Albemarle County Planning Commission
Draft Minutes Regular Meeting
October 14, 2025

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Jenny Tevendale, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Bart Svooda; Scott Clark; James Van Vranken; T.J. Newberry; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commissions.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission allow Mr. Moore to participate remotely in today's meeting due to an injury. Mr. Murray seconded the motion which carried (6-0). (Mr. Moore did not participate in the vote.)

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

Benjamin Jackson, White Hall District, said that he appreciated the opportunity to voice his concerns regarding the data center ordinance amendment. He said that fortunately, the amendment had been suspended, but unfortunately, all his prepared comments were written prior to this decision. He said that regardless, when this ordinance was taken up again, he would like to offer the following. He said that pausing the ordinance was a good step, but he believed a ban on data centers was a better approach.

Mr. Jackson said that the language in the suspended amendment had conceded too much scope during the planning process to data center developers, allowing for excessive development and scale. He said that the sheer size of these buildings, as permitted by the amendment, deserved community input. He said that Tier 1 buildings allowed for 125,000 square feet of development by right, and Tier 2 buildings allowed for 500,000 square feet, equivalent to 3 acres and 12 acres of development, respectively.

Mr. Jackson said that currently, there were no federal, legally binding energy standards that applied explicitly to the operation of data center buildings and infrastructure. He said that Governor Youngkin's veto of Senate Bill 1449 and House Bill 1601 in May, which aimed to regulate data centers in the Commonwealth, had shifted the responsibility to local governments, including this Board. He said that data centers, as a whole, were uniquely unregulated and represented an external threat to the communities in which they were built.

Mr. Jackson said that by allowing such large-scale construction to be by right, the County was giving up its ability to strictly scrutinize and perform discretionary review on an industry that would

have a significant impact on the community. He said that there were numerous examples of the construction operation of large-scale data centers, such as the Google data center in The Dalles, Oregon. He said that initially constructed in 2006, the campus had expanded to 350,000 square feet of data center space and a 1.8 million square foot campus with four buildings in total.

Mr. Jackson said that the campus had used an alarming amount of water, with 104.3 million gallons in 2012 and 355.1 million gallons in 2021, representing a more than threefold increase in water usage over a nine-year period. He said that for comparison, that amount of water was more than a quarter of all water used in the Dalles. He said that this excessive expansion came at the cost of diminishing utilities capacity and artificially inflated utility bills for residents. He said that any tax benefits gained from data center construction were immediately offset by the meteoric rise in cost faced by residents as data centers stole power and water from community members.

Mr. Jackson said that as of now, Dominion Energy was requesting a 6% monthly increase for residential users and was attempting to create a new rate class to address the strain large power users like data centers had on the Virginian electric grid. He said that this proposed increase would not take effect until January 2026, with an average increase of $8.51 monthly for residential users. He said that while this pause from the Board of Supervisors was a desirable outcome, Albemarle County government should consider implementing a ban on the construction of this type of industry. He said that the data center industry and its respective big tech end-users had already exploited their data, removed online privacy, and now sought to steal their public utilities.

Stuart Overbey, Samuel Miller District, said that she was a member of Don't Spread on Me, a grassroots organization advocating for change as to how treated sewage sludge, also known as biosolids, was permitted and spread on farmland and forest. She said that she wanted to thank the Commission for keeping a good sentence about biosolids in the AC44 plan. She said that it was a good start. She said that as the Comprehensive Plan process neared completion, she was hopeful that they could make progress on adopting a biosolids ordinance.

Ms. Overbey said that she had brought hard copies of materials for the Commission's reference, and she could also provide a digital copy upon request. She said that her email address was listed in this cover letter, but she had chosen to share it with them in person to avoid spreading the document too widely, as it was a draft document that had not been reviewed. She said that she believed that was all for now, but she encouraged the Commissioners to visit their website and review the information they had prepared. She said that she looked forward to discussing this further with them.

They did not appear to have copies of this document.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Clayborne said that he would abstain from voting since he was not present at the previous meeting.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion, which carried (6-0). (Mr. Clayborne abstained from the vote.)

Public Hearing

AFD-2025-00001 – Green Mountain AFD Review

Mr. Missel said that staff would present information on all the AFD public hearing items at once, and then he would open the public hearings one at a time for the Commission to take action on each.

James Van Vranken, Planner, said that he would present information on the regular review of three Agricultural and Forestal Districts (AFD). He said that to provide some background, the AFD program was a voluntary land conservation program, in which landowners could apply to the board to join or create a district. He said that districts were reviewed on a regular cycle, every four to 10 years, during which time landowners could withdraw by right. He said that they were currently in the review period for these three districts.

Mr. Van Vranken said that the AFD program offered benefits to landowners, including an extra layer of review for special use permits (SUP) in or adjacent to the districts and the potential to qualify for one category of the land use tax program. He said that it was important to note that the AFD program and the land use tax program were separate entities. He said that most parcels in land use were not in AFDS; many parcels in the AFDs were not in land use. He said that one connection between the two programs was that being in an AFD could allow a landowner to qualify for the open space category of the land use program.

Mr. Van Vranken said that restrictions placed on landowners while they were in the districts were primarily twofold. He said that first, they were not allowed to have homestays, so short-term rentals were not permitted, and second, they were not allowed to use small lot development rights to subdivide. He said that as a reminder, parcels in an AFD were allowed to subdivide, provided the parcels created were at least 21 acres. He said that he would like to clarify that family subdivisions were an exception to this rule. He said that they could see an example on the screen, comparing a hypothetical parcel in the rural area with maximum development potential in an AFD to one not in an AFD.

Mr. Van Vranken said that moving on to the review process, reviews were taken to the AFD Advisory Committee for its recommendation, then to the Planning Commission for its recommendation, and finally to the Board of Supervisors, where they could act to renew, modify, or terminate these districts. He said that the County Code outlined five review criteria, which were not an exhaustive list, but these were the factors that must be considered. He would like to bring to their attention a notable point regarding the development rights policy mentioned in number seven.

Mr. Van Vranken said that per the County's policy, parcels without development rights were not to be included in the districts. He said that reviews had come to the Planning Commission in February this year and December of last year, when 15 districts were reviewed, and parcels without development rights were recommended for removal. He said that this same process was currently underway for the three districts under review. He said that in the spring, the Board had decided to uphold this policy and remove parcels without development rights from the districts.

Mr. Van Vranken said that he would now present the three districts under review. He said that the first was the Green Mountain District, located just north of Esmont and west of Route 20. He said that this was their most recent district, created in 2015, and had not undergone any changes since

then. He said that they had received no withdrawal requests from landowners, who had until the Board's public hearing date on December 3, 2025, to withdraw by right. He said that however, they had not yet received any such requests.

Mr. Van Vranken said that all six parcels in the Green Mountain District had development rights and were not recommended for removal. He said that staff and the advisory committee recommended a 10-year renewal of the Green Mountain District. He said that the second district was the Nortonsville Local District, which was a bit of an anomaly in the County. He said that this district was technically a district of local importance, rather than statewide importance, which meant it had different criteria for creation.

