least a half-day

workshop to create the criteria Mr. Murray was suggesting, so she was not ready tonight to come up with the criteria and put them in this document. She said that she could not make them up on the dais tonight. She said that she thought it was clear that they were only potential criteria and not limited to those listed, and that a future process would need to be developed very carefully.

Mr. Carrazana said that he also thought it was important to outline the community engagement process that would go along with this as well. He asked for clarification regarding the proposed changes to this section.

Mr. Missel said that the amendment would be "potential criteria for removing underperforming areas from the Development Areas include but are not limited to the following."

Ms. Firehock said that then, at the bottom, they could add a sentence to note that a future process would fully flesh out the criteria, or something to that effect.

Mr. Missel said that he would be more comfortable if they also included language on page 11 that specified that "this process should include a robust community engagement effort."

Mr. Murray asked if they could, after the words "potential criteria for," add the word "assessing" so that it was clear they were evaluating their options as opposed to definitively adding or removing areas. He said that they had already acknowledged that the assessment may not lead to removal; it may lead to greater investments in the area.

Mr. Missel asked if it would be better stated as "criteria for assessing the removal of underperforming areas from the Development Areas, including but not limited to the following."

Mr. Bivins said that for those who may not be aware, in the 2025 Parade of Homes, featuring 22 homes, over half of those homes were valued at $1 million or more. He said that he would like to elaborate on why he was becoming increasingly concerned about this topic. He said that this was one reason was that, when they had been consistently building under capacity, it was inevitable that they would eventually transfer development land to rural uses.

Mr. Bivins said that although it may not be officially designated as rural, it was being used in a way that aligned more closely with rural land use. He said that currently, approximately 50% of their land designated for development was no longer viable for economic development. He said that they needed to address this issue for various community reasons.

He said that with only 5.5% or 0.7% of their land available for development, they were essentially done. He said that it was only when people started demolishing existing structures that they would have the opportunity to redevelop. He said that believed that this plan provided a reasonable framework for future generations to engage with the Planning Commission and continue to move their community forward. He said that this

should be done in a way that was not locked into becoming a solely rural-designated community.

Mr. Murray said that Albemarle's Development Area was about three times the size of Charlottesville's, and he would not say that Charlottesville was done developing.

Mr. Bivins said that the boundaries between Albemarle and Charlottesville were false. He said that if he could click his fingers, they would be done; they would be one unit, creating a single entity, and then they would have their way. He said that this whole idea of using Charlottesville, which originated from the University of Virginia in the 1800s, and how the Rural Area around here promoted an economic basis that excluded most of the people sitting on this dais. He said that to suggest that Albemarle County was some kind of nirvana or utopia compared to Charlottesville was a conversation they would continue to wrestle with all night if they wanted to continue that.

Mr. Missel said that he believed they had effectively addressed the language regarding Development Areas, boundaries, and land swapping.

Jenny Tevendale, Senior Assistant County Attorney, said that she would like to clarify the language on page 11 of the GMP regarding community engagement. She asked where specifically they wanted to add those words.

Mr. Missel said that perhaps it could be included so that it read, "the Board of Supervisors could utilize a robust community engagement process to pursue a boundary revision independently of a future area planning effort."

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to ask why it specifically mentioned the Board of Supervisors instead of just the County. She said that she was not sure why the Planning Commission or staff was not able to have that conversation. She asked if there were specific legal criteria for that.

Mr. Missel asked if it could just say "County."

Mr. Barnes said that he viewed this as a case of the "royal we," where the County was presenting itself as a unified entity. He said that it was likely that staff would be involved, and the Planning Commission would be consulted, but ultimately, the Board of Supervisors was taking the lead on this action. He said that it was not intended to exclude the Planning Commission from the process.

Mr. Missel said that he would recommend that the language read, "the County, utilizing a robust community engagement process, could pursue a boundary revision independently…."

Mr. Barnes said that that would be acceptable.