Mr. Van Vranken said that the minimum size for local districts was 25 acres, rather than 200 acres for statewide districts. He said that some of the benefits listed earlier did not apply to local districts. He also said the maximum review period for local districts was eight years, rather than 10 years. He said that there were two parcels in this district, one of which was recommended for removal due to it having no development rights. He said that staff recommended the eight-year renewal of the District and the removal of the one parcel.

Mr. Van Vranken said that finally was the Batesville District, which consisted of 33 parcels, approximately 1,000 acres, located north and west of Batesville, had received no withdrawal requests from landowners so far. He said that 18 parcels in the district had been identified as having no development rights. He said that one parcel currently using the district to qualify for the open space land use tax category was shown in blue on the provided map. He said that if removed immediately, the landowners of that parcel would face rollback taxes.

Mr. Van Vranken said that under the Board's direction, that parcel was recommended to stay in the district for five years, allowing landowners time to adjust their tax status and avoid rollback taxes if possible. He said that the parcels in pink were recommended to be removed. He said that the staff recommendation was a five-year renewal, with the pink parcels removed. He said that the AFD Advisory Committee recommended a five-year renewal, but with the pink parcels kept in the district. He said that with that, he would take any questions from the Commission before they opened the public hearing.

Mr. Missel said that he had one final question regarding Mr. Van Vranken's previous comment on the last slide. He said that the AFD Committee had voted to recommend the renewal of the district without the staff-recommended removals.

Mr. Van Vranken said that yes, they recommended renewal without removing the parcels.

Mr. Bivins asked staff why the renewal time periods were different for each district. He asked how the variation of years was determined by the Committee.

Mr. Van Vranken said that the review period can range from four to 10 years. He said that they had been striving to provide the maximum review period for these districts. He said that as a result, they would have given the 10-year review period if possible. He said that for the Nortonsville Local District, as it was a district of local importance, the maximum allowed was eight years. He said that for Batesville, they had the maximum five years due to the presence of a parcel in open space land use, which required a five-year notification period. He said that this

resulted in a five-year review period, with the intention was that, after five years, the parcel would be reviewed again, and it would revert to the 10-year review cycle.

Mr. Bivins said that he appreciated the clarification, and it was very helpful.

Mr. Murray said that Mr. Van Vranken had mentioned that the family subdivision was an exception to the utilization of small parcel subdivision rights. He asked how many family subdivisions the County had received since the 2016 policy. He asked for an estimate of the average number of family subdivisions they saw annually.

Mr. Van Vranken said that he did not have that specific number, but staff could find it and follow up with that information.

Scott Clark, Conservation Program Manager, said that to clarify, the exception for family divisions was not directly related to the 2016-2017 policy change regarding the inclusion of parcels. He said that it had been a longstanding policy since the program's inception, approximately 30 to 40 years ago. He said that they did not have an accounting of how many instances of family divisions had occurred, but it was a relatively small number. He said that they did track instances of family divisions when they occurred, but the policy had been in place for a long time since the inception of this program.

Mr. Murray said that there was a concern that when changes were made to the program in 2016, more people might utilize family subdivisions. He said that similarly, when other changes were made to the Agricultural Forestal Districts, there was a concern that there would be a shift towards using family subdivisions more. He said that this was one of the reasons he was inquiring about this.

Mr. Clark said that staff would have to do further research to find out.

Mr. Murray said that if he could be provided with some numbers at some point in the future, that would be greatly appreciated. He said that he would be interested in knowing the exact number, not just within the Agricultural Forestal Districts, but overall, as the provision did offer many exceptions to other policies as well.

Mr. Clayborne said that he had a question regarding the Committee deliberations. He said that he noticed that on Green Mountain, the decision was unanimous, whereas on the subsequent two districts, there were two dissenting votes. He said that he wondered if there was any context or information from those Committee meetings that would help them understand the reasons behind those dissenting votes. He said that this information would be helpful as they deliberated on these items.

Mr. Van Vranken said that the Advisory Committee was divided on this issue, but the majority of the committee members believed that parcels without development rights should not be removed from the districts. He said the committee believed that removing them from the districts would erode the value of the districts, that there was more reason to keep them in the districts than just restricting their development potential, and that even though they were not restricted by being in a district, they contributed to the overall sense of community that the districts provided.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to state for the record that he did not understand how that was an issue. He said that he was unclear about the significance of the land status in determining

community. He said that community was not a function of a land's designated status. He said that as his colleague had pointed out, the preservation of community could be beneficial, allowing individuals to access shared resources. He said that the use of the term "community" in this context added weight to it in a broader, universal sense, rather than a functional one.

Mr. Bivins said that he would suggest that future conversations use more precise language. He said that he found it intriguing that there was a group of individuals who refused to accept the Supervisors' decisions. He said that there were a couple of individuals on this committee who would not support the Supervisors' recommendations. He said that was fine; but he wanted to be clear that they were taking an opposing position that contradicted the stated Code. He said that as a result, his main concern was that the Committee members were creating an unnecessary roadblock. He said that he had said this before, but he felt compelled to reiterate it now. He said that in essence, he was saying that if they disagreed, then they should consider running for a Supervisor position, where they could potentially change the Code.

Mr. Van Vranken said that to be clear, eight out of ten committee members shared this sentiment. He said that he did not want there to be a misconception that only a few people felt that way; it was a vast majority of the Committee members who felt that way.

Ms. Firehock asked if staff could elaborate on the scenario where someone was notified that they would be removed from the program in five years, whether they chose to leave or not. She said that specifically, the notification would inform them that they had an opportunity to prepare by getting their taxes in order. She asked if they would be advised to set aside extra funds to cover potential rollback taxes.

Mr. Van Vranken said that typically, landowners had three options. He said that they may be eligible for other land use categories, such as agriculture or forestry. He said that their real estate office worked with them to explore these options. He said that if they were not eligible for another category or were unwilling to qualify, they would be removed from the open space this year and pay full fair market taxes on their property. He said that paying full fair market taxes for five years was less money than paying rollback taxes plus interest over five years.

Mr. Van Vranken said that in this case, it made more sense for them to pay full taxes now and avoid the rollback taxes when they were removed from the district. He said that it was an option for them if they chose to; they could instead opt to continue paying the current open space tax level, with the intention of paying rollback taxes in five years.

Ms. Firehock said that she had two additional questions. She said that there was one parcel in one of the AFDs that was only about two acres in size. She asked why such small parcels were included in an AFD in the first place.

Mr. Van Vranken said that until 2016, parcels were allowed to join a district regardless of size, and in the early days of the program, they were encouraged to do so for the reasons of community building and creating a more contiguous district. He said that this approach aimed to create a more cohesive whole, where neighbors from all sizes of parcels - whether two acres or 200 acres - came together to preserve the community.

Ms. Firehock asked if it was true that being a farm was not necessarily a requirement.

Mr. Van Vranken said that that was right.

Ms. Firehock said that that was really weird, so she appreciated the clarification. She said that she would like to hear from staff what they thought was the primary benefit of a landowner joining a district considering the new policy of subdivision rights. She said that she understood a sense of community was one thing they had mentioned, but she would like to hear what the main reason would be for someone joining a district.

Mr. Van Vranken said that today, assuming someone had development rights and was interested in joining a district, there were a few reasons why they might choose to do so. He said that one reason was to qualify for the open space tax rate. He said that many of the individuals he had spoken to this year and last year, who fell under the agriculture or forestry categories of land use, had mentioned this. He said that the paperwork associated with the land use process was quite burdensome, and it was slightly easier for them to simply become a member of an AFD and qualify for the tax rate.

Mr. Van Vranken said that he believed revalidation was still necessary, but he thought it was a straightforward process that did not require receipts or a harvest. He said that several other reasons existed for this. He said that again, some individuals were motivated by the community aspect and wanted to join their neighbors. He said that others may feel that participating in a district was a way to protect their land they cared about, without committing to a permanent conservation easement or similar program. He said that they were not yet ready to take that step, but they did not want to see their land developed. He said that by joining a district, they could take a halfway step to test the waters, as it were.

Mr. Bivins said that in the past, the AFDs had been used by landowners to prevent development in those contiguous areas and along the districts' boundaries.

Mr. Missel said that he believed Mr. Bivins was referring to the bypass.

Mr. Bivins said that there were actually two bypasses that were proposed but never developed.

Mr. Carrazana asked for clarification regarding the parcels of small acreage mentioned by Ms. Firehock. He asked if the acceptance of those small parcels changed in 2016.

Mr. Van Vranken said that that was correct; a two-acre parcel could not join an AFD now.

Mr. Murray said that there was a single parcel in the Batesville District that was outlined in blue. He asked if that parcel was changing from open space to something else or if it was trying to qualify for something else.

Mr. Van Vranken said that he believed that this parcel was currently ineligible for agriculture or forestry land use. He said that if he recalled correctly, it would be changed back to the fair market tax rate, presumably at the start of the next financial year.

Mr. Murray asked if it would be removed from the district.

Mr. Van Vranken said no; the property would still be located within the district and would continue to qualify for open space designation. He said that due to the change in its tax classification to fair market value in five years' time, when it was removed, it would no longer be subject to rollback taxes.

Mr. Murray said that it did not have any development rights.

Mr. Van Vranken said that that was correct.

Mr. Murray said that he was reviewing the criteria for open space, which stated that properties in Agricultural Forestal Districts under open space agreements that had not yet been removed from these programs under new rules requiring development rights for inclusion would not be qualified in this program if they did not retain additional unused development rights. He said that it appeared that they were delaying the removal of this property, even though it did not have development rights, which seemed to contradict the policy's suggestion of its removal.

Mr. Missel said that they were doing that because of the land use qualification.

Mr. Van Vranken said that as part of the policy implemented in 2018, the Board directed staff, and in this case, they did not to surprise landowners with rollback taxes. He said that instead, they opted to provide a five-year warning period, informing them of the new policy and allowing them time to adjust their tax status accordingly.

Ms. Firehock said that to summarize, all parcels slated for removal did not have development rights, and that was the sole reason for their inclusion on the list. She said that similarly, all parcels remaining in the gray category had development rights and were protected in some way by their location within the AFD.

Mr. Van Vranken said that that was right.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing, noting that this was a single hearing for all three AFD items. Seeing no speakers, he closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not agree with the Board of Supervisors' position that the only reason for parcels to be in these AFDS was if they had development rights. She said that there were other reasons why contiguous farm uses were beneficial. She said that what she found intriguing was that some of these AFD parcels were not actually farming or doing forestry. She said that this seemed unusual, as she had worked with other AFDs in other counties, and they were indeed farms and forestry operations.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought Albemarle may have had different reasons or processes for placing parcels in these districts. She said that therefore, she believed they were now trying to clean up this situation. She said that she must reiterate that she did not support that. She said that however, she must affirm that she worked for the Board of Supervisors and upheld the County's ordinances. She said that despite this, she still supported the recommendations for removing the parcels because they aligned with County policy.

Mr. Murray said that he would suggest they may need legislative fixes to this program, as he believed there were certain properties that should be included in AFDs but did not qualify. He said that the Natural Heritage Committee had long recommended some properties, and he was aware of several that were currently enrolled in conservation programs. He said that he thought it would be a shame if this program were not more narrowly tailored to encourage the conservation programs, they wanted to see in Albemarle County. He said that by doing so, he believed they would gain a lot more value from the program.

Ms. Firehock asked if Mr. Murray was saying that, for example, a parcel with significant conservation value may not have subdivision rights but may have other values.

Mr. Murray said that that was correct. He said that, for example, if they had documentation of activities such as fencing cattle from streams or participating in pollinator habitat programs or other measurable conservation programs, he would like to see that as a qualifying factor for being considered for open space. He said that, legislatively, they were not allowed to do this. He said that however, he believed it was something they should ask about. He said that he would like to see if they could include properties that met these criteria, as he thought they would gain a more measurable benefit from the AFD program.

Ms. Firehock said that that was something that would have to change at the state legislature level.

Mr. Moore said that as he reviewed the agenda for tonight, he felt that the discussion seemed somewhat perfunctory. He said that he believed that the Board policy was fairly clear on this matter. He said that the Commission could weigh in and soapbox a bit, but the process was mostly automatic because the policy had been in place for some years and this was what they did. He said that however, in the interest of soapboxing, he wanted to express his thoughts on this program, not just as a formality, but because he genuinely wanted to understand its purpose.

Mr. Moore said that if the goal was to develop an agricultural economy, he wanted to know how they could improve their current situation, which, as they all knew, was not strong in this area. He said that they could potentially do better with investment, training programs, and support for rural, agricultural economic development. He said that he did not see this program as doing that, so he wondered about the community benefits listed on the slides earlier.

Mr. Missel said that he was aware of concerns regarding land value, how it was represented, and how that impacted County finances. He said that he knew this was one of the reasons the Board was pulling out the parcels lacking development rights. He said that this was done so the County could seek revenue from these parcels that had previously been in the AFDs.

Mr. Van Vranken said that with regards to how land use taxation affected the funding the County received from the state, that was an issue related to conservation easements, not this specific program.

Mr. Missel said that to clarify, land use and the AFDs did not impact the way the state saw the value of the land.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission accept the recommendations for the removals from AFD-2025-00001 Green Mountain AFD. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

AFD-2025-00002 – Nortonsville Local AFD Review

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission accept the recommendations for the removals from AFD-2025-00002 Nortonsville Local AFD. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

AFD-2025-00003 – Batesville AFD Review

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission accept the recommendations for the removals of AFD-2025-00002 Batesville AFD. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

ZMA-2025-00006 – HTC Area C

J.T. Newberry, Planner, said that he would be providing staff's presentation tonight on Hollymead Town Center Area C, ZMA-2025-00006. He said that he would like to begin with an overview of the area. He said that Area C was a section of Hollymead Town Center located behind the Target on Route 29 North. He said that it consisted of nine blocks, with boundaries outlined in red on the provided map. He said that all nine blocks were available for review in the application plan, which was Attachment 5 to the staff report. He said that six of these blocks were fully developed, two were partially developed, and the remaining two were vacant and shaded blue on the map, Block VII and Block IX.