Mr. Missel said that moving forward, he would refer to the broad topics referenced in the suggestions from the public, without referencing specific details. He said that the Board of Supervisors would have this document outlining the more specific information. He said

that regarding housing, there was a recommendation to develop strategies to support low-income homebuyers, in collaboration with supportive community partners. He asked if the Commission supported this being considered.

Mr. Bivins said that while he had no problem with it, he would like to know more about the community partnerships the County played an active role in. He said that for example, there was the Regional Housing Partnership, the Regional Transit Authority, and other organizations the County was a part of. He said that before he became prescriptive about what the County should do, he would like to understand what existing agencies the County was already a part of were working on, as they may already be addressing these issues.

Mr. Moore said that upon reviewing Emily Dreyfus's comments, he believed there was a lot of valuable material there; however, wordsmithing from the dais was not his favorite thing, especially when this had been such a long process. He said that when introducing new objectives or requirements, such as inclusionary zoning, these topics could be complex and challenging to implement, and he did not think they could address them today.

Mr. Moore said that he thought these considerations were important, and he did not want to dismiss their validity, but they could not be addressed at the end of this Comp Plan process. He said that some of the simpler suggestions, such as adding subordinate clauses or incentives, were more straightforward, but overall, he was not comfortable adding in lots of new language at this phase.

Ms. Firehock said that she agreed with Mr. Moore. She said that she believed that the chapter on affordable housing in this document and the County's already adopted affordable housing strategy, were comprehensive and already supported collaboration with partners. She said that she felt like these suggestions had already been addressed in the County's policies.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any other suggestions that Commissioners wanted to champion.

Mr. Bivins asked if the Board would be able to review these suggestions as well.

Mr. Barnes said that staff was providing a compendium of public comments, of which a majority went to the Board as well as the Planning Commission. He said that the intent was that if the Planning Commission heard something they wanted to pull up and champion, they would have that to reference.

Mr. Missel said that he thought it was fair to say that the Planning Commission generally agreed with the input from the HSG comments, which were available for future reference.

Mr. Carrazana said that while it did not constitute an amendment, he thought a lot of those comments were beneficial.

Mr. Missel said that next, he would ask the Commissioners to discuss the suggestions for the DALU chapter implementation section.

Mr. Moore said that he thought that Action 1.3 was an intriguing concept that he would like to explore further. He said that adding a new objective at this stage would be difficult, and the idea of an affordable housing overlay was similar to the concept of not having neighborhood residential but starting with the middle. He said that he thought that either of these could be useful tools, but it was difficult to incorporate them at this point.

Mr. Missel said that he also was interested in that suggestion for 1.3.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to understand how this would be supportive and how it would interact with the affordable housing and density bonuses, which were being pursued in their development processes. He said that he imagined that the Commission and the Supervisors would need to address this issue, particularly whether the incentives were seen as effective in encouraging developers to build affordable housing. He said that he thought that it was at that point that they could consider how to refine this approach and whether new directions should be explored. He said that the Rio Small Area Plan was going to be reviewed soon, and that may be an opportunity to explore this type of idea further.

Mr. Carrazana said that he would like to emphasize the importance of measurable outcomes and how they measured their goals in this policy. He said that this was crucial in determining the effectiveness of their approach, particularly in the context of affordable housing.

Mr. Missel asked for the Commission's feedback on the suggestion that they implement a minimum of 80% local native species in all County projects and projects reviewed by County staff.

Mr. Murray said that that was already part of their current Comprehensive Plan, which could be found in section 4.25 of the document. He said that specifically, it discussed the use of 80% native plants in community development projects. He said that he believed this aligned with their existing efforts and made sense to include this in the updated plan and to expand this standard to include all County properties. He said that given that the County had already met this standard in most of its projects, he thought it was a straightforward requirement to continue their good work.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to note that it would be a guideline, as the Comprehensive Plan was a guiding document. He asked Mr. Murray where that recommendation should be placed in the document.

Mr. Murray said that he thought that should be added under the Environmental Stewardship chapter, specifically under Objective 4.

Mr. Missel asked if staff had any thoughts on where that guideline would fit best.