Mr. Newberry said that at a high level, the proposal was to increase the overall number of dwelling units in Area C by 40 units, taking it from 370 units to 410 units. He said that to provide further context, the Places 29 Master Plan land use map shows Block VII and IX indicated by yellow stars in the middle of the map. He said that both of these parcels were designated for commercial mixed use, which required a primary use of retail and commercial service, with secondary uses including residential, office, research and development (R&D), or flex space.

Mr. Newberry said that the Places 29 Master Plan recognized that over time, these commercial-focused areas could eventually be converted to a more mixed-use type of development, such as residential or non-retail uses that could support adjacent centers. He said that the zoning map also showed the subject parcels with yellow stars, and both were zoned Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC). He said that tonight's rezoning proposal did not propose to change the zoning district, but a rezoning was necessary to amend the Code of Development and the proffers.

Mr. Newberry said that specifically, the proposal would reallocate 56 units from Block VII to Block IX. He said that Block IX would then be permitted for residential uses, with a maximum of 96 units. He said that the proposal would also reduce the minimum non-residential square footage from 20,000 square feet in Block IX to zero, without removing the ability to do non-residential uses. He said that in addition to the rezoning, there were other minor changes to the Code of Development summarized on page three of the staff report.

Mr. Newberry said that an important aspect of staff's analysis was the residential rezoning related to affordable housing. He said that the proposal met the policy at the time of approval, and the 56 units proposed to move from Block VII to Block IX would be subject to their prior housing policy at the 15% level, and the new 40 additional units would be subject to the Housing Albemarle policy, which would indicate a 20% affordable requirement. He said that in conclusion, staff determined that this proposal was consistent with the Places 29 Master Plan and had the potential to result in additional affordable housing units being built. He said that at this time, staff had no concerns with the request.

Mr. Carrazana said that he had a question regarding the clarification on the 20% requirement. He said that considering this was a rezoning, he was wondering if the County had any leverage to ask for the full 96 units to be reviewed under the new Housing Albemarle policy.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that the County was not implementing the policy in that way. He said that staff was trying to follow the policy, and with a rezoning there were multiple factors that could be considered, so there may be other reasons why they did not increase or decrease that number.

Mr. Carrazana asked if an application was brought back to the County for a rezoning or other changes, they were still grandfathered under the policy it was originally reviewed under, even if changes were made in the future.

Mr. Barnes said that the way to approach this was to consider rezonings as a change that typically involved increasing square footage for commercial use or allowing more residential units above what was previously approved. He said that this was what they were focusing on. He said that the change they were examining was essentially the increase in units they were trying to apply the new policy to.

Mr. Carrazana said that in this particular case, there was a significant amount of commercial use in the area; however, they were being asked to eliminate the commercial requirement. He said that he was wondering if they should have a future conversation about how they had recently dealt with a number of requests to remove commercial space from developments, some of which would benefit from keeping that commercial zoning for future use. He said that he thought they should consider this as part of how they looked at their Housing Albemarle policy. He said that if a site had been sitting for 10 or 20 years without being developed, and then the developer returned with a new development, the County should have some leverage to use the new policy rather than falling back on the old policy.

Mr. Barnes said that each rezoning had its own distinct set of circumstances. He said that the removal of the commercial square footage was a factor in and of itself. He said that he thought staff had primarily focused on the housing aspect and had not thoroughly assessed whether the reduction in commercial space should have a corresponding impact on the previously zoned dwelling units. He said that in essence, he was trying to say that while the policy generally worked as applied, there were individual factors in each rezoning that needed to be carefully considered by the decision-makers, the Planning Commission, and the Board when evaluating each rezoning individually.

Mr. Missel said that he thought it was a great point. He said that to consider an extreme example, one could imagine a housing development with a zoning designation that allowed for 100 dwelling units, while the remaining area was zoned for commercial use. He said that if the developers wanted to rezone the commercial area to light industrial, they would not automatically apply the new housing standards to the existing residential units. He said that that was essentially what was happening here, but the new residential development was being built with the new housing policy attached.

Mr. Barnes said that he wanted to clarify staff's interpretation of this issue. He said that they were not considering the loss of commercial space as a justification for more affordable housing. He said that while it was possible to argue that this was a valid reason, that was not their perspective when reviewing this request.

Mr. Missel said that the applicant had the right to exceed the County policy on affordability when developing housing units.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to inquire about the traffic impact due to this revised plan. He asked if this took into consideration the impact of Berkmar Drive Extended.

Mr. Newberry said that the applicant may address this in their presentation, but the expectation was that if residential uses were constructed there, there would be fewer overall vehicle trips compared to if it were developed with non-residential uses.

Mr. Barnes said that the extension of that road was actually a current Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) project that was funded, and they were working on it. He said that as for the project, he did not have information on when construction was scheduled to begin, but they were currently in the right-of-way phase. He said that they had made significant progress in the design phase.

Mr. Bivins said that for clarity, he would like to confirm that they were addressing setbacks on page three. He said that it appeared that they were attempting to equalize and modify some of the existing setbacks. He said that he would like to know how the proposed setbacks for the townhouses across the street, the townhouses on this side, and the apartments on another side would compare to the existing properties closest to the sidewalks, in terms of their overall character and feel.

Mr. Newberry said that yes, he expected so.

Mr. Murray said that he was seeking clarification on the current state of pedestrian access in these areas and the condition of the sidewalks and how they connected some of these areas to the commercial area. He said that this was particularly relevant given some of the comments made about this issue.

Mr. Newberry said that the Code of Development required sidewalks throughout Area C, and the applicant may be able to provide more information. He said that at the community meeting, concerns were raised not only within Area C but also across the street to Forest Lakes. He said that staff had taken note of the desire for enhanced pedestrian connectivity between these centers, particularly across Route 29. He said that the sidewalks would effectively fill in and continue the existing pattern of providing sidewalks adjacent to Timberwood, as well as Berkmar and Connor Drive, to connect to the shopping center area.

Mr. Missel asked if there were crosswalks across Route 29 in this area currently.

Mr. Barnes said that no, there were not.

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

Justin Shimp, Shimp Engineering, said that he was joined by his colleague Polina Andreeva, and was here representing Post Office Land Trust, a business that had been active for 97 years and had been working on projects like this for approximately 25 years. He said that he had a brief presentation and would highlight some important points. He said that he would like to start with the question regarding sidewalks. He said that there were missing sidewalks in this area because they had not been developed yet. He said that the original Code of Development required wide,

10-foot sidewalks and pedestrian accommodations. He said that they would fill in when they were developed.

Mr. Shimp said that in terms of the site layout, the parcel across the street, between Timberwood Boulevard and Connor Drive, was expected to become commercial and had undergone various site plans over time. He said that he was not involved in that particular project. He said that the rest of the blocks had developed over time, with the exception of a small area as part of Block III. He said that overall site plan drawing showed the highlighted blocks, along with the Code of Development.

Mr. Shimp said that over time, one could see the anchor development of Target in the bottom left corner, and how Block C had become predominantly residential, with a hotel, and Block I had commercial developments, including Bojangles. He said that they had also included some aerial views of the current development, which showed the urban street front and three- to four-story buildings. He said that the future residential development would be very similar to what had been developed so far in this area.

Mr. Shimp said that in to summarize changes, they were amending Blocks VII and IX. He said that they were redeveloping the site plan for Block VII, which now included 44 units, and were moving the density down to Block IX, which was previously approved. He said that the policy had been treating additions to the baseline density as part of the affordable housing policy. He said that this approach had been consistently applied as part of Housing Albemarle. He said that in this situation, one of the downsides was that going back to a developer and asking them to revisit their 1996 plans and make the units more affordable may not be an effective incentive.

Mr. Shimp said that building fewer units and creating a larger, more expensive unit might be a better option, as it would avoid crossing the higher affordability threshold. He said that this was something to consider when looking at going backwards and may even create the opposite outcome, where fewer units were built due to the increased complexity of revising the zoning and affordable rates. He said that in this case, they were following the existing zoning that allowed for 15% affordable units, and the additional 40 units would meet the 20% threshold at the applicable affordable rates, including 60% and 80% AMI for sale.

Mr. Shimp said that the main change was provided in the uses table, which illustrated the adjustments made and was brought up by the staff. He said that the table outlined the original Code of Development and had been amended several times over the years. He said that the latest amendment simply eliminated the requirement for commercial development on Block IX, allowing for residential units. He said that previously, this was not permitted, and the 96 dwelling units were only possible with this change.

Mr. Shimp said that the Albemarle County 44 Comprehensive Plan, which emphasized the need for increased housing. He said that he did not run the calculations on this, but it appeared that in areas where the Comprehensive Plan recommended 35 dwelling units per acre, but they were nowhere near that level. He said that this was due to the pattern of development, which often involved large commercial sites like Harris Teeter and Target, occupying 15-20 acres of land. He said that to achieve this density, they needed to make up for it elsewhere by building higher-density units, such as condos, which would provide an ownership opportunity for residents. He said that these units would likely be more affordable, and when combined with the existing density, they would create a more efficient land use.

Mr. Shimp said that he would like to bring up the recent AstraZeneca announcement, which he was pleased to hear about. He said that the County had secured a successful project, and he was sure it would employ a significant number of people. He said that the project was approximately three miles from this site, and one of the issues that had been a constant concern was the number of people who lived outside the County and commuted in. He said that creating housing opportunities in close proximity to numerous employment opportunities, particularly one that the County had invested in, made a lot of sense. He said that this was part of their interest in developing this residential area and it was a timely opportunity to build this location.

Mr. Murray said that there was not much being offered for parks and recreation in this area. He said that they had little tot lots and parks scattered throughout the development, so he was wondering if the developer would consider combining all the tot lots into a more significant park out of the same acreage. He said that this would be much more useful.

Mr. Shimp said that yes, this topic had been discussed with staff, and it also came up at the community meeting. He said that there was a requirement for a certain number of tot lots, and he believed they had two left to build in this development. He said that staff may not be aware, but he thought there was an opportunity for them to determine that the two could be combined, still meeting the intent of the original zoning. He said that for example, if they were built side by side, they could be combined to create more useful space while still meeting the code requirements. He said that he thought this was a viable and efficient option. He said that they had not fully calculated the costs, but unless they were told otherwise, they would likely pursue this route.

Mr. Murray said that co-locating with attractively designed bioretention stormwater facilities could potentially create a larger green space that served multiple functions, which he believed would have significant value. He said that he would certainly advocate for this approach and encourage staff to consider it as they reviewed the project.

Mr. Bivins asked if the condos would be townhouses or multifamily condos. He asked what structures they were considering for these two Blocks instead of commercial space.

Mr. Shimp said that there was an opportunity for a traditional condo building, a 32-unit building that was more like an apartment building. He said that what was commonly seen in these projects was a stacked, four-story unit, with the first two floors being owned by one person and another owner on the top two floors. He said that this was a smaller building form, more similar to a townhome, but technically a condo structure.

Mr. Bivins asked if Mr. Shimp could share, if possible, the success they had in bringing individuals or families who qualified for affordable housing to the units they had already developed there.

Mr. Shimp said that he had not been involved with that type of two-over-two product before. He said that in Block II, across the street, they had about 12 or so affordable townhomes. He said that once it got to the marketing and sale phase, he was not involved, but he could confirm they had built about 12 affordable units across the street on Timberwood.

Mr. Bivins asked if Mr. Shimp believed they were able to successfully go to market and maintain their affordable status in that process.

Mr. Shimp said that he knew they went to market as affordable housing. He said that under the old code, there was a provision that after a certain period of time, they would go back to market

value. He said that he could not confirm, but he hoped they were purchased under the affordable rates.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to ask that Mr. Shimp and the developer would consider donating units to the Land Trust in order to provide permanent affordable housing, as opposed to potentially losing their affordability at some point in the future. He said that he did not need an answer but would suggest that be taken into consideration.

Mr. Shimp said that he had worked on several projects where the Land Trust had been involved, and they may be involved in a project like this. He said that they had recently updated their model to allow for a condo-style, two-unit structure, similar to what was proposed here. He said that in the past, he had won projects where the Land Trust acquired townhomes or was donated, and he had found those to be excellent opportunities.

Mr. Bivins said that he understood that the decision to minimize commercial space was a choice, and they were not obligated to have it. He said that he was wondering if they had any insight into market trends regarding commercial space in their community. He asked if Mr. Shimp had any data or information that suggested what was happening in their community with commercial space, and how that might have influenced the developer's decision to request this change.

Mr. Shimp said that he had done very little retail in his business over the past five years or more. He said that the reason for this was that there was sufficient space available that it was not economically viable to build a building and lease it to pay for it. He said that as a result, the rate of rent for commercial retail space had not kept pace with the rate of home prices.

Mr. Shimp said that consequently, it was cheaper for builders to construct townhomes or two-family dwellings, which could be sold and generate a profit. He said that however, building new in that location was not feasible unless there was a specific user who required that space, such as an owner-occupied user or a for-lease space. He said that this was true even in this development, where they still had vacant commercial space and therefore did not need to build more. He said that the market had driven this trend. He said that reflecting on the original plan from 2003, he likely was not familiar with Amazon at that time, but now they delivered to his house every day. He said that over the past 25 years, patterns had changed, and this was just part of the change.

Mr. Murray said that he wanted to follow up on that point. He said that when he looked at development that was being done well, he considered Old Trail as an example. He said that they had been gradually moved out their commercial spaces and incorporating residential units above some of the existing commercial areas. He said that what he found particularly effective about the commercial development they were undertaking was that it met the needs of local residents, rather than catering to big-box stores or generic retail.

Mr. Murray said that instead, it was tailored to the specific needs of the people living in the area. He said that given that the market may not be fully established yet because the people were not there yet, but he wondered if there were ways to design spaces that could be flexible and adaptable, allowing them to transition into commercial use as the area developed, rather than building exclusively residential and later discovering a need for small commercial retail.