Mr. Holt said that under Action 4.4 in the Environmental Stewardship Chapter, they had a bulleted list of recommended actions, so it could be added as a separate bullet point in that list. He said that alternatively, it could be added as a new Action, Action 4.5.

Mr. Missel said that he thought it fit under 4.4.

Mr. Murray said that he would agree with that.

Mr. Missel said that they would add, "use a minimum of 80% locally native species on all County projects." He said that the next several suggestions were regarding land swapping, but he felt the Commission had adequately addressed that topic. He said that next was the request to consider a revision to the Future Land Use Map, which was proposed by Sweetspot of Albemarle LLC.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to hear some history on that. He said that he was intrigued to hear from the owner of the property that they had changed their property type at the request of the County. He said that it would be helpful to know what it was prior to that and to confirm that the County had in fact asked them to do that.

Mr. Barnes said that as part of the 2015 plan, this was one of the last components. He said that the Development Area was enlarged to include this parcel, and it was designated as industrial in part due to the presence of the Deschutes Brewery. He said that there was also a Comprehensive Plan amendment that included a Resolution of Intent to not only consider this parcel, but also to study other parcels south of it for potential inclusion, should the Deschutes property expand beyond this single parcel.

Mr. Barnes said that at the time, he was not present, so he may not have all the details, but his understanding was that the Deschutes property was intended to encompass more than just this parcel. He said that he believed that was the history.

Ms. Firehock said that she recalled being on the Planning Commission during that time, and she did remember this change was initiated by the County to have the land in appropriate zoning for this potential new use. She said that she was not in favor of that change; in fact, at the time, it was proposed to create a much larger area, which Supervisor Liz Palmer and she as the Commissioner opposed, and they reduced the area to a much smaller one.

Ms. Firehock said that they basically saw their victory as achieving that reduced area because initially it was much larger, even larger than what Deschutes needed. She said that she could delve into a lengthy history of why Deschutes was never a good fit for that site, as it lacked the necessary infrastructure and readiness for an industrial user. She said that the site was only at a level one, far from being ready for industrial use.

Ms. Firehock said that she understood the property owner's difficulty now in trying to market it as an industrial site, as it was not well-suited for that purpose. She said that however, she had only heard their request in the past hour, so she was not prepared to amend the Future Land Use Map tonight. She said that her inclination, based on the site's

sensitivities and other factors, was that a mixed-use development would be more appropriate. She said that this issue likely needed its own hearing.

Mr. Carrazana said that he wholeheartedly agreed that industrial was not the right designation for that area and he did not think it fit well there at all. He said that he would be in support of making the change, but he would note that it would only be a general recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. He said that he would feel comfortable recommending that mixed use was more appropriate than industrial for that area.

Mr. Moore said that additionally, they had just had a public hearing a few weeks ago for the parcel next door to this one. He said that this experience had really helped him to better understand that part of the County more closely. He said that in understanding the broader area, he felt he could support that small change as well.

Mr. Bivins said that he would support that change as well. He said that if this would further discussions about connectivity between parcels in this area as well as potentially providing better access to Hedgerow Park, he would support that change.

Mr. Murray said that he was a bit uncomfortable with this coming to them at this stage and without a thorough discussion of the implications, particularly for an area with topographic challenges and was forested. He said that they had previously discussed the Development Area swaps and specifically identified areas with topographic challenges and difficulties in development as potential candidates for swaps. He said that this area seemed to fit that description; however, he was generally in support of the idea of making that change.

Mr. Missel said that he had heard numerous concerns from people in this area, including residents of Sherwood Farms, who were worried about the impacts of the development across the street as well as the environmental features of this site. He said that he thought this was a very last-minute change to the Future Land Use Map, and he did not believe the community had had the opportunity to weigh in on it.

Mr. Missel said that currently, it looked like the Planning Commission would provide a recommendation that would directly go to the Board of Supervisors tomorrow, but they had been talking about this plan for four years, so he did not understand why it was happening at this point. He said that he would not support the request because, as they had heard from staff, there were potential other opportunities for applicants to request Comprehensive Plan amendments in the future.

Mr. Murray said that he agreed with that.

Ms. Firehock said that what was convincing to her in Mr. Missel's comments was the fact that there had been no opportunity for the public to weigh in on the matter. She said that this potential change to the FLUM had not been advertised to the public, nor was it included in the meeting materials.

Mr. Missel counter to that, this was a public hearing, and they did make recommendations to the Board through this process. He said that they could express their general support

for the intention behind this proposal, but they were also raising concerns about the process that led to it. He said that he did not think they needed to say any more than that, as it effectively conveyed their concerns to the Supervisors.

Mr. Barnes asked if the Commission had a recommendation for the Board at this juncture.

Mr. Carrazana said that it sounded like they were still talking through it. He said that while he believed the land use change was appropriate, he was concerned about the timing. He said that the process and how it was handled were not appropriate. He said that what really swayed him was the Chair's point that there was no public hearing, no public discourse, and no notification to the community.

Ms. Firehock said that there was a long process of getting it to the designation it currently had, and that was very controversial.

Mr. Carrazana said that that gave him pause with regards to supporting the change.

Mr. Missel said that he believed technically there was a public hearing, which would be the Board's public hearing. He said that however, there would not be another public hearing before the Planning Commission as it currently was.

Mr. Barnes said that he would like clarification regarding whether the Commission would like to recommend this FLUM change to the Board as part of the Commission's recommended amendments to the Comp Plan.

Mr. Missel said that what he initially heard was that there was support for this in general as a land use, which was what the Commission essentially oversees. He said that he was more concerned about the process.

Mr. Barnes said that to clarify, there was support for the change, but concern was that this was not the venue for this change.

Ms. Firehock said that the issue was that it was not advertised.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any other points of discussion from the Commission.

Ms. Firehock said that she had two changes to recommend. She said that on DALU 42, she wanted to add a sentence to the end of the first paragraph. She said that for context, she was concerned about was that when the state stormwater law was updated, a committee had been formed to recommend changes to it. She said that the committee had recommended that on-site water quality treatment be required, and that was subsequently struck by the legislators when they wrote the bill.

Ms. Firehock said that as a result, the expert panel's recommendations were not followed, and what they had seen was a huge decline in bioswales, French drains, and other best management practices on-site to treat water quality. She said that people were buying off-site credits, so local water quality declined in her community, while a stream was

restored elsewhere in the James watershed. She said that while that was great, it did not help the local water quality.

Ms. Firehock said that, therefore, she wanted to add the sentence: "to minimize degradation of local surface waters, on-site best management practices to treat runoff and improve water quality are preferred over the purchase of off-site credits." She said that they had successfully coaxed several developers to add on-site water quality treatment by simply preaching that up here on the dais. She said that she would just like to put it in as a county preference that they would like to see that, wherever possible. She said that it was not a law, but rather a statement of their preference to prevent local water quality degradation.

Mr. Bivins said that he was supportive of the concept since he had watched his colleague cajole and change behavior. He asked if it was necessary to confine it to credits.

Ms. Firehock said that yes, they could still buy outside credits. She said that she wanted to add that sentence was her concern with the preceding sentence that was currently there, which read, "It is also recognized that impacts to some natural resources will occur as new development proposals strive to meet the higher density and intensity goals for the Development Areas."

Ms. Firehock said that this sentence was an acknowledgement that as they develop and intensify density, they will see declines in natural resources. She said that she did not want to just give up at that point. She said that instead, she would like to add that, however, the County would really like to see on-site water quality treatment because it could be done.

Mr. Murray asked if it could be "local" instead of "on-site."

Ms. Firehock said that she was mainly speaking to a developer's site, but she would be fine with "local." She said that her main point was that the James watershed encompassed a huge area from Highland County to the Chesapeake Bay, so buying stormwater treatment credits was not as effective as on-site treatment.