Mr. Shimp said that he thought about a building on Rio Road, designed in the form-based code, included tall ceilings and a convertible first-floor space. He said that he thought the reason that

worked well in Old Trail was because the ratio of people to businesses was suitable for local and small businesses, and otherwise they would have to drive farther to larger stores. He said that, however, in this subject site, the ratio of commercial to residential properties was skewed, making it difficult for new retail shops to establish themselves.

Mr. Shimp said that the ratio had changed significantly since the days when businesses could easily pop up in this area. He said that he hoped that would change someday, but he believed they were far from achieving a suitable ratio for this site to support small businesses. He said that Old Trail, on the other hand, was a successful model for how this could be done, and he attributed its success to the ideal ratio of people to businesses.

Mr. Murray said that he encouraged them to think about the long-term implications of their decisions. He said that they had mentioned concerns about running out of space in the County's development area. He said that if they only considered a 20-year timeline and not a 50-year one, they were doing themselves a disservice. He said that as the population grew, he thought they would need to prioritize creating a commercial and residential area that was walkable and served neighborhood functions.

Mr. Moore said that he believed many of the questions he had were addressed. He said that he did see the applicant's point that, in the shadow of a Target and now being referred to as one of their destination centers in the AC44 Plan, the demand for additional commercial space on the ground floor may be relatively soft. He said that this aligned with Mr. Bivins' point that this might be something the Board of Supervisors could take up in the future, specifically exploring the development of a permanently affordable housing stock, which would serve as a secondary market for those in need, but that was beyond the scope of this particular application.

Ms. Firehock said that as they moved towards a more remote work environment, she wondered if the design of these units had taken into account the need for small, private workspaces or office nooks. She asked if there was a different architectural approach being used. She said that as someone who had staff working from home two days a week and lived in apartments in Albemarle County, she was interested in knowing if this shift had influenced the design of these developments.

Mr. Shimp said that they certainly saw that happening, and many of these units were two-bedroom units and often occupied by a couple or a single person, with the extra bedroom serving as additional space. He said that although tangential, he would mention that throughout his career, he had studied traffic patterns as zoning regulations had changed. He said that if they were to review the original traffic study from 2003, he was confident that they would find that the build-out was significantly less traffic than initially planned. He said that the study was conducted before the widespread adoption of remote work, and it assumed that residents would travel to multiple retail shops to access services.

Mr. Shimp said that as a result, the proffers were based on those numbers. He said that however, if they were to examine the data from that time, they would likely find that the impacts were over-calculated, particularly in terms of residential versus commercial development, and this had led to the construction of additional lanes and paving. He said that regarding traffic patterns from 2019 to 2023, according to VDOT's latest numbers, traffic was flat. He said that during the COVID-19 pandemic years, traffic projections had begun to decline and then rebounded to pre-pandemic

levels. He said that their data supported this trend, and VDOT had refused to allow them to use COVID-19 era data due to its skewed nature.

Mr. Missel said that while they were being tangential, he would like to ask Mr. Shimp why he thought they were seeing so much congestion on the roads today in Albemarle County. He said that it appeared that the issue was not universal, and not everyone was overestimating the need for improvements. He said that instead, it seemed that the opposite was true.

Mr. Shimp said that in his opinion, the calculation based on any given number of projected businesses might be less, but they still had a significant number of businesses and people there. He said that the growth would always lead to increased traffic. He said that considering this, he would speculate that if they assumed a certain number of residents, such as 2005, who drove to retail, work, and did not have online shopping, they would project significantly higher traffic counts based on the number of people and businesses there than what they actually saw. He said that therefore, he believed the trend of increased traffic per user there was likely to be a curve that eventually flattened out.

Mr. Missel said that it was interesting to note that despite the various factors he mentioned, such as Amazon deliveries, people working from home, and other factors, the volume of traffic on the roads appeared to have increased beyond the capacity those roads were built for, and the proffers were able to handle.

Mr. Shimp said that was certainly the case. He said that in the case of this development, the proffers were made for this individual development, but if someone in Greene County put in 1,000 new houses and those people commuted to Albemarle, they would see that traffic.

Mr. Missel said that they also had to make assumptions based on background traffic that were also projections in some cases, which were likely projected to be high.

Mr. Bivins said that it related to some of the conversations they had here. He said that part of it was that they could make projections in Albemarle County that worked within their boundaries, but not within the City's boundaries. He said that this created a situation where they had two sets of infrastructure that did not mesh with each other. He said that he thought this was fundamentally the issue they were seeing with the main arteries connecting these two jurisdictions.

Mr. Bivins said that they could go to Greene County, but they were never anticipated to have traffic flow in a way that optimized the flow of traffic. He said that they may recall that the City failed to uphold its part of the deal to have its traffic lights synchronized with the rest. He said that as a result, even if the road was good, the infrastructure issue prevented the flow of traffic in a meaningful way. He said that this went back to his concern that this issue would not be solved until they rethought what these two jurisdictions meant to each other.

Mr. Bivins said that in the same way that people talked about improving transit, they would not make significant changes to the way they moved people around because there was no unified approach. He said that there was no collaboration between the two jurisdictions, and the University of Virginia down the road did not even consider the transportation thinking of the other two jurisdictions. He said that he believed that was the real issue.

Mr. Murray said that in terms of integrating travel and coordinated planning, he found it instructive to examine the site, despite its designation as a town center, and upon reviewing the Strava heat

map, he was struck by the stark contrast between the commercial area and the surrounding pedestrian traffic. He said that the Strava heat map recorded data on walking, running, cycling, and pedestrian traffic, providing a clear picture of where people were moving and where they were not.

Mr. Murray said that as it could be seen, the commercial area was relatively dark on the map, with many dark areas and very limited pedestrian activity, particularly at road crossings. He said that it was particularly noteworthy that a town center, which was intended to be a hub of activity, had such limited pedestrian traffic. He said that he encouraged them to utilize available pedestrian data, as it was indeed shocking to see a town center with such limited movement of users.

Mr. Missel asked if that data was available to the public.

Mr. Murray said that yes, they collected data from various sources, and it was available to the public. He said that also, cell phones collected movement data, which was anonymized and used to analyze pedestrian travel patterns. He said that this could help identify where people were going.

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

Ms. Firehock said that she was pleased to see more housing density coming into the area. She said that, given the high level of commercial activity surrounding this location, it did not make sense to require the applicant to include commercial space when there was no demonstrated market demand for it. She said that it had been vacant for a reason, and the issue was not that there was a lack of commercial space.

Mr. Murray said that he would say there was no demand yet. He said that he believed that Short Pump was what Places 29 aimed to be, both good and bad. He said that there was a significant amount of commercial activity in Short Pump, and as Albemarle's population increased, he believed the potential for commercial development to be viable was there. He said that writing off large areas of the development area as solely residential only was a problem unless they considered the possibility of adaptability.

Mr. Missel said that regarding the applicant's comments, he thought it was important to consider the percentage of residential, commercial, and retail support. He said that the percentages had changed over time, and it appeared that they were shifting more towards residential development, as people were increasingly relying on mail-order services and staying at home more. He said that this shift was leading to a decrease in commercial support and walkable areas.

Mr. missel said that it would be interesting to know the current percentage and compare it to the 2005 data, as well as understand how this change had impacted traffic generation. He said that if the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) manual was being revised to reflect the recent realities, it would be beneficial to know about these changes.

Mr. Clayborne said that along those same lines, he believed that the term "mixed use" may need to be redefined. He said that he thought that a daycare would likely fill up quickly in one of these commercial spaces, given the need for childcare, or co-working areas may take up the ground-floor commercial space. He said that in his opinion, the concept of mixed use was evolving, and

it may take on a different form. He said that he was in full support of this proposal, based on the justifications provided.

Mr. Carrazana said that there were certain areas of the county that were likely to be well-suited for mixed-use development, and the density could allow for smaller shops to be successful. He said that this approach encouraged small businesses, which he believed they should aim to support. He said that when considering the arrival of large companies to Albemarle County, it was clear that residents wanted to live near services and amenities.

Mr. Carrazana said that while they did have a Target here and a few other large stores, there was not a lot, but there were opportunities. He said that there were also opportunities for growth, and if they filled all these areas with single-family homes, they risked creating bedroom communities that lacked access to services. He said that this was a common issue, as seen in many other places, locally and across the country.

Mr. Carrazana said that they could learn from examples where this approach had been successful, such as the Old Trail development. He said that in Crozet, the proximity to commercial areas was fairly accessible. He said that however, on North 29, there was not a lot of access, yet they continued to build these new communities. He said that he thought it was essential to be mindful of this balance and not eliminate commercial development solely for the present. He said that by doing so, they risked losing opportunities for future growth and development, so they needed to be cautious.

Mr. Missel said that he thought the Planning Commission would benefit from having a brief work session or discussion item on their local, regional, and national markets as they related to this discussion.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to note that they had CoStar as a local entity, the leading group that conducted analysis on commercial buildings and other real estate. He said that it would be interesting to explore the possibility of collaborating with them. He said that he would be interested to hear from them about their local market for development. He said that unlike the Richmond suburbs, which had the ability to attract large box stores, he believed their community did not have that same attractive quality. He said that he thought it would be beneficial to discuss what this meant for communities with a business mix like theirs.

Mr. Missel said that Stonefield was another example of a mixed-use development.

Mr. Bivins said that considering what happened in Stonefield, the project's potential failed due to the 2008 economic downturn. He said that he believed they also needed to take into account that investors in their area had a different risk profile compared to those in Richmond. He said that for example, Greystar, an international company, had taken a risk on a property on Old Ivy Road at the right time.

Mr. Bivins said that they had a similar opportunity near Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center (CATEC), but the company ultimately decided to withdraw due to the negative feedback from the community. He said that when considering what was being asked of someone, they saw that national chains were making decisions based on their local market. He said that the Kroger's location had been closed, and the Starbucks in Hollymead had also closed. He said that it was clear that national chains were making decisions based on their local market.

Mr. Bivins said that as Mr. Carrazana had mentioned, the economics were different for local vendors to enter the commercial market. He said that they had seen an example of this with Mudhouse, which had started as a pushcart on the corner of the downtown mall and had since grown into a very successful local enterprise. He said that while they may see some sprouts of commerce in their area due to a different risk profile, he believed it would be challenging to replicate the success seen on the outskirts of Richmond.

Mr. Murray said that he did not necessarily believe they should replicate that.

Mr. Bivins said that if one considered the area of the County around Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, that section worked well because people could walk to the gym, and there were numerous restaurants in the area. He said that in contrast, the side of the street where Nordstrom's used to be was less vibrant, with fewer housing options and less density.

Mr. Bivins said that the idea of integrating housing solutions with commercial ones, particularly with higher-income individuals, provided insight into their local mix. He said that their dispersed mix of incomes, which they had discussed previously, suggested that they were not concentrated in a single jurisdiction, making it challenging for national businesses to sustain themselves.

Mr. Murray said that one of the concerns he had was that, and while he did not have direct experience in building construction, based on his understanding, one of the significant problems was adaptability. He said that if they built an office building, it was not easily convertible into apartments or a restaurant later on. He said that with proper design, it was possible to create buildings that were more adaptable to future changes. He said that he was unsure what they could do to ensure their design standards were flexible enough to accommodate market changes in 20 years, so they were not stuck with a use that no longer made sense.

Mr. Moore said that he agreed they should consider bringing in market study presentation experts, as it would be beneficial for the Commission. He said that he often felt that their conversations lacked concrete data to support their ideas and conclusions. He said that he believed that the demand for housing was high, as was the demand for light industrial. He said that he had been hearing from developers that the demand for commercial properties was currently soft; however, that was similarly just an observation rather than based on concrete data. He said that he thought it would be valuable to analyze more data to better understand the situation and explore ways to build thriving neighborhoods and communities.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00006 Hollymead Town Center, Area C, for the reasons stated in the staff report and discussed at the dais. Mr. Moore seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Committee Reports

Mr. Murray said that the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met, and he believed that everyone had a copy of the resolution that resulted from that meeting. He said that he encouraged everyone to review it, and if anyone had any questions about the resolution, they should reach out to him.

Mr. Missel said that there was a planned CAC group meeting at the end of this month.

Mr. Barnes said that he would need to confirm the exact date, but he believed it was in November.

Mr. Clayborne asked if staff could send that CAC meeting date as a calendar invite for the Commissioners.

Mr. Barnes said that they would be glad to do so.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: October 1, 2025

Mr. Barnes said that this work session was focused on the Comprehensive Plan. He said that the Board had previously held a work session on September 10, 2025, which ran long, and they were unable to complete some chapters. He said that staff worked with the Board to incorporate some of the concerns raised in those chapters into the document, which was presented to the Commission on September 30, 2025, as the final draft.

Mr. Barnes said that with the understanding that they would review the last two chapters the following day, they began a lengthy discussion with the Board regarding those chapters. He said that broadly speaking, the major changes included updates to language regarding the criteria for assessing Development Areas and revisions to the Future Land Use Map, which included changing the designation of the Sweetspot property and the adjacent properties from industrial to light industrial/office/flex.

Mr. Missel said that that was different than the designation requested by the applicant for that property.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, to clarify, the property owner came to the County seeking a community mixed-use designation. He said that the Board, having heard the Commission's input about the process, also listened to the property owner's concerns about the difficulty of attracting tenants and interested parties to develop the property as an industrial site.

Mr. Barnes said that during the meeting, Supervisor McKeel made a motion to change the parcel's designation to industrial/office/flex use, which aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. He said that the Board acted on this and updated the parcel's designation. He said that they also clarified housing data and added several housing-related actions. He said that this aligned with the recommendations the Commission had provided.

Mr. Barnes said that they noted that the Big Moves were not in a priority order; they were not trying to tackle one challenge at a time but rather needed to move on multiple fronts to address the changes that would occur over the next 20-year planning horizon. He said that this meant they needed to tackle multiple issues simultaneously. He said that the Board also incorporated many of the Commission's recommendations, which were detailed in attachment A of the Board packet, which he could send to the Commissioners if they would like.

Ms. Firehock asked if that was a summary of the changes that would be included in the version of the plan that would be voted on tomorrow.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, the list included a significant amount of information that encompassed the changes that the Commission had recommended for approval. He said that some of the Board's recommendations from October 1, 2025, had been combined with others.