Mr. Carrazana said that he would be concerned with eliminating the on-site requirement. He thought they should consider retaining that language, as it would provide a more direct and effective way to address water quality issues at the development site. He said that perhaps they could say it was preferred to have on-site treatment or local treatment. He said that it would be best to prioritize on-site treatment while still acknowledging local or nearby improvements may be applicable.

Mr. Missel said that if they were preaching the benefits of unlocking density in the Development Areas, they did have to look for alternatives, potentially.

Ms. Firehock said that she agreed, but she had worked with local architects to create a Zoning Ordinance for Charlottesville that allowed for doubling density, as long as they added water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs). She said that they did so, and it was fine.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed that sometimes if they pushed a little bit, and it could be an amenity.

Ms. Firehock said that was true; it could be a beautiful garden that also provided pollinator habitat and clean water. She said that people wanted to live next to it, they did not even realize it was a stormwater feature.

Mr. Carrazana said that natural features like this could actually complement density very well, so he did not think it should be one or the other.

Ms. Firehock said that yes, that was the issue she had with the tone of this section. She said that it seemed to end on the dismal note that density resulted in environmental degradation and there was nothing else that could be done. She said that this was why she wanted to augment it with the addition of prioritizing on-site stormwater treatment in order to avoid any potential degradation. She said that she fully believed they could have denser development with less stormwater runoff.

Ms. Firehock said that she also had a note on CF-20. She said that she wanted to add a new action to this section. She said that under Objective CF10, which was the main objective, the topic was to improve urban stormwater management, drainage, and flood control. She said that tone thing that she thought was lacking, was an action item to seek opportunities to add stormwater best management practices to older neighborhoods that lacked stormwater management. She said that she worked with localities throughout the south to achieve this, so she knew it was possible, and she thought it would be a worthwhile action for this section.

Ms. Firehock said that to provide context for everyone, she would like to clarify a few points. The Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, with stormwater amendments in 1987 that required stormwater management. She said that however, many of their neighborhoods were older than that, and as a result, they had large areas of the County and the City without any stormwater management. She said that all the water ran off into storm drains, polluting the Rivanna River or other waterways.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought that retrofitting older neighborhoods to add best management practices should be an action item within their Comprehensive Plan. She said that while it might be a minor point, when they applied for grants for stormwater management or other projects, it could be beneficial to have it written as a clear County policy. She said that she had written many grants, and she could attest that having a clear policy in place could make a big difference when seeking funding.

Mr. Missel asked if Ms. Firehock had any additional comments.

Ms. Firehock said that those were her two recommendations, but she would make one closing statement. She said that she was heartened to see how many of the Commission's comments and the public's comments had been incorporated into the plan.

Mr. Carrazana said that he concurred with those comments and would like to express his gratitude to staff and his colleagues on the dais for their hard work. He said that he was

aware that it had been a long and challenging journey to reach this point, but he was pleased with the progress made.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to acknowledge the significant improvements made in this plan, particularly in recognizing multimodal traffic, advancements in sustainability, and the recognition of the diversity of their County. He said that he appreciated the efforts to better understand and address these issues; however, he did have serious concerns about certain aspects of the plan.

Mr. Murray said that since the 1980s, the core principle of the Comprehensive Plan had been protection of the County's Rural Area. He said that he feared that the vaguely worded language around swaps had opened the door to significant expansion of the Development Areas. He said that the current definition of "underperforming areas" could apply to a majority of their Development Area, so he wanted to reiterate that this was a significant concern of his. He said that it undermined the fundamental principle of the County's Comprehensive Plan since 1980.

Mr. Bivins said that he had come to realize that this Comprehensive Plan shared similarities with a strategic plan. He said that this was an idea that they hoped would guide and send signals to various stakeholders for the next certain amount of years, aiming to facilitate decisions within their community. He said that while it was not a perfect plan, and it would never be, he believed it did serve a purpose.

Mr. Bivins said that land was an economic agent, and the County's goal was to facilitate the decisions for people who had cash assets, whether it was to sell their property or invest in their community. He said that they were being asked to make it easier for people to make informed decisions, and he thought this plan was a step in the right direction. He said that he was pleased with where they were, and he believed the community, staff, and Commission should be proud of the progress they had made.

Mr. Bivins said that he was optimistic about the future and the potential for adjustments to be made in the future. He said that he looked forward to seeing how the plan evolved and how stakeholders would bring their ideas and suggestions to the table.

Mr. Moore said that he wanted to express his sincere appreciation for the amount and quality of work that had gone into this Comprehensive Plan. He said that he had seen firsthand the dedication of their staff in drafting, redrafting, and collecting feedback to create something truly significant. He said that he also appreciated the addition of the seventh Big Move, which focused on social and cultural connections. He said that he hoped this would open doors for more intentionality around arts, parks, and third spaces as they moved forward as a County.

Mr. Moore said that if he had one overarching critique, it was that the AC44 plan was too wedded to their current status quo. He said that across the country, the gateway to the American dream was closing, and it was becoming increasingly difficult for people to achieve it, especially those who were not already comfortable with good salaries and owned homes. He said that Albemarle was not the most extreme example of that trend; however, for those who had not already achieved that American dream in Albemarle,

many people were leaving their county, opting for Fluvanna, Waynesboro, and Greene County instead.

Mr. Moore said that as that happened, those people were then forced to commute to Charlottesville, which was unsustainable. He said that he wished they had a Comprehensive Plan that prioritized making the American dream more achievable for everyone in their region. He said that he thought there were some good things in AC44 that moved them in that direction, but it was too slow and tied to the status quo for people who were struggling to make ends meet. He said that people were juggling expensive childcare, eldercare, and underpaid jobs. He said that for those people, of which there were many, he believed they should be moving faster to address these issues.

Mr. Moore said that overall, he supported this Comprehensive Plan and appreciated the effort that had gone into it. He said that he was proud to be working on this as a County, and he was committed to improving the lives of their residents and workers. He said that however, he also wanted to note that he wished they could move a little faster on some things.

Ms. Firehock said that she would not expound on her previous statements about how they should rezone to the desired densities and make it easier for redevelopment, but she would note that it was always a possibility the County could consider. She said that rather, she would like to shift focus to the importance of completing the Rural Area plan for the County. She said that there was a sentiment that the Comprehensive Plan did not go far enough in addressing the Rural Area, which was somewhat acknowledged in this document.

Ms. Firehock said that the Rural Area was currently treated as an amorphous blob, failing to provide specific details beyond farming, forestry, and rural living. She said that they had promised to make a Rural Area plan, which would examine the unique character of different regions and districts. She said that she would just urge the County leaders, staff, and constituents to keep this promise and prioritize the development of a comprehensive Rural Area plan. She said that she wanted to emphasize that in the near term, they needed to take up that planning process and complete that important work as well.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to share a few thoughts. He said that first and foremost, he would like to express his gratitude to the staff for their hard work and dedication to this project. He said that it had taken longer than anticipated, but he believed it also was something that did not need to be rushed. He said that this Comprehensive Plan was a significant document that would shape their community's future for the next 20 years, and he thought the extended schedule was justified and they had arrived at a good point.

Mr. Missel said that he also wanted to commend the staff for their out-of-the-box thinking, which had helped them strike a balance between progress and preserving what was already working He said that this plan was a living document, and he thought that was a key aspect of its value. He said that it was not a static document that would be finalized for 20 years; it was a starting point for ongoing discussion and refinement.

Mr. Missel said that one area where he thought that could improve was in community engagement. He said that he had been disappointed at times by the turnout for public meetings and the lack of participation from their community. He said that he thought it was essential that they make sure everyone had a voice in this process, and that they provided opportunities for feedback and input. He said that he would ask the public and County staff to take this into consideration, as that participation was essential to a fully democratic process.

Mr. Missel said that back to the issue of things not being perfect, a lot of this process had involved land use discussions. He said that land use was not a digital concept; it was analog because every site and project was different, and they were trying to make a plan that encompassed all of it. He said that this was part of the reason the plan was not perfect but also part of the reason it was so diverse. He said that he thought this plan was much more simplified than other Comprehensive Plans, but he also thought it emphasized the right things. He said that it respected preservation while unlocking development in the growth areas and identifying ways to consider that.

Mr. Missel said that regarding metrics, he thought it was essential that they establish clear measures of progress and accountability. He said that this plan provided a framework for that, and he was glad they had the opportunity to revisit and refine it over the next 20 years. He thought they had had a productive discussion, and he was happy to see that they had made some progress. He said that the Commission would take a brief recess to finalize their recommendations.

**Recess**

The Commission recessed at 7:53 p.m. and reconvened at 8:02 p.m.

**CPA2021-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update – Final Document Recommendation (continued)**

Ms. Swartzendruber said that they had a draft of the resolution, but they had gone ahead and amended that resolution to include the amendments they had just discussed.

Mr. Missel said he would just read them for the sake of clarity, in case some members of the public could not see this. He said the first amendment was under page GMP 11, process. He said that ideally, the need for a development area boundary revision would be identified by a future area planning effort. He said the County could pursue a boundary revision with robust community engagement for a future area planning effort and should request that the County Executive direct staff to develop a Development Areas report.

Mr. Missel said moving on to page GMP 12, the heading would be "potential criteria for assessing and removing underperforming areas from the Development Areas, including but not limited to the following." He said the third amendment would be on page ES 18, Action 4.4, to add a sub-bullet point to use a minimum of 80% locally native species in all County projects.

Mr. Missel said that next, page DALU 42, they would add the following sentence to the end of the first paragraph: "to minimize degradation of local surface waters, on=site or nearby best management practices to treat runoff and improve water quality are preferred over the purchase of off-site credits." He said that next, on page CF 20, adding Action 10.4, "seek opportunities to add stormwater best management practices to neighborhoods lacking stormwater management."

Mr. Murray said that he would like to note that they had the Albemarle County Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), and he was wondering if they should mention or encourage their county incentive programs in this context, as it would achieve that goal.

Mr. Missel said that he believed that was covered under the general direction to "seek opportunities."

Ms. Swartzendruber said that she would also like to address the Commission's support for the comments on housing. She said that staff could add that to the materials and pass it along to the Board. She said that it would not necessarily be a change of language, but rather that the Commission was supportive of that language as well as the language about the Sweetspot change, in that the Commission was generally supportive of the intent, but uncomfortable with the process.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission adopt the resolution with amendments attached, recommending approval of CPA 2021-02. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to acknowledge that many people who had worked on this project may not be in the same roles as when they contributed, so he would like to say that they all appreciated the work that got them this far.

The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

**Committee Reports**

Ms. Firehock said that the Historic Preservation Committee did not have a quorum, even with the addition of new members.

Mr. Missel said that they needed to fix that.

Mr. Murray said that the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met and they discussed the mission of the organization and how the nature of the committee over time had evolved into being more informative, where staff presented ideas to them, and they responded with nods or walked away feeling informed, whereas in the past, the CACs had been much more advisory in nature, with actual recommendations that they would pass along to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Murray said that there was a general consensus that they wanted to start moving in the direction of being more advisory and providing recommendations, rather than just receiving information. He said that he thought it was a very interesting conversation. He said that additionally, he would like to mention a joint Metropolitan Planning Organization

(MPO) meeting, where they discussed transportation opportunities for localities in the region as well as their own initiatives, such as the potential for future rail opportunities. He said that they also talked about the Afton Express, which had seen a significant increase in ridership to 16,000 people, and he found that impressive.

Mr. Murray said that furthermore, he was interested to learn that UVA employees could now receive a free pass to ride, which was a great initiative. He said that they also discussed the Virginia Breeze and the future connectivity it would provide, as well as the Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, which would provide for more commuter traffic along a rail system. He said that he was particularly interested in seeing if the Crozet train station, which had been briefly operational, could potentially be revived. He said that it would be an enormous asset to the region to have a convenient train service connecting Crozet to Charlottesville and Staunton. He said that finally, they received an update on the Three Notch'd Trail.

Mr. Moore said that he had two reports. He said that the Rio 29 Community Advisory Committee meeting went well. He said they had a good conversation about the form-based code in the Rio 29 Small Area Plan, which was upcoming for review and updates. He said that also, he attended a meeting of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization, or CTAC CAMPO. He said they had several presentations, including one on Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) studies, which assessed safety needs and made resident recommendations for the US-29 corridor from Hydraulic to Woodbrook.

Mr. Moore said that they also discussed the 29-250 bypass interchange which was currently being studied. He said that furthermore, they talked about the role and necessity of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, which was not required by law. He said that four out of 15 MPOs in the state had one, and they wondered if they truly needed one outside of long-range transportation planning processes. He said he did not have a strong opinion on the matter.

Mr. Moore said that finally, they reviewed projects that would be submitted for SmartScale funding in the next cycle, including improvements to US-29 and I-64, Fifth Street and I-64, and other corridors, such as Barracks Road and Ivy Road, with on-ramp and off-ramp extensions and potential dual exit lanes at Barracks to improve capacity.

**Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: September 10 and 17, 2025**

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said the September 10 work session meeting covered Comprehensive Plan items, so he believed the Commissioners were well-informed on what they discussed at that meeting. He said the September 17 meeting had a couple of notable events. He said that in the afternoon work session, they addressed issues with the fill section in their Ordinance, so staff held a work session with the Board to gather their intent on this matter. He said they would like to know what the Board's desired outcome was on this issue, and it would be incorporated into an ordinance that would be presented to the Commission and the Board at a future date.

Mr. Barnes said there was a public hearing on the transit occupancy tax, which he did not pay close attention to, so he could not provide more information on that. He said the other notable item was a land-use related matter regarding the utility easement on Huckleberry Hills property. He said apparently, there were approximately 3,000 feet of overhead electrical service on the property, which was already subject to a conservation easement held by the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority. He said a new easement would require a 15-foot-wide corridor to underground the power, which was approved.

Mr. missel asked if tomorrow would be the final work session for AC44.

Mr. Barnes said yes, the work session on AC44 on September 10 went from 2:00 p.m. to almost 8:00 p.m. and they got through a lot of documents said however, in Section 3, Part 3, there were some final chapters that required individual input from Board members. He said they attempted to incorporate their comments into the document the Commission reviewed tonight, but they needed to verify that their input was accurately reflected.

Mr. Barnes said the purpose of tomorrow's meeting was to ensure that Board members had a chance to review the changes they suggested and see how they were implemented in the document. He said he assumed it would be a brief meeting.

Mr. Missel asked about the 100-foot increase for industrial.

Mr. Barnes said yes, there was a zoning text amendment to consider a special exception process to allow taller heights for industrial properties to accommodate more modern industrial processes. He said that then, for the Comp Plan, they would bring it to the Board on October 15, 2025, for a public hearing and final adoption.

Mr. Bivins said that it seemed like they had paused conversations around data centers. He said that he wondered if staff could provide any kind of update on when they would resume work on data center regulations.

Mr. Barnes said that it was currently being assessed at the Board level, and it was likely that a decision would be made regarding whether to move forward at all.

Mr. Bivins said he spent some time in another part of the world, and it was quite striking to him that they were discussing the placement of data centers in remote locations, often paired with off-grid power plants. He said this trend seemed to be driven by the desire to avoid community resistance in certain areas, and instead, locating data centers in more accepting or nonconfrontational locations. He said he was seeing a pattern of this, where companies may bypass areas with existing regulations or opposition by setting up data centers in more remote or less populated areas, often with their own power systems. He said he was wondering what was the current status of their data center plans for the County and whether they would begin to see oddly placed data centers throughout the country.

Mr. Murray said that he recently returned from his vacation in Davis, West Virginia, and they were having that debate in that area.

## New Business

There was none.

## Old Business

There was none.

## Items for follow-up

There were none.

## Adjournment

At 8:13 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 14, 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)

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| Approved by Planning Commission |
| Date: |
| Initials: |