Ms. Firehock said that to confirm, everyone was aware of these changes, and they were included in the document.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked if Mr. Barnes could elaborate on the potential changes that may have occurred to allow the applicant to make their own modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Barnes said that to clarify, the Comprehensive Plan currently only suggested that they consider taking action on allowing a citizen-initiated comp plan amendment process. He said that however, it did not actually change the process. He said that the process itself was likely not something that should be detailed in a comprehensive plan, as it was more of a policy document change.

Mr. Barnes said that at the staff level, they had been working diligently to develop a plan, and it had been a busy year for them. He said that they had not yet thoroughly discussed the changes they wanted to bring to the Board in the coming months, specifically about how to implement AC44. He said that however, they had been spending a significant amount of time thinking broadly about what was needed and identifying initiatives. He said that they recognized that one of the things they needed to do was work on updating processes within the Community Development Department, zoning modernization, and other areas.

Mr. Barnes said that one of these processes was the citizen-initiated comprehensive plan amendment. He said that they had the opportunity to discuss this further in a meeting this morning. He said that they aimed to roll out this amendment sooner rather than later, as it made sense to change land use designations during the master planning process so they could adapt to changing market needs. He said that however, they also needed to balance this against Comprehensive Plan amendments that were impractical. He said that staff was currently examining this process and would bring it back to the Board and the Commission in short order.

Mr. Missel asked if citizen-initiated comprehensive plan amendments existed at one point.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, they did. He said that actually, regarding the request Mr. Shimp had brought forward this evening, he had been a planner working on that development application at the time, which was brought forward as a citizen-initiated comprehensive plan amendment. He said that they had actually originally wanted to put a movie theater on one of the parcels being discussed tonight, so it was very interesting how things changed.

Mr. Barnes said that this experience led to the idea of doing a comprehensive plan amendment, particularly since the land was industrially zoned. He said that this led to a more holistic approach, involving all four developers in the area. He said that as a result, they were unwilling to do a zoning amendment on one individual parcel without considering the surrounding area. He said that this process ultimately led to the comprehensive plan amendment, followed by rezonings for that specific area. He said that there was a lot of nuance to this process, and he was not prepared to delve into it in detail tonight. He said that their goal was to develop a flexible process that could accommodate a variety of needs.

Mr. Carrazana said that he would like some more clarification on an issue that the community had been discussing and that they had received emails about. He said that this was regarding the potential process for allowing the Development Area to annex properties. He asked if Mr. Barnes could elaborate on whether that was being incorporated into the AC44 Plan tomorrow or if that was something staff would be developing.

Mr. Barnes said that to clarify, the idea of a citizen-initiated comprehensive plan amendment was multifaceted and could encompass a wide range of possibilities. He said that it could involve changing the designation of a piece of property from one land use to another or modifying maximum densities in certain land use categories. He said that it could also involve altering specific text within the Comprehensive Plan document, which spanned 200 pages.

Mr. Barnes said that the Growth Management Policy was a key component of this amendment. He said that while they had established criteria to guide expansion decisions, the primary focus of the citizen-initiated amendment seemed to be on land use designations. He said that boundary adjustments could also be a consideration.

Mr. Carrazana said that he believed it would be used exactly for that purpose, considering that was the current debate. He said that it seemed like an odd way of going about this, especially since that policy was not reviewed by the Planning Commission. He said that the community did not have an opportunity to publicly review it, either. He said that his question was whether that was being incorporated into the Board's agenda item tomorrow so they could allow it as part of AC44.

Mr. Barnes said that there were two separate processes. He said that one process involved a request for an amendment to the plan after adoption, and the other involved a request for enlargements or reductions in the growth area, which was a specific request made by the Board and included in the plan.

Mr. Carrazana said that that was a change from what they had previously seen. He asked if this change would be outlined in the information that would be sent to the Commission as one of the items that had been updated.

Mr. Barnes said that the items included in the staff report that would be presented to the Board were those that changed on September 30, 2025. He said that the Growth Management Policy component, which he was discussing, had been included in the Plan for months.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was talking about something separate from the land swapping discussion. He said that he was referring to a citizen-initiated process in which someone could request their parcel be added or removed from the Development Area.

Mr. Barnes said that what they were discussing was a procedure that would allow citizens to change the Comp Plan, but that would be something implemented post-adoption. He said that the language he was referring to was something he would bring to them after the fact.

Mr. Carrazana said that he wanted to clarify that point because it was not something that was voted on or discussed during the Commission's conversations.

Mr. Barnes said that it had not been something that had been drafted yet.

Mr. Carrazana asked if it was being adopted by the Board.

Mr. Barnes said that no, it was not being adopted by the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Carrazana said that that was the clarification he was seeking.

Bart Svoboda, Deputy Director of Community Development, said that he wanted to clarify that this was only about developing the policy for the ability to request a hearing before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to determine if it was appropriate, rather than waiting. He said that if they aimed to be responsive to market-driven situations, it may or may not align with the County's desired outcome, similar to the discussions they had tonight about the rezoning. He said that the goal was to provide an opportunity to request a hearing without having to wait four or five years.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was seeking clarification on the timing of this process and whether it would be voted on by the Board tomorrow.

Mr. Barnes said that it was not being voted on by the Board.

Mr. Svoboda said that to the point Mr. Barnes made regarding what was included in the plan, it was specifically the option to develop a policy on this matter. He said that it was essentially an alternative to consider, similar to other options within the Comprehensive Plan that may not work out. He said that they needed to determine the parameters for its success. He said that this part of the discussion and the development of the policy were still to be determined, along with other initiatives and goals they had set within the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Carrazana asked if there would be public hearings and review by the Planning Commission on that policy.

Mr. Svoboda said that an ordinance revision would be required to allow that to occur. He said that an ordinance revision would come before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. He said that he would need to review their current regulations to determine how that process would work, but he believed their current regulation did not permit it. He said that the Zoning Ordinance did not allow it, or there was no provision for applying for such a change under their existing regulations. He said that regulations adopted, reviewed by the Commission, would follow the same path.

Mr. Missel said that he did not see any mention of this in the summary of document changes from the revised September 2025 version.

Mr. Barnes said that the citizen-initiated process would be developed by staff outside of the Comprehensive Plan adoption; the Commission would review that in the coming months.

Mr. Carrazana said that that was what he wanted to clarify. He said that there had been confusion and concern from the public regarding that specific issue in the community, so he wanted to ensure they were all aware of the current status. He said that the Commission had not reviewed any such policy here, so he wanted to be clear on that part.

Mr. Barnes said that they would have that opportunity in the future.

Mr. Missel said that it was only the idea of a policy; it was not the actual policy. He said that the document of all the changes to the Comp Plan were very helpful, and it also included potential changes they decided not to include, as well.

Ms. Shaffer said that regarding the handouts Ms. Overbey left for the Commission, she would scan them and email them to the Commissioners to make sure everyone received a copy.

New Business

There was none.

Old Business

There was none.

Items for follow-up

There were none.

Adjournment

At 7:50 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 28, 2025, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.

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Michael Barnes, Planning Director

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: