Albemarle County Planning Commission
Draft Minutes Regular Meeting
September 9, 2025

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: Luis Carrazana, Vice Chair.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Cameron Langille, Principal Planner; Bart Svoboda, Deputy Director of Community Development; Jodie Filardo, Director of Community Development; Jenny Tevendale, Senior Assistant County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commissions.

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 for a Public Hearing on this agenda

There were none.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried (4-0-2). (Clayborne, Firehock, Missel, and Murray voted aye; Mr. Bivins, and Mr. Moore abstained; Mr. Carrazana was absent)

Mr. Moore said that he abstained from the vote because he was absent from the previous meeting.

Mr. Bivins said that he would also abstain from the vote because he was absent from the previous meeting.

Public Hearing

TA-2025-00002 Structure Height Regulations in Industrial Districts

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that he would be presenting this item to the Commission this evening in place of Mr. Fritz. He said that tonight, they would review a potential zoning text amendment for structure height regulations in industrial districts. He said that the current ordinance had no administrative process to increase the building heights within industrial districts.

Mr. Barnes said that there were two options that did exist. He said that one option was through a variance with the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and in this case, the variance could only be granted under one of two circumstances. He said that the first was that the requirements of the ordinance unnecessarily restricted the utilization of the property or that granting the variance would alleviate a hardship due to the physical condition related to the property. He said that those two circumstances with a new building were very unlikely and hard to provide that type of a variance.

Mr. Barnes said that the second method was only through a rezoning process and usually to a planned district. He said that that was a long process and quite arduous. He said that what they were seeing here was that lots of modern industrial uses often required something that would be higher than 65 feet allowed in the current ordinance's language, which dated back to the 1980s. He said that staff was proposing a zoning text amendment that would allow the Board to grant a special exception to go over the height of 65 feet.

Mr. Barnes said that, typically, the process for a special exception took about 90 days. He said that they had talked with Fire and Rescue about this issue. He said that modern building code regulations handled that; it was not something that they needed to have a larger truck or something like that to deal with. He said that therefore, they did not see any issues with some increased or taller height. He said that the basic purpose was to make sure that they were competitive in industrial applications that might be coming before them to allow for more modern processes.

Mr. Barnes said that what was being suggested for this was for the text that came from Section 26.4, structure height in industrial districts exclusively. He said that what they were talking about modifying was to add the language as authorized by special exception to allow it to be exceed 65 feet. He said that staff had provided a recommended motion for the Commission as well.

Mr. Clayborne asked if Mr. Barnes could elaborate a little bit more about the reasoning for the step back if it goes above 40 feet in an industrial district. He said that it was not like people were frequently really walking by, so there would be less chance of buildings causing a cavern effect or anything like that.

Mr. Barnes said that they did not specifically address step back issues in this particular case. He said that in his time here at the County, they had processed several step back requests for projects He said that they did not move to eliminate the step back requirement in this section. He said that he thought as they did a comprehensive zoning modernization, it would probably be something that they would reassess at that time.

Ms. Firehock said that it that did strike her when she was looking at the proposed text amendment as well, that if it was on an industrial pad, it would already have quite a large buffer between the edge of the building and their property line just by their current code. She said that it seemed like if they were far away from anything and then they had stepped back, it was of little benefit because it did not create human scale.

Ms. Firehock said that they had talked about getting rid of creating some conditions for step backs already in this Commission to try to fix that across the board. She said that it seemed almost silly in an industrial building. She said that perhaps there was a reason for retaining the step back for these cases, and she understood Mr. Barnes did not create this report himself.

Mr. Barnes said that it was not really the focus of what staff was working on. He said that if the Commission felt that change was necessary, staff could forward it to the Board for their consideration. He said that Section 20 did the way the setback worked in industrial districts above 40 feet, it only applied to the front set back, not to the side or rear set back.

Mr. Barnes said that for the front setback, the building went above 40 feet, it required a minimum of 15-foot setback. He said that if the Commission were suggesting to staff, they should reassess that and potentially modify that section before they got to the Board, he would recommend putting that into the Commission's motion as well.

Mr. Missel asked if it depended on whether it was adjacent to non-industrial uses. He said that there might be special conditions where a step back might be appropriate. He said that for example, if it was adjacent to a mixed-use development, perhaps they should consider whether there was enough buffer.

Ms. Firehock said that it would still be pretty far from that boundary.

Mr. Barnes said that this particular section of the ordinance did not differentiate between adjacent properties; it was simply a requirement.

Ms. Firehock, if it was in an industrial zone, it already had hundreds of setbacks. She said that she was not sure exactly how much it was, but it was a significant amount.

Mr. Missel said that if it was adjacent to residential areas, it already had setbacks.

Ms. Firehock said that yes, it would already have substantial setbacks so it would likely not be noticeable if an additional 15 or 40 feet were added.

Mr. Murray said that this would highlight that currently, they only had one classification for industrial that encompassed properties in both rural areas and development areas. He said that if they added this, it would also apply to rural area properties that were designated as industrial.

Mr. Moore said that he had been reading about how clearance heights for industrial buildings had increased significantly over the years. He said that now, 36 feet or even 40 feet or more per floor was not uncommon. He said that he was wondering if staff could elaborate on what modern industrial uses might require such high clearance heights.

Bart Svoboda, Deputy Director of Community Development, said that there could be a number of reasons more height may be necessary. He said that one aspect of this was considering a more vertical approach instead of a horizontal one. He said that as Ms. Firehock had mentioned, being able to consolidate buildings on a site and increasing height while maintaining a greater distance from the property line could be an option. He said that he recalled from his past experience that industrial development was often spread out in a linear fashion, with railroad tracks and various facilities within the buildings.

Mr. Svoboda said that however, with advancements in technology, industries could now be more vertically integrated, from top to bottom, rather than lengthwise. He said that this increased efficiency was part of their ability to be more adaptable within the industrial districts. He said that the proposed change was specifically aimed at the industrial districts, and it was just intended to grant the Board the authority to approve such heigh increases. He said that allowance for these height increases would not be an automatic process.

Ms. Firehock said that they would still need to come in and request approval for the project.

Mr. Svoboda said that yes, they would need to request approval for the project and review it to ensure it met the necessary requirements. He said that special exceptions (SE) could be graded, and special exceptions already accounted for step backs. He said that what this proposal did was simply align the process for height with the existing process for setbacks. He said that in essence, a height that was not listed in the setback chart was still considered a setback, as it was measured from the ground up. He said that they were essentially saying that they wanted to have the option to modify this process, as they had previously missed including it in the chart.

Mr. Moore said that he wanted to clarify that he did not have any issues with the proposal but was just curious.

Mr. Missel said that he was wondering if staff could provide some insight into the frequency of height variance requests over the years. He said that he would imagine that such requests were not particularly common, but he said that he would like to know if there was any data available on the number of requests that had been made and how many had been approved.

Mr. Svoboda said that height variance requests were uncommon, and they typically discussed them in the context of towers. He said that, however, they did have some flexibility with tower heights due to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, which limited the height at which a tower required color coding when the tower reached over a certain height. He said that as a result, they did not have to worry about height variance for those structures. He said that they had a specimen tree and a height standard in place to manage this as well.

Mr. Svoboda said that for other buildings, they had not seen a need for height variance. He said that silos and structures already exceeding 200 feet were exempt from the rural area designation, but they were still subject to a setback requirement of one foot for every foot of height. He said that in the past, they may have underestimated the impact of height on structures, but he said that they now understood the importance of considering this factor in their ordinances.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing and asked if any members of the public wished to speak on this item. Seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Mr. Missel said that in his view, this proposal aligned with their goals of economic development and creating density in development areas. He said that his only question was whether this could potentially have a visual impact, depending on the location. He said that however, he believed that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and entrance corridor guidelines would mitigate this issue. He said that he did not have any concerns with this proposal.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of TA-2025-00002 Structure Height Regulations in Industrial Districts, with the reasons stated in the staff report. Mr. Moore seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Mr. Carrazana was absent)

Public Hearings

ZMA202200002 Seig Property Rezoning

Cameron Langille, Principal Planner, said that tonight he would be providing the Commission with the staff report on ZMA202200002, which was a rezoning known as the Sieg Property Rezoning. He said that specifically, the proposal was to rezone six parcels of land, totaling 62.4 acres, from R-1 Residential and Highway Commercial (HC) to the Neighborhood Model District. He said that because Neighborhood Model District was a planned district, if this was approved, the rezoning would subject the land to the conditions and standards outlined in the application plan and code of development, which were attached to the staff report as Attachments 2 and 3.

Mr. Langille said that additionally, the applicant was requesting to redesignate approximately 5.1 acres of the Preserved Steep Slopes Overlay District to be disturbed, primarily for the installation of new road and utility infrastructure; he would elaborate on this aspect later in his presentation. He said that the parcels in question were located in the southwest corner of the Exit 118 I-64 interchange. He said that immediately to the east, the Virginia Eagle Beverage Distribution Company was situated, while to the west, they had primarily undeveloped or single-family residential properties, as well as forest and mature vegetation.

Mr. Langille said that the properties that would become part of Hedgerow Park in the future were located slightly further west. He said that he had intentionally pointed out the exact parcels with arrows, and for reference, the parcels in question were not part of Hedgerow Park. He said that to the north and northeast, they had the I-64 interchange, with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) salt facility located in the public right-of-way along Route 29.

Mr. Langille said that the surrounding neighborhoods included Sherwood Farms, which accessed Teel Lane to connect to Route 29, and the Redfields neighborhood, which accessed Sunset Avenue Extended to connect to Fifth Street. He said that looking to the north and northeast, they had the Fontaine Research Park, the state police facility, and the children are at the Regent School, as well as the Ragged Mountain Reservoir. He said that there were various surrounding uses in this area, and he would elaborate on these further in his presentation.

Mr. Langille said that the next slide depicted a map with the current zoning of the area, with the subject properties highlighted in blue. He said that one of the properties was zoned R-1

Residential, indicated by the light green color. He said that the red color represented the highway commercial zoning district. He said that of the 62 acres, 43.8 acres were zoned R-1, and 18.6 acres were zoned HC. He said that these properties were subject to four overlay zoning districts, which were listed on the screen.

Mr. Langille said that in terms of what could be developed on these properties by right for residential use, the R-1 property could yield between 43 and 68 dwelling units, depending on the use of bonus factors. He said that the HC zoning district allowed for residential uses but required a special use permit. He said that based on the acreage, the HC district could accommodate between 279 and 373 total units, with the higher number resulting from the use of bonus factors.

Mr. Langille said that the HC district also permitted a wide range of commercial uses, primarily automobile-oriented, such as fast food restaurants, car washes, and general retail. He said that the next slide showed the Comprehensive Plan map, with the subject properties again highlighted in blue. He said that there were three future land use designations that applied, including a regional mixed-use designation, which called for a mixture of residential and retail uses as primary uses. He said that residential units could be up to 34 dwelling units per acre, and must be attached units such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, or multifamily units.

Mr. Langille said that non-residential uses could include commercial retail, commercial service, office uses, and others. He said that secondary uses permitted were auto commercial sales and service, Office, Research & Development, Flex, Light Industrial. He said that green-colored areas were designated as Parks and Green Systems, coinciding with areas of sensitive environmental features, such as the Preserved Steep Slopes Overlay District. He said that the Parks and Green Systems were recommended in the master plan to provide a landscaping buffer in the event of development.

Mr. Langille said that he would like to note that the industrial district applied to two small areas of the R-1-zoned property, totaling approximately 12,000 square feet. He said that he wanted to mention this because the R-1 property had three land use designations. He said that the next slide showed the application plan, which proposed a mixed-use development allowing up to 1,200 dwelling units, with a density of 19.2 units per acre gross or 22.6 net. He said that the proposal included 15% of affordable housing units at 80% AMI, and plans for up to 440,000 square feet of non-residential space, with a maximum.

Mr. Langille said that the application specified that a minimum of 50,000 square feet of non-residential space would be required. He said that he would discuss the allowed uses for that designation in more detail later. He said that everything in this development would be connected to the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) public water and sewer system. He said that the building height would be four stories or 60 feet tall by right, but if a special exception was needed, it could be increased to five stories or 70 feet.

Mr. Langille said that the next slide showed a map of the layout and density, and the block diagram on the left, which was taken from page 10 of Attachment 3, the code of development. He said that the table on the right, Table 7, page 18 of the same attachment, provided more information on the six distinct blocks, which would all allow residential uses. He said that Blocks

5 and 6 did not require non-residential uses, but the unit counts and square footage areas per block were listed in the table.

Mr. Langille said that next, he would discuss transportation. He said that access to the site would be provided through two entrances on Route 29. He said that the northern entrance, located near Gold Eagle Drive, would be a right-in, right-out only. He said that the streets in this image would all be public streets. He said that the southern or western entrance would be a full-access, signalized intersection, allowing left turns in and out. He said that a 10-foot-wide asphalt paved shared use path would be located along the roads inside the development, marked in gold. He said that a star symbol indicated the general area for a centralized transit stop.

Mr. Langille said that finally, the applicant planned to make off-site improvements to the park and ride lot along Teel Lane, marked in purple. He said that the next slide included a larger image, page 4 of the application plan. He said that he would like to note that there would be an at-grade pedestrian crossing where the shared use path connected the north and south sides of Route 29. He said that the applicant would extend the path approximately 900 feet in the northeast direction. He said that a bridge would be built over a section of Moores Creek, located nearby.

Mr. Langille said that according to the code of development, park and ride upgrades would be determined at the site plan stage with VDOT staff and County staff, with a cost equivalent to building 25 to 30 new parking spaces at the park and ride lot. He said that a red star symbol indicated where the new pathway would connect to the existing Moores Creek Greenway Trail. He said that the next slide was from page 24 of the code of development, Figure 6. He said that this map showed the general areas where the applicant planned to provide open space, marked in light green colors.

Mr. Langille said that it also indicated where buffers would be installed along the perimeter of the property, totaling 12.55 acres, which was 20.1% of the total site acreage. 1.3 acres of this open space would be designated as civic space, or outdoor amenity areas, such as pools, playgrounds, and grass fields, as described in the staff report. He said that the buffers varied in width, with a minimum of 30 feet on the south and north sides, and 10 feet on the sides.

Mr. Langille said that the existing vegetation in the right-of-way on the north and east sides was maintained by VDOT and would not be removed as part of this development; this was one of the reasons for the proposed buffer widths. He said that next, he would discuss the preserved slopes. He said that the provided aerial map was from their County's Geographic Information System (GIS), showing the Managed Steep Slopes Overlay District in yellow and the Preserved Steep Slopes Overlay District in light green. He said that preserved steep slopes were associated with sensitive environmental features, such as streams, floodplains, and rivers, and were slopes with a 25% or greater grade.

Mr. Langille said that the overlay district prohibited development on these slopes, except in rare cases where a rezoning was requested. He said that managed slopes, on the other hand, could be disturbed, but were subject to design standards that dictated how grading could be done. He said that the application plan requested the disturbance of 5.1 acres of existing preserved slopes, marked in red, with labels indicating areas one through seven. He said that the staff

report provided a detailed analysis of both managed and preserved slopes, including their characteristics and how they related to the evaluation of these considerations.

Mr. Langille said that aside from the smallest area near the proposed right-in, right-out entrance, none of the other areas being considered for disturbance were associated with a water feature, nor were they located in a Mountain Protection Area or a Conservation Focus Area from the Comprehensive Plan. He said that therefore, they were not officially designated as hillside systems. He said that one of these preserved slopes had been preserved through a prior County action, such as a rezoning that designated them as conservation or preservation areas.

Mr. Langille said that the master plan did identify some preserved slopes on the property to the west, but not those being requested to be disturbed, which were not identified as providing specific value to the entrance corridor. He said that for these reasons, staff was recommending approval of the ZMA. He said that a more detailed analysis was presented in the staff report, which could be discussed during the question and answer period. He said that staff were recommending approval of the ZMA because they believed the positive aspects outweighed the concerns.

Mr. Langille said that this decision was consistent with the land use and density recommendations from the Southern and Western Neighborhoods Master Plan. He said that the proposed application included several transportation improvements that were consistent with the master plan, both on-site and off-site. He said that additionally, the application was subject to the old housing policy, which required 15% of dwelling units to be at 80% Area Median Income (AMI), and the applicant was proposing to meet this requirement.

Mr. Langille said that one concern they did have was that the student enrollments at both Red Hill Elementary and Monticello High School were currently over capacity, and this project would generate a significant number of students at both levels. He said that the applicant had not proposed any measures to offset this impact, and that was staff's main concern with the request.

Mr. Missel asked if the Commissioners had any questions.

Mr. Murray said that currently, the interchange of Interstate 64 at Route 29 was a high traffic area and seemed to be one of the most dangerous. He asked if staff could discuss some of the planned improvements to that intersection and what the ultimate goal was to improve that situation at the intersection.

Mr. Barnes said that VDOT had a project pipeline program that aimed to advance Smart Scale projects in the state. He said that there were a couple of things happening on the northbound side of the interchange, particularly with regards to the left turn onto westbound I-64. He said that that exit would be affected by a Fontaine Avenue project and would be closed, at which point vehicles would be routed through Fontaine Avenue, go over the bridge to go southbound, and then go west. He said that with that being said, the current pipeline process was reviewing the signal put in a few years ago when they closed the ramp for southbound Route 29. He said that the signals had not succeeded in slowing down traffic in the way they had hoped, so they were reconsidering that portion of the interchange. He said that these were the two projects that were addressing issues at that interchange.

Mr. Missel asked if the Fontaine Avenue project had been funded.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, it was funded and would be moving forward.

Mr. Missel asked what the timeline was for the project.

Mr. Barnes said that he was unsure of the specifics, but he knew it would be within the next four or five years, if not sooner.

Ms. Firehock asked if it was correct that trucks would be exiting at the Fontaine ramp instead of turning left at that light, then going underneath the bridge.

Mr. Barnes said that the light was controlling southbound movements, but the Fontaine project would be handling the northbound truck traffic. He said that there would be no left turn heading towards Staunton.

Ms. Firehock said that it seemed like that would cause another backup at the Fontaine exit, which was already congested. She said that although the left-hand side had less traffic than what was going right, they would be shifting the problem to the north. She said that it did not seem to her like that would fix the problem.

Mr. Barnes said that there were other improvements beyond that, including improvements at the Fontaine interchange, in addition to closing that section. He said that the portion of Fontaine underneath the bypass was also being rebuilt, which would provide more capacity to handle the increased traffic.

Mr. Missel asked if there was a dedicated truck lane on Fontaine, which separated that traffic from Fontaine Avenue and the trucks turning.

Mr. Murray said that he knew that VDOT was probably reluctant to make new exits off of I-64, but he was also wondering if there a reason why a new exit could not be made if a significant number of homes were going to be put in this location. He said that he was wondering if a new exit off of I-64 could not be created to access this property, rather than off of Route 29.

Mr. Missel said that he believed it would require an act of Congress to create that new exit.

Mr. Barnes said that he believed it would be difficult to get approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to create a new exit to access this property. He said that it was too close to the interchange for a second exit in this condition. He said that, however, staff did not investigate the possibility as part of this application review.

Mr. Clayborne asked if Mr. Langille could provide more detail on the topography of the site.

Mr. Langille said that the site's topography was evident in the provided image, which also applied to adjacent properties. He said that the hilly nature of the land was a significant factor in the request to redesignate the preserved slopes. He said that it would be challenging, regardless of the proposed use, to install a new driveway entrance or upgrade the existing Gold Eagle Drive without disturbing the slopes. He said that the applicant would be able to provide

more detailed information on their plans for contour lines and other aspects. He said that the image itself clearly illustrated the hilly terrain.

Mr. Moore said that he had a question about the land use map designations for the parcels. He said that currently, they were designated as regional residential, but he believed the AC44 land use map designated them as community mixed use. He said that he wondered if these designations were fairly similar in terms of what they encouraged and did not encourage.

Mr. Barnes said that the regional residential designation was slightly more intensive than the community mixed use designation, but both had mixtures of uses.

Mr. Moore asked if both land uses would allow for a four- or five-story, mini-town type of development.

Mr. Barnes said that another observation he would like to make was that in the 2015 plan, this area was designated as a center for development. He said that in the current version of AC44, this area was no longer identified as an activity center in the new terminology.

Mr. Moore said that he would also like to inquire about the preserved steep slopes. He said that he appreciated the context of conservation priority maps and water feature areas, which helped clarify that these slopes were not part of those designations. He said that he would like to know if the preserved steep slopes on the southern side of the proposal as well as the small narrow sections were naturally occurring or were they the result of previous development and construction.

Mr. Langille said that the small, finger-shaped area appeared to be undisturbed by human activities, but the area adjacent to it, which was within the public right-of-way, may have undergone some disturbance. He said that this area was near Route 29, Moores Creek, and abutted Gold Eagle Drive. He said that while he did not have a civil engineering drawing to support this, it was likely that some disturbance had occurred in this area at some point. He said that the presence of Moores Creek and the natural stream running through it suggested that some of the slope may also be naturally occurring.

Mr. Bivins said that there was Hedgerow Park in one area, where he assumed someone could access the trailhead. He said that across the street, he believed Arrowhead Park was located, which was surrounded by green space along Route 29 and nearby roads. He said that given the abundance of park land in the area and proposed creation of a trailhead, he wondered if they could consider shifting some of the required green space to access the 400-acre area that was currently underutilized.

Mr. Bivins said that this land could be accessed by walking across the street to Arrowhead Park. He said that he was concerned that requiring a significant amount of green space in this area may be unnecessary, given the existing abundance of green spaces in their community. He asked if there was there any possibility of reevaluating the green space requirements and considering shifting it to connect to the other designated green systems.

Mr. Langille said that when considering shifting the green space recommended by the master plan, it was essential to note that the land in question was not within the County's development

area, but rather in the rural area. He said that this meant that the land in Hedgerow was not subject to the master plan's Parks and Green Systems designation, which was where the green space requirements originated.

Mr. Barnes said that about 1.5 acres would contain amenities associated with the site. He asked if Mr. Bivins was suggesting that may not need to be on the site if there was a big park nearby.

Mr. Bivins said that he was asking that in addition to asking this question in the context of their existing resources, Hedgerow Park and Arrowhead Park, which provided an abundance of green space. Given the proximity of these parks, which offered over a thousand acres of green space within a half-mile radius, he was wondering if it would be beneficial to provide more flexibility to the applicant if the project moved forward.

Mr. Bivins said that specifically, he was suggesting that they consider being more lenient with the required green space, perhaps allowing for as little as one acre, in order to give the applicant, the opportunity to think creatively about how to utilize the space. He said that he was wondering if the 1.5 acres within the development was similar to how the County required developers to install sidewalks even if the sidewalks may not be well-used by residents or connect to destinations.

Mr. Langille said that to clarify, the Neighborhood Model District required that 20% of the total site be dedicated to open space or green space. He said that in this case, the 1.3 acres of civic space referenced in the code of development was actually 20.1% of the total site, based on the 12.55 acres. He said that however, he believed there may be an opportunity to make a special exception request to reduce the required green space below 20%; this would require Board approval when evaluating the proposal.

Mr. Missel said that he thought what Mr. Bivins was wondering if they could consider a potential swap, borrowing the green space from the adjacent area.

Mr. Barnes said that upon reviewing the diagram, he noticed that a significant portion of the designated open space was actually consumed by the buffer zone along Route 29, as well as the steep slopes in the front of the site. He said that some of the open space was restricted due to climate and aesthetic considerations, such as the buffer zone along Interstate 64. He said that the 1.3 acres was likely intended for the residents of the site. He said that however, he understood Mr. Bivins' point. He said that additionally, Hedgerow was walkable, but Arrowhead was about five miles down the road from this proposed development.

Mr. Bivins said that considering how often people rode bicycles in the County, five miles was a relatively short distance. He said that his main point was that they had a unique opportunity to bring this park to a development that could include a number of houses. He said that he was aware that some may resist this idea because there was nothing currently there, but he believed it was worth considering.

Mr. Bivins said that the property adjacent to the proposed park, located on Shepherd Hill, was owned by an LLC. He said that it was likely that this LLC would be watching the outcome of this discussion, and potentially, connections could be made between the two properties. He said that however, he was likely getting ahead of himself.

Mr. Barnes would like to clarify that point because the original application did include the parcel in question, whereas the current proposal did not. He said that there was also a discussion at the time regarding the potential for a trailhead closer to Hedgerow, which had since become an opportunity that had changed. He said that as a result, they were presenting the proposal they had before them today.

Mr. Missel asked if there was no access to Hedgerow Park.

Mr. Bivins said that it could connect.

Ms. Firehock said that if it was approved as-is, there would be no connection to Hedgerow.

Mr. Missel said that they could further discuss the potential connection to Hedgerow with the applicant.

Ms. Firehock said that to clarify, when Mr. Langille mentioned earlier that of the preserved slopes on site, only one was associated with a water feature, specifically the one along Moores Creek, and the others did not, and therefore were less important to preserve. She said that under that logic, in the County, they would only be concerned with preserving slopes that have a water feature running through them.

Mr. Langille said that if he made it sound that way, he apologized, because there were seven characteristics of preserved slopes that they considered. He said generally speaking, they looked at preserved slopes that were surrounded or located within a water body, as this was a key factor. He said that additionally, they examined the hillside system, reviewing comprehensive plans, Mountain Protection Areas, and conservation maps that highlighted forested areas with mountainous terrain and diverse ecosystems. He said that these environmental aspects were also taken into account.

Mr. Langille said on this map, notably, none of these areas were in a floodplain, and there were no Water Protection Ordinance (WPO) stream buffers in this vicinity. He said that the proposed disturbance was a relatively small area, approximately 5,000 square feet, and he had to refer to the staff report to confirm that this corner was the only one associated with a water feature. He said that it was essential to consider multiple factors beyond just whether a slope was part of a water feature.

Ms. Firehock said that she did wonder if another factor contributing to the protection of slopes was the potential for accelerated runoff and erosion. She said Moores Creek was an impaired waterway, which had not been mentioned earlier. She said that furthermore, all of those slopes were within the immediate drainage of a state-impaired water body, for which they had developed a total maximum daily load (TMDL) plan to control the number of pollutants.

Ms. Firehock said that as a result, considering the future years of this project, this site would not be eligible for offsite water quality credits, as the water quality at this site was already impaired. She said that she also had another question regarding the calculation of open space. She said that Mr. Langille had mentioned a 20% threshold, but she wanted to confirm that it included all of the buffer along Interstate 64, which was open but not useable. She said that it would provide buffer from the traffic, but people could not recreate in the area. She said that while there were

benefits of open space outside of recreational activities, she was trying to get a sense of how much of the proposed open space would be useable by people.

Mr. Langille said that according to the Zoning Ordinance, when considering what constituted and qualified as open space, the first factor was whether it remained in a natural state. He said that it did not necessarily need to be improved to the extent that people could actively use it for recreational purposes. He said that, however, recreational activities could fall within open space, but it could also be areas that remained undisturbed.

Mr. Langille said that for example, the slope in question currently had a buffer with vegetation, and the proposed plan was to keep it intact if it got disturbed. He said he did not imagine they were planning to do that, as they would need to replant it to restore the buffer. He said that to confirm, yes, the buffers did fall within the 12.55-acre calculation.

Ms. Firehock said that in her reading of their application narrative, it stated that the block locations and road layouts were conceptual, essentially meaning that the entire layout was conceptual. She said she assumed they would maintain the buffer from Route 29 and the buffer along Interstate 64, but it was challenging for her to analyze this layout. She said that normally, an applicant would specify where each block was located and what the road layout would be; however, in this case, they were saying that those were not necessarily the actual locations or road layouts, and that it was conceptual and not proffered.

Mr. Langille said that this was where the Neighborhood Model District got really technical and interesting. He said that within the application plan, the roadway alignment was specified, and that was what would be built. He said that however, it was worth noting that the alignment might shift slightly here and there, but that was the intended design. He said that this was similar to the Brookhill project. He said that within each block, there would be more streets, parking lots, and other travel ways, but the main internal connector roads would be held to a specific design, including the entrances.

Ms. Firehock asked if there was only one conceptual layout for the property.

Mr. Langille said that yes; it was the conceptual image on page 11 of the code of development, which was meant to show one potential way that the overall site could develop.

Mr. Murray asked why the Sieg property was designated Highway Commercial instead of Light Industrial. He asked if anyone knew why it was then designated residential and not Light Industrial. He said that there had definitely been some public discussions about light industrial uses in this space.

Mr. Barnes said that some parcels on the site, including the Sieg property and a few surrounding parcels, were currently zoned Highway Commercial. He said that they had been zoned for a long time, and he did not know the reason behind this designation, but staff could provide that information as a follow-up. He said that the other half of the property was R-1. He said he believed you were referring to the Sweet Spot parcel to the south, which was designated as a regional mixed-use area in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Barnes said that the parcel was located adjacent to the property that was being considered for the Deschutes Brewery, so this parcel was added to the plan in 2015 to support the brewery's expansion needs. He said that at the same time, the planning process also adopted a resolution of intent to study parcels south of the purple area, which extended down to the third crossover. He said that however, the Deschutes Brewery ultimately did not move forward, and the additional plan analysis was dropped. He said that in summary, the red area had been in place for a long time, the purple area was added in 2015, and there were considerations for parcels south of the purple area that never came to fruition.

Mr. Murray said that he appreciated the background information.

Mr. Langille said that there were no rezonings done; only reclassification of Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designations.

Mr. Missel asked if, while it was bumped into the development area, it had no water and sewer service.

Mr. Langille said that they were within the ACSA jurisdictional area for both water and sewer but currently did not have water and sewer lines extended to them. He said this would be addressed as part of this proposed project, provided it advanced to the site plan subdivision plat stage.

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

Ashley Davies with Riverbend Development, said that she was joined by Alan Taylor, Scott Collins, and Carl Hultgren. She said that she believed one of the most interesting aspects of the Sieg site was its location and context. She said that located at the corner of I-64 and Route 29, this site saw up to 56,000 cars pass by daily. She said that it was part of the Samuel Miller Magisterial District, situated close to Charlottesville and the University of Virginia. She said that this site was also a designated mixed-use center and a gateway to the future Hedgerow Park, with potential connections to larger trail networks in the County.

Ms. Davies said that to begin, they would take a step back and look at the site from a broader perspective, then move into more detailed information. She said that within the Samuel Miller Magisterial District, it was notable that this site was the largest land area in the County, yet it had the smallest population density and least commercial activity. She said that she believed that balanced growth in this district could alleviate pressure on other development areas.

Ms. Davies said that she thought this site was an excellent location for economic development and tax base expansion for the County, which in turn could reduce pressure on homeowners and property taxes. She said that by densifying development areas, they could preserve rural land and support climate goals, such as reducing sprawl and protecting green infrastructure. She said that according to the recent Comprehensive Plan, only 7% of the existing Development Area was considered developable. She said that sites like Sieg became crucial in using the development area wisely.

Ms. Davies said that even with this site, the maximum unit count would be over 2,000 units, but they were proposing a maximum of 1,200 units, along with commercial space. She said that this was important, as it allowed them to use the land effectively. She said that in this district, the

median home value was $653,200, $120,000 higher than the overall County median, and primarily composed of single-family homes.

Ms. Davies said that to address this, they were providing multifamily housing options at lower price points at this property. She said that as they could see on the map, they were situated near over 2,200 acres of publicly conserved land, making it a prime location for a future front door to the Hedgerow Park. She said that the site network of shared use paths was also connected to the future trail network, which could lead into the 340-acre Hedgerow Park and the County.

Ms. Davies said that this land had been donated to the County 10 years ago, and there was also a connection across the street to other trail systems. She said that the zoomed-out aerial view gave them an idea of the land area of these park systems. She said that she was surprised to learn that the Ragged Mountain Natural Area extended south of the interstate, making it an incredible opportunity. She said that they could also envision the potential for commuting into Charlottesville and the possibility of connecting this area and the larger trail network in the future. She said that there was a lot in the works, and she believed Sieg played a key role in all of that.

Ms. Davies said that taking a closer look at the site itself, depicted on the slide, were the conceptual block systems. She said that they had a future transit stop here, and the site was divided into two main land uses. She said that to the left, the residential area would be located, with Block 5 likely to be apartments, and Block 6 featuring attached unit styles. She said that she was not showing a specific concept plan this evening, as they had about 20 so far, and there would be 20 more as they responded to market feedback.

Ms. Davies said that their code of development allowed for light industrial uses, so that was an opportunity on the site that they were open to exploring. She said that in Block 4, even though it was a hilly site, the Block 4 area offered some nice large pad areas, providing visibility from the interstate. She said that she believed there were many reasons to support this rezoning. She said that the targeted housing options would appeal to the unmet needs of County residents, located adjacent to the City and UVA.

Ms. Davies said that there was commercial and office space that could foster local employment opportunities and strengthen the County's economic base. She said that she thought the well-positioned neighborhood amenities would enhance the quality of life, build a sense of community, and support transportation options and active recreation. She said that the new traffic signal they were proposing included a pedestrian crossing, improving site and road safety while allowing multimodal access to the site, and the new transit stop, and park and ride facility would advance transit goals and offer sustainable mobility choices.

Ms. Davies said that another zoomed-in image focused on the offsite improvements. She said that one could see the pedestrian crossing where the new traffic light would be installed, near the crossing of Moores Creek, and improvements to the existing County Park and ride lot. She said that they had been working closely with VDOT and County staff for approximately half of the three-and-a-half-year rezoning process. She said that they analyzed five different intersection options for accessing the site and determined that a traffic signal would be warranted for most activities on the site.

Ms. Davies said that they also wanted to de-emphasize the Gold Eagle Drive, which was a safety concern, and focus on the new entrance with the traffic signal, which they determined to be the safest and only feasible option. She said that adding the pedestrian crossing was a great feature, as it was only activated when someone hit the button, so it would not hold up traffic when there were no pedestrians present. She said that she thought it was great that they would have a safe option to get across this busy roadway.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any questions from the Commission for the applicant.

Mr. Moore said that in the code of development, there was a wide range of allowed residences and commercial square footage. He said that he would like to hear what the applicant's proposed emphasis would be in that regard.

Ms. Davies said that it would be a true mix of uses. She said that the orange blocks, for example, would have a high-density residential focus, while the purple blocks would be more commercial in nature. She said that it would provide a variety of options for developers and users, and she thought it was a great approach to meeting the needs of the district. She said that for instance, Block 2 was being considered for a potential gas station site, while Block 1 might be more suitable for a hotel. She said that Block 4 was focused on office opportunities and retail, and Block 3 was geared towards retail use.

Mr. Moore asked if Blocks 5 and 6 would be rentals or homes for sale.

Ms. Davies said that they would be offering both options.

Mr. Moore said that regarding affordable housing, he saw the analysis under the old housing policy for 15% affordable units. He said that in that plan, 15% of the housing units would be affordable to 80% AMI for ten years. He asked if Riverbend had considered the new Housing Albemarle policy, which recommended 20% of homes to meet housing affordability in exchange for property tax credits for the whole property.

Ms. Davies said that they had not done that yet.

Mr. Moore said that he was curious to know if the inclusion of the property tax credit in the revised plan had a positive or negative impact on the overall financial viability.

Ms. Davies said that she would like to take a closer look at that, too.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to clarify the density regulation matrix. He said that to confirm, the matrix allowed for a non-residential space of up to 400,000 square feet and a minimum of 100 dwelling units. He said that he would appreciate some insight into the reasoning behind the range of 50,000 to 440,000 square feet and the minimum of 100 to 1,200 dwelling units. He said that he would like to know the thought process behind these specific numbers.

Ms. Davies said that they had intentionally created a broad range for the density regulation matrix because, in today's uncertain market, it was difficult to predict who would and would not participate in the development process. She said that this site, similar to Brookhill, was expected

to be a long-term project with a complex build-out process, requiring significant infrastructure development.

Ms. Davies said that assuming a large number of big players were interested, the 450,000 square feet of non-residential space would be a starting point. She said that however, as noted, it was challenging to secure commitments before completing the rezoning and site plan processes. She said that she agreed that it was unlikely they would limit the project to just 100 houses, even with the inclusion of apartments, which would likely result in several hundred units.

Mr. Bivins said that in the Brookhill development, they had reduced the amount of commercial space to a fairly modest amount, which was fine, and he appreciated that. He said that with the range provided for this development, he wondered if it would be more helpful to think that it may not be 400,000 square feet of commercial; rather, closer to 150,000 square feet. He said that if that became a reality, he would like to hear what the applicant would consider for the extra space if it was not all used for commercial.

Ms. Davies said that this was the purpose of the flexibility in the density regulation matrix. She said that by setting a range that allowed for a more nuanced approach, they could avoid the need for future rezoning and create a more sustainable development plan. She said that if the actual development were to result in less commercial space, they had considered alternative uses such as senior living facilities and other types of projects that could fill the gap and provide a more balanced and sustainable outcome.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to bring up the historical significance of the old homestead on that property. He asked what the plan was for that interesting structure.

Ms. Davies said that it would be demolished.

Mr. Bivins asked if there was no way it could be incorporated into this development plan so it could be preserved in some way. He said that if it was at all possible, he would recommend the applicant consider whether or not demolition of the structure was absolutely necessary.

Ms. Davies said that what she thought was more unfortunate was that this site was the location of the Bren-Wana Hotel and the Hilltop Hideaway, and she wished that some of that was still present on this site.

Mr. Bivins said that this site was a notable gathering place for African Americans during the time of segregation, and it was also a popular spot for jazz musicians. He said that the Green Book, a well-known resource for African American travelers, even listed this location as a safe haven for those traveling through the area. He said that he believed that acknowledging and honoring this history would not only be a tribute to the past, but also a valuable contribution to their current community's understanding and appreciation of its heritage.

Ms. Davies said that at the very minimum, they would be installing a plaque at the location of where that was. She said that it was, in fact, the first Black-owned hotel in Albemarle County.

Mr. Bivins said that considering the site's history and potential, he thought it would be fantastic to incorporate a band venue and possibly host concerts by local musicians. He said that this could not only enhance the community's cultural offerings but also serve as a unique gathering spot and acknowledgement to the property's past. He said that he would like to discuss this idea further with them, as he believed it could be a great way to revitalize the space.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to explore the possibility of incorporating more affordable housing units into the development. He said that he would like to propose that they consider building out the maximum affordable units, take the tax deduction, and then transfer the properties to an organization like Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) or the County, which would allow them to build a long-term inventory of affordable housing units and support the community's housing needs.

Ms. Davies said that she loved that idea. She said that thus far, they were having a successful partnership with the Piedmont Community Land Trust at Victorian Heights, which was a brand new model they were exploring. She said that she thought it was a great approach to ensure that their future developments prioritized permanent affordability of homes for sale.

Mr. Bivins said that additionally, he would like clarification from the logistics of the Stella Artois truck's transportation along Gold Eagle Drive.

Ms. Davies said that the new arrangement would be an improvement over the current situation. She said that the distributorship's current challenge of navigating across Route 29 and making left turns with 18-wheelers was a significant issue in that regard. She said that the new setup would alleviate that problem by allowing the trucks to come in through the site and utilize the new traffic light with dual left turns, so they could ensure a safer and more efficient delivery process.

Ms. Davies said that she was also pleased that they had been able to find a solution that preserved the full turning movements on Teel Lane, which was a crucial consideration for Sherwood Farms. She said that the fact that the green-T configuration would have cut off their access and compromised VDOT's property was a major concern, and she was glad they had been able to avoid that issue. She said that the new setup, with a right-in, right-out configuration, should provide a safe and convenient solution for the distributorship while also maintaining the integrity of the intersection.

Mr. Murray said that given the significant elevation change and topography in this location, he was curious to know if the applicant had any conceptual ideas of what the development would look like from different vantage points. He said that he would like to know if they had any ideas of what the view would be like as someone was driving on Route 29 or standing in one of the houses across the street, looking up the hillside towards the development.

Ms. Davies said that while she did not have a specific massing diagram to reference, the topography of the site was a significant factor in shaping the design of the development. She said that the use of smaller pods and plantings along the edges of each pod would likely help to soften the visual impact of the development, while also creating a sense of separation between the different areas. She said that by incorporating buffers and replanting along the edges, they hoped to address the issue of visibility and creating a more naturalized look.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to follow up on Ms. Firehock's previous comments regarding the TMDL for Moores Creek. He said that considering the potential location of a gas station next to the creek raised concerns about the risk of petroleum leaks and contamination of the waterway. He said that gas stations were indeed notorious for environmental issues, so he was wondering whether that had been considered.

Ms. Davies said that she would apologize for that suggestion; considering that information, it appeared that a gas station may not be the best use for that portion of the site.

Mr. Murray said that the concerns he had heard regarding this development seemed to center on the amount of potential residential units being proposed. He said that he understood the applicant was asking for some flexibility regarding commercial development, but he was wondering if they would consider capping the total residential units to be developed on this property. He said that this would provide some security to the people who were concerned about the upper end of the potential residential development.

Ms. Davies asked what the specific concerns were about the residential development here.

Mr. Murray said that the concern was about how many people would be living here if this rezoning was granted, as well as the resulting impacts to schools and trip generation.

Ms. Davies said that given the limited development area and statistics about this particular district, she believed that residential and commercial development was needed in this location. She said that several years had been spent studying the traffic exiting the site and working with VDOT and staff to ensure all of the impacts were appropriately handled with the proposed improvements. She said that she thought it was important to get attached product and more affordable product in this part of the County, and she would hate to lose that opportunity.

Mr. Missel said that it sounded like that was a no.

Mr. Murray said that it did sound like a no. He said that he would like to clarify a few points regarding the proposed connection to the commuter parking and potential greenways. He said the greenways did not currently exist.

Ms. Davies said that that was correct. She said that some of the greenways did exist, such as the Rivanna Trail and other shared use paths that were soon to be completed. She said that for the Granger property, they were building a shared use path through it.

Mr. Barnes said that this type of development was meant to provide commercial and residential uses within the development area, and the connections would assist in accessing Hedgerow from the development area in general. He said that there were multiple ways to access different green systems in the surrounding area, but the best way to do so had not yet been established.

Mr. Murray said that they did not have a specific timeline for implementing those connections.

Mr. Barnes said that as part of this rezoning, they had conducted a site walk to identify potential obstacles, including the railroad and interstate crossings. He said that they had referenced the VDOT salt shed at the end of Teel, which was located in the public right-of-way. He said that

there were also two bridges in this area – one bridge was associated with the interchange, and the other was located to the east, spanning the railroad and Moores Creek.

Mr. Barnes said that the eastern bridge had three bays, with the creek in the first bay, the railroad in the second, and a third bay that was open and relatively flat, making it a feasible location for a trail. He said that however, the challenge lay in navigating the Forestry Department property, which required crossing another creek and reaching the Department. He said that while it was technically possible, it was a matter of budget.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wanted to start by acknowledging the challenges of the site and expressing his appreciation for the effort that went into developing the plan. He said that if they could revisit the original plan with block designations, he would like to ask a few questions. He said that specifically, he was curious about the reasoning behind designating Block 5 as residential, given its proximity to the interstate. He said that he was thinking about the noise that this block would be affected by.

Mr. Clayborne said that he appreciated the decision to locate Block 6 internally within the site. He said that he would like to know if the applicant had explored alternative configurations, such as making Block 3 residential instead of Block 5. He asked if the applicant could elaborate on the reasoning behind the designations of each block.

Ms. Davies said that she thought the decision to designate Block 5 as residential, rather than Block 3, was largely due to the site's grading and the ability to accommodate larger pads in certain areas. She said that as one moved up to Block 5 and Block 4, the larger pads became more feasible, but the other blocks were more challenging due to the steep hillside. She said that this required a more incremental approach to development, which may limit the size of the pads in those areas.

Scott Collins, Collins Engineering, said that as Mr. Langille had mentioned during his presentation, there was a significant buffer area within the VDOT right-of-way along the interstate. He said that they had buffering in place along their Block 5 area, which created a substantial distance between the actual interstate and their development, about 100 feet. He said that this buffer zone was similar to what was seen in other street interchanges, such as the one with apartments on the south side, which also featured a similar buffer zone.

Mr. Clayborne said that that was helpful. He said that if they developed towards the upper residential limit, he asked if that may result in adjusting the speed limit on Route 29. He said that currently, it was 55 miles per hour in that area, but with the increased traffic and the proximity of the two signals, he wondered if they should consider reducing the speed limit to 45. He said that this would help mitigate the potential safety risks associated with the increased traffic volume and the close spacing of the signals.

Mr. Collins said that he believed the speed limit on Route 29 would remain the same; the signalization and dual left turns would be implemented to facilitate safe traffic flow in and out of their site, including trucks.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to discuss transportation. She said that she appreciated the inclusion of a bus stop in the site, which was a great amenity. She asked if the applicant had

any feeling with regard to the likelihood of transit service being extended to this new stop. She asked if there had been any conversations with Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) or other transportation providers.

Ms. Davies said that considering the number of units they were proposing, she believed it would be highly likely that the stop would be operative. She said that however, they had not had those specific conversations yet. She said that she thought it was part of a larger County-wide transportation conversation as well, considering the transit stops in Brookhill and other nearby developments. She said that she was very eager to make this a multimodal site.

Ms. Firehock said that it would be beneficial to have those conversations earlier in the process. She said that, however, she understood that it was not within the applicant's control. She said that she wanted to bring up that the bus service may not be available to this development. She said that personally, she was disappointed by the lack of bus service, as they did have it, but it needed serious improvements in reliability and routes. She said that additionally, she wanted to mention the park and ride across the road. She said that she had a difficult time believing someone from this development would use it, so she was wondering if it was meant to mitigate traffic impacts in the general area.

Ms. Davies said that their initial concept had envisioned an interior park and ride lot within the site, but after discussions with the County, they determined that the existing park and ride lot, located across the road, was the most suitable spot for commuters traveling to Richmond or other destinations. She said that with that in mind, they decided to focus on enhancing the existing lot as a nicer amenity, rather than creating a new one.

Ms. Firehock said that next, she would like to discuss housing affordability. She said that 15% of the units would be available at 80% of the area medium income She asked if Ms. Davies could clarify what type of units they were talking about for this affordability measure. She asked if they were discussing rentals, or home occupancy, such as single-family homes or townhouses.

Ms. Davies said that it would apply to both.

Ms. Firehock said that given the range of 100 to 1,200 housing units, it was challenging to determine the exact number of affordable units. She said that additionally, if the majority of the affordable units were rentals, it raised a question: were they truly providing more affordable options for renters, or were they simply offering rentals at a rate that was comparable to the market rate?

Ms. Davies said that she thought there were two key points here. She said that firstly, the median house price in this district highlighted the need for more affordable apartment units, as well as attached units. She said that their conversation with the Board last week brought up the consideration that should run the numbers to determine if this was a viable tool for providing affordable units at 80% AMI. She said that she believed it was essential for them to work together to examine this possibility and see if it was a viable option for their community.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to clarify that the actual number of affordable units they ended up with would depend on the number of units they were building, which was currently unknown. She said that Ms. Davies mentioned that she was considering 15% of units to be

affordable, but she wanted to note that this was based on an older number, not the current target of 20% affordable units.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to clarify how they modeled traffic for the different build-out scenarios. He said that given the range of potential units, from 100 to 1,200, and the corresponding population ranges of 50,000 to 440,000 square feet, they needed to understand how traffic improvements or new intersections would be built relative to the construction on the property. He said that specifically, he would like to know the timing of these infrastructure improvements.

Ms. Davies said that the new intersection would be built in phase one of the development, along with a significant portion of the public roadway on the site, including the uphill section. She said that this phase was heavily infrastructure-heavy, with additional costs for water and sewer infrastructure. She said that their traffic engineer had conducted extensive modeling to ensure that the traffic signal would function at a level of C or better, considering various scenarios, including commercial and residential development.

Ms. Davies said that at the time of the rezoning application, their traffic impact assessment was based on the assumption that the site would develop with additional residential units on the Sweet Spot property. She said that although they did not know the ultimate development of the site, they had accounted for the potential for additional traffic, particularly with the existing road connection to the site.

Mr. Missel asked what built-in assumptions they had regarding background traffic. He said that it was a challenged area at this time, and there had been some deaths due to traffic issues near this interchange. He asked if they had built in improvements that would improve that intersection and then add the potential traffic from this development, or did they base their assumptions on adding traffic to an already-failing system.

Carl Hultgren, Traffic Engineer with Grove Slade, said that to clarify, he would like to explain how they conducted the traffic study a couple of years ago, which had been thoroughly reviewed and approved by VDOT. He said that they began by conducting brand new traffic counts at all the intersections they studied. He said that in this case, they applied a growth rate to the build-out year of the project, based on discussions with VDOT. He said that they then applied a percentage growth rate for several years to estimate future traffic levels.

Mr. Hultgren said that once they had those estimates, they added the traffic from their project into the model to determine the level of improvements needed, including turn lanes and traffic signals. He said that the traffic study included the proposed intersection on Route 29, where they were proposing the traffic signal, as well as other intersections within their study area, including the Gold Eagle Drive-Teel Lane median break, the recently installed signalized intersection at the interchange, and the interchange ramp that would soon allow left turns onto westbound Interstate 64, but would soon be redirected to Fontaine. He said that these were the intersections they studied.

Mr. Missel asked if that was two years ago.

Mr. Hultgren said that their final traffic study was completed in September 2023, and that version was approved by VDOT. He said that prior to that, they had been working on the study for approximately two to three years.

Mr. Missel said that that was helpful. He asked if their assumptions included the left-turn westbound onto Interstate 64.

Mr. Hultgren said that that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked if they had not factored in the Fontaine redirect Mr. Barnes had talked about.

Mr. Hultgren said that they did not study the Fontaine Interchange; that had been reviewed as part of the VDOT project but was not a requirement for this project.

Mr. Missel asked if they based their assessments on full build-out of this property.

Mr. Hultgren said that yes, the traffic study looked at a combination of commercial and residential at a little bit less than full build-out. He said that considering they were unsure of the final unit count, for the purpose of the traffic study, they selected a mix of uses that generated the maximum number of trips, while being conservative. He said that they then determined the improvements needed, assuming a combination of uses that maximized trips, rather than the maximum of one or the other.

Mr. Hultgren said that this approach allowed for flexibility, as they did not know the exact circumstances of each phase of the project. He said that they established a maximum level of trips, which they treated as a trip budget. He said that as long as the project stayed within this budget, established in the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), the improvements remained valid.

Mr. Missel asked if they felt no proffers were necessary because the future build-out was captured in the initial phase of infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Hultgren said that that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked how water and sewer services would physically reach this site.

Mr. Collins said that water and sewer services would be crossing underneath the railroad tracks and then under Route 29, entering the site. He said that from the south, this would provide sewer and one water connection. He said that there was another water line coming down Fontaine Avenue, potentially through a portion of the Regent School property, and would go underneath Route 29 to provide a connection to two separate water tanks. He said that this would create a loop system, which the Service Authority currently lacked, allowing for a redundant connection between the two separate systems.

Mr. Missel asked if they had had preliminary conversations about acquiring easements to make that happen.

Mr. Collins said that they had.

Mr. Missel asked if it seemed workable.

Mr. Collins said that it did.

Mr. Missel said that regarding the path to Hedgerow, there was a piece of land that the applicant did not own. He asked what the plan was to get across that property.

Ms. Davies said that she believed the owners of that property understood the importance of the pathway, and while they did not directly control it, it was an easement that could be requested at any time. She said that if they decided to rezone the property, which they had expressed interest in doing, the pathway would likely be incorporated into the pathway. She said that alternatively, they could ask for the easement or consider condemnation as a last resort. She said that she was glad they were exploring this connection, as she thought the Hedgerow property was a valuable amenity. She said that having a potential gateway to it was exciting, and she thought there were multiple ways to make it work.

Ms. Firehock asked if, in the current code of development, a storage unit development could be developed on this site as part of their allowed uses.

Ms. Davies said that she did believe it was one use that could potentially be allowed.

Ms. Firehock said that she felt it would be a poor use for a pad like that. She said that she just wanted to confirm that a storage facility could be a tenant on this site.

Ms. Davies said that yes, it was listed as a potential use in the code of development. She said that on another note, she was thinking about the Commission's consideration of the 15% affordable units at 80% AMI, and she was wondering if there would be more support for 20% of units at 80% AMI or 10% of units at 80% AMI and 10% of units at 60% AMI.

Mr. Missel said that he believed the applicant would have to come back with a proposal for that.

Mr. Bivins said that he thought it was fair to say the Commission wanted to see more affordable housing.

Ms. Firehock said that it would be better to have more than what the market rate currently provided.

Mr. Missel said that on a different subject, he wanted to clarify that the traffic study had been completed in 2022.

Ms. Davies said that it was approved in 2023.

Mr. Missel said that that was good to know.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to make a comment. He said that while they did have a shortage of residential housing, which was important, he would like to balance that with the fact that they also had a shortage of commercial space. He said that these commercial spaces and

light industrial areas not only provided funding for infrastructure, but they also helped offset the financial losses associated with residential development.

Mr. Murray said that as everyone was aware, studies had shown that they actually lost money on residential projects, but they gained money on commercial and light industrial projects. He said that considering this, he thought this property would be an ideal location for an employer to establish a presence, and he would like to highlight that.

Ms. Davies said that she agreed; the upper section of the site had great potential for employment and light industrial uses.

Mr. Murray said that he was not sure if there was a way to structure this or encourage it, but if a live-work kind of situation could be established where people lived and worked in the same community, that would be ideal. He said that this would eliminate the need for people to commute from the site to Fontaine, which would be impractical.

Ms. Davies said that she agreed and appreciated the comment.

Mr. Moore asked why Mr. Murray thought there was a shortage of commercial space.

Mr. Murray said that if they were discussing office space, he did not think there was a shortage of that. He said that when considering small businesses, he had heard many times from small business owners that the costs associated with leasing even a small space were prohibitively expensive, and many businesses closed or moved because they could not afford a lease. He said that there was definitely unused commercial space in the County, but they were not lowering the prices of leasing them. He said that until those prices came down, they were limited in terms of commercial space in the County.

Mr. Bivins said that when looking at page 15, he did not see any information about the self-storage being a potential use. He said that he hoped this meant it would not be there. He said that they were in a funny situation right now, where a business owner wanted to bring their business to Albemarle County, and one of the things they would ask was, "Can my people get housing there?" He said that if they could not get housing there, they would go somewhere else.

Mr. Bivins said that he thought they had several opportunities right now, many of them under the UVA Foundation, where they were considering what to do with North Fork. He said that there was also the conversation about what would happen with some of the spaces that came up in Woolen Mills. He meant that there were many places that people who had the means to build and put in commercial or research spaces had opportunities. He said that they knew, and he would come back to this because this was one of the things that frustrated him about where they were right now, the property across from the Fifth Street Albemarle County Office Building.

Mr. Bivins said that some of the Planning Commissioners may recall that it was supposed to be one of those places where people with limited means and big ideas could go. He said that apparently there was a dearth of big ideas, as there was certainly no lack of people with limited means, and no one took that on. He said that the other opportunity zone was behind Staples, and he had been repeatedly asked by interested parties about what could be done there. He

said that the end result was always that it would not work because the costs did not allow them to shift the risk.

Mr. Bivins said that the main concern was who held the risk in these scenarios, and if the risk fell mostly or solely on the applicants, it would never get done. He said that the cost of money, when putting risk on top of that, meant it was impossible to achieve. He said that when they made it difficult for an applicant to bring some kind of project, and as his colleague had said, on land that was now harder to develop, that equation about what he could put there became very expensive for them. He said that unless private entities wanted to buy land in order to preserve it, they needed to be able to make this feasible for people who wanted to develop property.

Mr. Bivins said that the reality was, when they had made those decisions on who they could bring here, they often got disappointed because they did not come to fruition as expected. He said that this had happened multiple times with past projects, although not specifically with Riverbend or this development. He said that his original point was about page 15 and the self-storage units, which he did not think were expressly allowed.

Ms. Davies said that she was unsure, as she had not recently reviewed the allowed uses.

Mr. Langille said that self-storage facilities would be allowed, but only in Blocks 1 through 4, not blocks 5 and 6. He said that was on page 16 of the code of development.

Ms. Davies said that they would remove the self-storage use from their list.

Ms. Firehock said that it was important as to what was included on the list.

Ms. Davies said that they were happy to hear any motions the Commission wished to make with regard to removing uses from that list.

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

Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), said that he was here tonight to speak to the County and to the residents of Albemarle County. He said that they had a great relationship with Riverbend, and they had each other's phone numbers. He said that he wanted to talk about a couple of really important priorities that the County itself had identified and needed to follow through on. He said that he was old enough to remember the Deschutes proposition and the idea of using economic development dollars to attract businesses that were well-connected to the community.

Mr. Krebs said that this site was supposed to be an export-oriented location, with greenways connecting to town and to the reservoir and other places. He said that if one squinted, they could still see that. He said that he thought it was crucial for the County to not lose sight of the gigantic investments that were about to happen, just a few miles away, at the UVA Fontaine Research Park, which would be a whole life sciences cluster. He said that businesses needed to locate somewhere. He said that he would highly encourage them to not allow self-storage facilities at this location; they should prioritize job-creating businesses in this location.

Mr. Krebs said that, as it stood now, it was not ideal for residential. He said that he would like to see it become a place that was awesome for residential; however, the greenway connection to Granger, which the PEC fully supported, was still hypothetical. He said that the County really needed to stop pretending that these lines on maps were actual connections and get to work making these connections. He said that he would be coming back to the Board of Supervisors to state the same thing.

Mr. Krebs said that budget discussions were coming up, and the last budget essentially stated that the County did not want to invest money in greenways and to not ask for funding for them. He said that they were the Planning Commission, so they needed to tell the Board that if they wanted to have the kind of community that they wanted to have, projects like this one to really succeed, they needed to actually get busy and get to work. He said that he appreciated all the good work that had been done here, and he looked forward to working with Ms. Davies and her crew to get this place connected. He said that however, they needed to be real and get to work.

Lee Kondor, Rio District, said that he was a member of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) and was aware of the VDOT pipeline study for this area. He said that he had suggested a design to them that would resolve the problem with the southbound traffic on Route 29 that wanted to go eastbound on Interstate 64. He said that as they had mentioned earlier, the original design had a weave distance that was too short, making it dangerous. He said that they tried a traffic light, but that did not work, so now they were back to the drawing board.

Mr. Kondor said that the obvious solution to that problem was to make a longer weave distance. He said that the diagram he had shown them, which simply highlighted the property lines in blue, would only impact the very easternmost tip of Block 4. He said that therefore, his request was that some provision be made in this rezoning effort to accommodate that. He said that it was the only practical and affordable solution to solve that problem. He said that it would provide a quarter mile of weave distance, which was adequate for that situation and the traffic volume present.

Nora Seilhimer said that she was a lifelong resident of Albemarle County and a current resident of southern Albemarle County, she was here to encourage the Commission to recommend denial of this project. She said that placing an intensive development in this isolated location was antithetical to smart growth. She said that it was a car-dependent development that was not the kind of development they should be advancing in Albemarle County. She said that the Route 29/Interstate 64 interchange was currently congested or failing, as they had mentioned, especially during the morning and evening commutes. She said that this project would have a detrimental impact on traffic flow on Route 29 and Interstate 64, making a bad situation even worse.

Ms. Seilhimer said that furthermore, removing this property from the light industrial designation would be a mistake. She said that the property should abide by its current zoning, allowing it to support the County's economic development priorities and the considerable investments expected to cluster around UVA's biomedical research initiatives, which would be located, as they knew, across Interstate 64. She said that she also encouraged the Commission to seriously consider the overcrowding of their school system and how this project would negatively impact the school district.

Lois Wagner said that she lived across the street from this proposed development. She said that and she wanted to have a point of clarification. She said that so she thought Ms. Davies had said that coming out of Overlook Drive across the railroad track, getting ready to turn on Route 29, that they would be able to turn both right on Route 29 to go north or turn left on Route 29 to go south.

Mr. Barnes said that that was correct.

Ms. Wagner said that in the previous meeting she attended, she thought the plan was to not have that, and residents were concerned with that aspect. She asked if vehicles coming south on Route 29, such as an ambulance that needed to reach the housing on Overlook Drive, would be able to turn left, or if they had to go to the traffic light, make a U-turn, and come up.

Mr. Missel said that the applicant would answer these questions after the public comment period.

Reed Forbes said that she lived in Sherwood Farms. She said that she had been there for over 32 years. She said that she did have grave concerns with noise pollution, light pollution, water pollution, traffic, the impact that it would have on the Sherwood Farms community in general, but also for those people traveling north and south on Route 29, and how all of those converged on the failing intersection that they had now. She said that when she came home at 5:00 p.m., 5:15: p.m. in the afternoon from UVA, there was a backup that backed up almost as far as Ivy Road.

Ms. Forbes said that with the addition of a thousand houses or residential units, in there, not to mention commercial that would employ people who were also getting off or were coming to work, she was concerned about the volume of traffic in and out of that development and how that would impact them getting in and out of their neighborhood when these folks were coming home from UVA or wherever they happened to work. She said that it currently was not feasible for them to live and work in the same community; that was a pipe dream for a while anyway.

Ms. Forbes said that a thousand units were not all going to be working at the gas station or the hotel or the restaurants or whatever went into the commercial portion of the development. She said that she had a concern about this closing of the highway. She said that she knew that was not this development, but the truck traffic that was going to have to make a U-turn on Fontaine to head back to get on to I-64 West. She said that as was mentioned, that there was this Fontaine growth that was happening; those trucks were going to back up.

Ms. Forbes said that people were going to try to come off of I-64 westbound to get to Route 29 North and it was going to bottleneck. She said that trucks were going to block people trying to get over. She said that people were going to go to Fifth Street and make a U-turn at Fifth Street to get on 64 West. She said that was mentioned they had the Regent School going in there, so they were going to have truck traffic, they were going to have school drop-off and school pickup traffic. She said that as Ms. Seilhimer mentioned, they had an overpopulated school system and no plan to address that, that she had heard.

Louis DeSobry said that he owned the property right next to the park and ride on Teel Lane. He said that he was obviously concerned about traffic as well. He said that however, what brought

him here tonight was that he saw on the plan that there was going to be a plaque for the Bren-Wana. He said that Edward Jackson was his grandfather, the owner of the Bren-Wana. He said that he would very much like to know what the applicant would intend to put there. He said that he would like to be part of that conversation. He said that he also saw the crosswalk across Route 29, and from his personal viewpoint, he knew he would not want to attempt to cross that area. He said that there was an existing tunnel under Route 29 that potentially may be of use, but he was unsure.

Lily Zhou Tredway said that she was a resident of Sherwood Farm. She said that she compared the proposal from 2022 to the 2025 plan, and the size was about half the size, which was good. She said that however, she compared the development and the residential units, and it was almost the same. She said that that meant it was equally dense or denser with a smaller land mass. She said that she agreed with a few neighbors who had spoken about traffic, how the traffic was already very bad. She said that the school system was jammed. She said she thought they should consider improving the traffic situation before adding any further developments.

Ms. Tredway said that she questioned how they would house 1,100 residential units, plus a congregated care facility, plus office buildings and hotels. She said that they might have 4,000, 5,000 people in and out. She said that she lived there, and it was 10 minutes from her office. She said that the traffic plan that had talked about that research two years ago, and she believed the traffic counts were only estimating one trip there and back per day. She said that she lived there and she went four times a day because it was only 10 minutes from her work.

Ms. Tredway said that many of her neighbors were UVA professors, and because it was five minutes to Fontaine, seven minutes to UVA, they went in and out all day long too because of the school schedules. She said that therefore, traffic was more congested than the written estimates had stated. She said that she thought this was too dense in her opinion. She said that according to the map presented earlier, she was happy to see there was a multi-use path going to the north to the future park and going to the south to Teel Lane somewhere; however, at the moment, it was eight to 10 feet wide, paved, but it was going nowhere. She said that it would only make sense if it was continued to a destination, and otherwise, no one could travel along that proposed pathway.

Mr. Bimji said that he lived across the street at Sherwood Farms. He said that school numbers seemed off, especially with the proposed increase in high-density residential and affordable housing. He said that this would likely lead to more children in the school district, exacerbating the existing overcrowding issues. He said that the traffic concerns, including the already hazardous intersection, were valid. He said that the Fontaine proposal had not worked as well as expected, and he thought it was a concern that should not be dismissed. He said that adding more commercial uses to the site would only increase congestion.

Mr. Bimji said that one issue that had not been discussed was light pollution on a steep slope. He said that the proposed development would not have the same canopy level light pollution as the Dark Skies Initiative aimed to prevent. He said that the elevation gain would reduce the amount of light pollution, which was a key aspect of living in a rural area. He said that the residents across the street would bear the brunt of this if it occurred. He said that the traffic

study must take into account the types of businesses that would be present, including large commercial spaces with varying uses

Mr. Bimji said that additionally, the pedestrian crossing on a 55-mph road seemed like an improbable solution. He said that it was unlikely that people would attempt to cross, especially with trucks already struggling to make turns on that road. He said that a Commissioner had suggested live music and a band shelter as part of this development, but he would contend that this would disrupt the quiet that rural areas were known for. He said that the current zoning allowed for this quiet, and residents wanted to maintain it.

Mr. Bimji said that the Commission had also discussed an increase in commercial space prices, which he believed was likely due to landlord greed, not issues with space available. He said that finally, the abundance of green space in this area was not a mistake; it was a dedicated feature of this part of the County. He said that these green spaces were representative of their County and should not be negated or looked beyond. He said that it was an integral and key aspect of the community south of I-64.

Norma Deal said that she lived in Sherwood Farms. She said that there were several aspects of this application that she did not think were adequately justified in this application and needed more work. She said that, however, she wanted to focus on the proposed crosswalk across Route 29. She said that in her opinion, that was the most concerning aspect. She said that if anyone had ever driven on that road during rush hour, they were aware of the high volume of tractor trailers and the hazardous traffic conditions. She said that even with a blinking crosswalk, she believed it was encouraging potentially deadly traffic collisions with pedestrians. She said that she strongly disagreed with that proposal, and she thought it was one of many issues that needed to be thoroughly addressed.

Suzanne Fox said that she lived further south from this proposed development, and she wanted to reiterate the concerns that had been expressed by the residents here. She said that the traffic was a huge concern for her, as she traveled through that intersection and also commuted from Crozet into Charlottesville. She said that she saw the traffic congestion on I-64 in the morning, backed up both lanes, and it was a daily concern for her.

Ms. Fox said that she had witnessed side-by-side collisions almost happen every morning, and it was alarming. She said that as the owner of a small business with heavy equipment, she worried about the safety of her employees every day when they traveled through those intersections. She said that she was also concerned about the safety of drivers who may not know how to yield properly when entering or exiting the intersection.

Ms. Fox said that the proposed pedestrian crosswalk was particularly appalling, given the speed limit changes to 60 miles per hour right where it would be located, and the fact that nobody drove at that speed on Route 29. She said that speeding was a significant issue in this area. She also said that she had concerns about the connection to the Albemarle County sewer system and the potential strain on the reservoir capacity.

Ms. Fox said that they had already seen the impact of growth in Crozet, with the risk of running out of water in the next 20 years. She said that if this development went forward, she feared it could exacerbate this issue. She said that furthermore, she was concerned about the lack of

discussion on emergency services as part of this application. She said that finally, she was deeply disturbed by the light pollution that had resulted from other recent housing development in this area. She said that as someone who valued the dark sky and the ability to see the stars, she was unsupportive of more developments that reduced the dark skies of the County. She said that she requested the Commission to recommend denial of this rezoning request.

Berend van Roijen, Samuel Miller District, said that despite the need for housing within the County, he would emphasize that the schools in this area were already over capacity. He said that furthermore, as the Board and Commission were well aware, typical residential housing units were a net tax drain on the County. He said that in contrast, commercial and industrial properties were often net tax positive for the County and were viewed as underrepresented in AC44 community surveys.

Mr. van Roijen said that while the proposal was conceptually mixed use, it was non-binding, and the reference to up to 1,200 housing units left open the possibility that this could become another isolated commuter subdivision. He said that he firmly believed that this property was better suited to exclusively light industrial or commercial use, or at the very least, a highly restrictive limited residential cap. He said that the site was located at the corner of two of the busiest, largest throughways in Albemarle County, Route 29 and Interstate 64.

Mr. van Roijen said that if they considered the long-term value of the land and the potential for public utility, public use, and tax revenue, it was clear that these parcels should be used for light commercial or light industrial purposes, rather than overemphasizing residential development due to a short-sighted focus on housing. He said that this lot was completely disconnected from relevant residential infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and maximum transit options. He said that he loved parks, and he had spent the weekend camping, but the illusion of trail connections and proximity to green space was laughable.

Mr. van Roijen said that given the inability to secure an easement during years of design and traffic work, and the impracticality and safety concerns, it was clear that no one would be walking across Interstate 64. He said that they could not get an off-ramp for the housing development, so a pedestrian crosswalk was unlikely to ever happen. He said that as noted, traffic on Route 29 north and southbound, regularly exceeded 60, 70, 80 miles an hour. He said that it was terrible, and he had spoken to Albemarle County Police officers who could attest to the regularity of these speeds.

Mr. van Roijen said that every single trip to a nearby park, school, office building, or grocery store would require a car. He said that he would also add a personal note: he drove past this intersection every day, and as people had noted, the traffic had become significantly worse and more dangerous with the improvements made to the Route 29/Interstate 64 ramp changes. He said that it regularly backed up to Ivy, and what was once an easier drive going northbound had become much more difficult and more dangerous due to the stoplight.

Mr. van Roijen said that he would emphasize that any development, commercial, industrial, residential, or otherwise, must allow for the restoration of the southbound Route 29 ramp to Interstate 64 and the expansion of the I-64 weave, which was noted as a likely solution to the traffic problems they faced. He said that failure to do so risked hemming themselves into broken traffic patterns that cost lives.

Melanie van Roijen said that unlike her husband, she was a transplant to Albemarle County after having lived in multiple large cities around the world. She said that for the last seven years, she had lived in the Samuel Miller District off Route 29, just a couple of miles south of the property under review. She said that she wanted to thank the Commission for the opportunity to speak tonight and for the work on this very complex issue. She said that she was here to express serious concerns about the proposed rezoning of the Seig property.

Ms. Van Roijen said that the scale of this project was enormous, with 1,200 homes and over 400,000 square feet of commercial space. She said that even if it technically fit the Comprehensive Plan's density targets, she questioned whether it truly fit the character and capacity of this part of the County. She said that one of the arguments made in favor of this project was that the Samuel Miller District was the largest land area but had the lowest density and therefore should accommodate more growth.

Ms. Van Roijen said that, however, that overlooked a key reality: size did not equal capacity, especially when the necessary infrastructure simply was not available. She said that yes, the property was technically within the ACSA service area, but utilities had not been extended to this location yet. She said that this meant that this development hinged on major infrastructure investment just to support its most basic needs, including water, sewer, and roads.

Ms. van Roijen said that they had seen in other areas how development could outpace infrastructure, leaving existing residents to deal with the consequences. She said that just outside this project boundary, the homes in the area relied on well water and septic systems, which were increasingly unreliable. She said that there were documented cases of wells running dry or failing entirely in this region. She said that while that may not directly apply to this parcel, it spoke to the fragility of the broader system that would ultimately bear the impacts of this project.

Ms. van Roijen said that the proposed transportation upgrades sounded positive, with transit stops, a multi-use path, and improved intersections; however, they had all seen how infrastructure promises could get delayed or watered down. She said that these improvements needed to be binding and phased clearly, not just included in concept. She said that in addition to infrastructure issues, the strain on schools was undeniable.

Ms. van Roijen said that the staff report projected more than 200 new students, but both Red Hill Elementary and Monticello High were already over capacity, with no expansion plan in place that would directly impact educational quality for current and future students. She said that environmentally, this project would disturb over 220,000 square feet of preserved steep slopes. She said that that was not a small adjustment; it was a major intervention into sensitive land.

Ms. van Roijen said that she did appreciate the gesture of honoring the historic Bren-Wana Jazz Club and hoped that more than just the installation of a plaque be done to commemorate the location. She said that however, even then, that cultural recognition did not offset the broader issues with scale, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability of this proposal. She said that for all these reasons, she respectfully asked the Commission to recommend denial of this rezoning, or at the very least insist on significantly scaled-down density, enforceable infrastructure timelines and guarantees, and clearer accountability for impacts to schools and the environment.

Mr. Missel asked if the applicant had a response to the comments from the public.

Ms. Davies said that she would like to remind everyone that their proposal, as submitted, was perfectly in line with the Comprehensive Plan, which was one of the main points being considered tonight. She said that they were in the development area, and as they had discussed earlier, the development parcels in the past had not been developed to their full potential. She said that this was one that absolutely needed to be developed to its full potential.

Ms. Davies said that the reason why it was mixed-use to match the Comprehensive Plan. She said that they had spent years working on the traffic with VDOT and staff. She said that she thought when you had a mix of uses, it did allow for trips both within the site and gave a different traffic pattern. She said that not everyone was coming and leaving the site at the same time. She said that also, they studied traffic for the future years, so their analysis was not only based on current activity.

Ms. Davies said that regarding Teel Lane, of the current movements turning left out of the site or into the site, those remained open. She said that that was a major change that they had completed about midway through the review cycle when they added the traffic signal. She said that she also did want to also mention schools, since that had come up several times in the conversation. She said that for this area, yes, there would be students added to the school population.

Ms. Davies said that she just wanted to quote staff from 2023. She said that per recent rezonings and board discussions on schools and rezonings, the Board of Supervisors had acknowledged that school capacity issues were an Albemarle County discussion and not an issue that needed to be solved by individual rezoning applications. She said that furthermore, over the past 10 to 15 years, several properties had been dedicated to Albemarle County for new elementary and high school sites from them specifically and others.

Ms. Davies said that however, Albemarle County had not yet moved forward with the construction of these new facilities, but it did continue to expand its existing schools. She said that there was also the recently proposed alternative potential high schools that were underway. She said that they recognized this was an overarching issue. She said that she thought as developers, they were trying to do their part to solve it. She said that at some point they did need to construct some new schools, but developers could only be a certain part of that partnership.

Ms. Davies said that she did not think they had discussed the fact that this site was an entrance corridor. She said that therefore, there would be an additional layer of review; they would absolutely be following Dark Skies and the Lighting Ordinance. She said that they would do everything that they could to make sure that that was not impactful to the surrounding areas. She said that for the utility extension discussion, that was all on the developer. She said that she just wanted to be clear that that was not something that was on the County or on the Service Authority; the developer would be paying millions of dollars for those utility upgrades to the site so as to not have additional impacts to the surrounding area.

Ms. Davies said that regarding the plaque, she would love to work with the gentleman who came up and mentioned his relative, and they would also be working with County staff to ensure

that the language of the plaque was correct and appropriate for that. She said that she had heard a lot about the crosswalk, and as she said earlier, the signal, signalization of the site did create a really safe situation for the big trucks from the distributorship and other cars coming in and out of the site. She said that it would be a signalized crosswalk, but whether someone chose to cross there was up to them. She said that this was also suggested by the County in order to facilitate access to Hedgerow Park and commuter traffic into the City.

Mr. Clayborne asked if Ms. Davies could review the anticipated timeline of development for phasing, like phase one, phase two, phase three, to the full build-out.

Ms. Davies said that ideally, the rezoning would be approved towards the end of this year, then they would enter the site planning phase with county staff, which could take up to a year. She said that they would likely be under construction late 2026, potentially to start phase one construction. She said that with that, they would be putting in the traffic signal, the multi-use path, the updated park and ride facility, and at a minimum, they would get this road all the way up the hillside here.

Ms. Davies said that they would have to also do all the lower connections into the existing distributorship, so a lot of the public improvements were actually going in in phase one. She said that exactly how many phases of development there would be, she could not say, but she could say that she thought this was at least a 10-year build out for the whole site. She said that if they thought about Brookhill being a 20-year build out, this was going to be 10 years at least for the whole site.

Mr. Clayborne asked at what point the first building would be complete.

Ms. Davies said that they were projecting that Block 5 and probably Block 4 would be some of the first development, likely to be completed within four years.

Recess

The Planning Commission recessed at 8:40 p.m. and reconvened at 8:45 p.m.

Mr. Missel asked if the Planning Commission had any further discussion on ZMA202200002.

Mr. Bivins said that he was conscious of the fact that many of the decisions they had to make now were about the availability of property in Albemarle County. He said that the focus was on the remaining property, which was what they were making decisions about now. He said that this particular property had had many ideas floated through it, but none had come to fruition.

Mr. Bivins said that he was supportive of this project because he believed it was in a location that would help spread out some of the density, they were having trouble within other parts of the County. He said that they did not have much land, and they were aware that if they looked at the projects on Route 29, they had the Brookhill project and the Ashwood project across the road, and then there was the issue of North Point and the potential for the foundation.

Mr. Bivins said that what was happening was they were pushing all this development up north of town, and they were not giving an opportunity to have a balanced or rounded set of housing

opportunities in the County. He said that if they could achieve that, he thought they could be more effective in balancing traffic in and out of the urban ring; so, he was in favor of this project. He said that he wished the property next door had been available, as it once was, because he thought it had the potential to do something with that density; however, he digressed.

Mr. Bivins said that another thing he would like to mention was that when he looked at the idea of crossing Route 29, he lived in a place where people were losing their lives systematically until the County and VDOT put in a crosswalk. He said that the simple thing about timing the Hydraulic Road crossing over Route 29, had resulted in fatalities dropping dramatically there. He said that he would hope that if this was a managed crosswalk, they would see people not trying to dash across and risk colliding with trucks, but they would see a more approachable approach to that, so he thought it would be a good solution.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to move to the idea that when they looked at projects that had popped up in places that received a lot of concern, such as Avon Street Extended, the projects that came out beyond the way towards Biscuit Run. He said that they saw the projects that came out, including the one on Brookhill, which was now being integrated. He said that he thought it had made some good improvements there, allowing traffic to move quickly and balancing the way people came in and out of the community. He said that he also thought the work being done on Fifth Street Extended, around Southwood, and the new community there was integrating well into the traffic plan coming down and up Fifth Street.

Mr. Bivins said that there were still some challenges, and the county was working with VDOT to improve the flow. He said that hopefully, the government in Richmond would not veto bills when they came to Charlottesville, and that hopefully would change in November. He said that as he saw these things, he knew it was hard to be in that place and appreciate the traffic situation, but he was seeing that once they got those kinds of situations, the County and VDOT were actually very interested in making things better. He said that he had been involved in wrestling with some of these issues on committees, and he had seen how seriously and creatively they approached finding solutions, so he had faith that would happen.

Mr. Bivins said that one thing he was concerned about was that they still looked at projects today and their impact on the current school system. He said that he had said this before, they needed to figure out how to do that, so they did not upset people because this project was probably not going to have a significant impact until eight years from now at the earliest. He said that they had figure out how to have that conversation so that they were not always pushing the school button when there was no way for that to actually be realized for the data they had.

Mr. Bivins said that additionally, the Samuel Miller District would take over the majority of the land in Albemarle County if they did not find ways to bring people to live there comfortably, and that could result in 80% of the land being allocated to Samuel Miller during the next census for the redistribution of districts.

Mr. Bivins said that as someone who lived in the Jack Jouett District, which had the most income disparity in Albemarle County, he had to say that in conversations with people who lived in the Samuel Miller District, they seemed to think it was okay to take the houses that helped them achieve economic balance. He said that if they did not accept developments such as this, Jack Jouett District would become the poorest district in Albemarle County, the most diverse,

and would always be viewed as needing help. He said that it was simply wrong to sacrifice a group of people because one part of their community was suited for development, housing, and was resistant to change.

Mr. Bivins said that there were consequences that would flow across all the other districts if they did not attempt to be balanced in their approach. He said that considering the totality of what this development would bring and the totality of the response of the community in terms of integrating this development into it, he was supportive of the rezoning request.

Mr. Moore said that they knew they needed more homes in Albemarle, and they knew that many people who worked there for a living could not afford to live there. He said that they knew that they had to move to Greene or Fluvanna or Waynesboro to afford a home where they could live a dignified life and on their own. He said that this project had a modest amount of affordable housing, but the housing market was an ecosystem.

Mr. Moore said that when new homes were built, people with good salaries could move into the nice new homes, and then their existing homes became available for people with lower incomes to move into, and so on. He said that market solutions were not going to be sufficient on their own to address the need for affordable housing, but they were a key factor in addressing the issue. He said that Albemarle County already had a development area that was probably too small, and he would argue that more than 1/20 of their land should be open to growth.

Mr. Moore said that regardless, this proposal was actually within the existing growth area, so it was not even relevant. He said that of course, that development still needed to be done conscientiously and wisely and smartly. He said that this was exactly the land that County leaders 45 years ago had decided should be a focus for their growth. He said that they lived in a growing metro area, and it was an attractive place to live; people wanted to move there. He said that there had been some conversation earlier about maybe putting a lower cap on residential development.

Mr. Moore said that he would actually prefer to see this not have a low cap on residential. He said that he would love to see a small town with its own neighborhood services, commercial areas, and civic amenities. He said that 1,000 or 1,200 homes was a significant number, and that was enough to support local businesses, cafes, shops, and community events. He said that greenways were nice, but to him, it was actually far more important to have places to gather, places to know neighbors, and places of belonging. He said that moving from the site itself, he would like to talk about traffic because that was perhaps the biggest issue that he had heard from their audience today, and also one that he sympathized with.

Mr. Moore said that he actually lived on Overlook Drive when he first moved to town back in 2011, so he knew that intersection very well. He said that when coming home, driving south from the City, crossing 29 onto Teel Lane was tough. He said that northbound traffic was flying, and he agreed it was like playing Frogger. he said that what he had not heard was what actually would likely come true, and that was that this project could very well improve the situation of turning left onto Teel Lane.

Mr. Moore said that the reason for that was that if they had a traffic light just a little further south, people would be stopped at it, creating openings where one could make that left turn quite

safely. He said that similarly, when one was coming out of Teel Lane, coming down from Overlook, turning right up north, it would actually improve that situation as well. He said that the same reason applied: a traffic light just a little further down would create openings where you could make that right turn safely.

Mr. Moore said that he used to have frequent occasions to go from Carrsbrook onto Route 29 North. He said that he had noticed that when the light at Goodwill turned red, it was great to have an opening where he could make that right turn. He said that he also wanted to talk about the southbound traffic on Route 29 South. He said that Lee Kondor had been here earlier, and he was also on the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee. He said that he had given some honest feedback to the VDOT representative about the terrible left turn lane on I-64.

Mr. Moore said that everyone knew how frustrating it was during peak hours, with traffic backing up a quarter mile or half mile in the left lane. He said that the rise in the road made it difficult for drivers to see cars in the rear end, and he had even seen two rear-ended accidents in the same day, separated by a few hours. He said that the thing about this proposal was that they were talking about residents who would be using the right lane of Route 29 South, just to safely drive home and then turn into their neighborhood; this was not the same as the traffic clogging up the left lane trying to turn onto I-64 East.

Mr. Moore said that this proposal did not have everything they would like to see; it did not have all the trail interconnections or bus stops yet, because it had not been built yet. He said that at the same time, he thought they ought to zoom out and focus on planning for what was possible for the County. He said that they wanted to be a place that met people's needs, in this case, providing housing and community where people could live a connected and dignified life. He said that they then they could grow their schools, bus service, and greenway connections to meet those needs. He said that cities and metros were dynamic places, and they were good when they were vibrant and evolving.

Ms. Firehock said that she was leaning towards a no, but had not heard from everyone yet, so that was just a lean. She said that she was known to change her mind, but that was her current leaning. She said that to clarify, she did think this site should be developed, and she had no objections to the developer who was proposing this development. She said that her greatest concern was with the proposal itself because she did not know if she would be voting for 100 units of housing or 1,200 units or housing, or 50,000 square feet of commercial or 440,000 square feet.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not necessarily have issues with these numbers, but she could not accurately assess the proposal because it was so vague there may as well be no numbers associated whatsoever. She said that somewhere in the scenario building for the traffic was someone's thought for what it was likely to be, but she could not vote in support of this because she did not know what she would actually be voting for.

Ms. Firehock said that the second concern she had was that she thought the proposal needed more commercial. She said that however, she could attest that what happened with most of these projects when they gave them a range was that the County got the maximum residential and the minimum commercial, or the developer came back and asked to get rid of the

commercial entirely. She said that if that was the case, they should be honest about this being a big housing development and nothing more.

Ms. Firehock said that without the application clearly stating one way or the other, she could not assess what the proposal before the Commission was. She said that her third concern was the current poor traffic performance. She said that she understood that greater queuing space might be provided by this truck turn that was going to go into Fontaine turn around and come back down and then go west, but she did not understand why VDOT could not get this right.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not have faith in that proposal, and she said that as had someone who had to drive through that intersection every single day of the week for the past 14 years, so she did know it well, going both directions. She said that additionally, she was unconvinced of the viability of the pedestrian connections. She said that she had looked at this quite a lot herself, and she was not convinced that they could be made. She said that it was also not accessible to Hedgerow Park.

Ms. Firehock said that she thought it was a point well made by Mr. Bivins that they should not go to great lengths to make a big outdoor nature space in the middle of this when they could just go next door; however, she also had no idea what the entity that owned the property next door had in mind for that site either. She said that perhaps maybe they were waiting for this to develop; they really did not know. She said that she would also prefer a more sensitive design that preserved the steep slopes on site because it was in the watershed of an impaired river.

Ms. Firehock said that in summary, she would still say her number one objection was that she did not know what she was voting for. She said that she was wholly supportive of affordable housing, but frankly, they were not getting very much affordable housing. She said that on the high end of the range, they would be getting 100 affordable units, but on the lowest end, it could be as few as 15 units, and based on the application, she had no idea what it would be.

Ms. Firehock said that she would be glad to provide maximum flexibility and recognized the market conditions may have their own complexities that affected this development, but she could not really evaluate the ultimate impact of this site. She said that however, she believed the site should be developed and would recommend an even mix of commercial and residential.

Mr. Murray said that he remembered back when they had the discussion about the managed slopes and preserved slopes and the deal that was sort of brokered between the environmental community and the development community at that time and the sort of discussions that took place. He said that the idea was that waivers for critical slopes had been handed out like Halloween candy, and there was support for preserved slopes if they were really preserved.

Mr. Murray said that he did not want to get to the point again, where they were just handing out waivers without a second thought to preserved slopes, where it became just a standard thing they were developing on them. He said that he thought it made sense that if those were going to be developed, that there should be some give and take there in terms of environmentally sensitive design, that there would be some commitments to sustainable design and the process.

Mr. Murray said that he certainly heard the concerns that people had about affordability, and in a perfect world, he would love to see something someday where someone would actually

dedicate housing to the people that were working at the businesses that lived in the neighborhood. He said that he was unsure if they would ever see a proposal like that, but he would definitely like to get to a point where people could afford to live in the same place that they worked.

Mr. Murray said that he had grave concerns about the traffic in this area. He said that his personal experience of driving to get to Fontaine and to get to UVA had been horrible. He said that there were almost daily accidents among commuters, and he worried about adding to that dangerous situation without identifying comprehensive solutions. He said that he liked the idea of the proposed greenway connections, but as currently proposed, they led to nowhere. He said that a lot of those connections were contingent on the County, and he agreed they needed to be actual connections rather than future ideas they put on a map.

Mr. Murray said that right now, this development would be very disconnected and without the potential future connections, it would be only accessibly by car, despite being so close to the City. He said that he perhaps would have a different perspective if someone could easily walk, run, or bike to somewhere in the City.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wanted to thank the members of the public for coming to tonight's meeting and voicing their concerns, and he wanted them to know that the Commission was taking them into consideration. He said that he agreed with Mr. Bivins that they had to be future-focused in their consideration of this development as they were looking at a full build-out of 10 years. He said that in his time on the Commission, they always grappled with infrastructure versus development.

Mr. Clayborne said that the infrastructure was rarely ever already at a site before the development was, except for rare, lucky cases. He said that he thought they should be considering whether the roads and school capacity could be improved enough for this development in 10 years. He said that the Comprehensive Plan had zoned this land for a reason, and this proposal had acknowledged that. He said that he agreed that the traffic situation in this area had gotten worse over time, and he would ask the applicant to consider whether speed limits should be reduced in the future.

Mr. Clayborne said that if they were considering shutting down a development due to existing conditions, he thought they needed to talk about it more. He said that adding a traffic signal and crosswalk were positive improvements in that respect. He said that he understood the concern about the greenways not leading to destinations, but he also thought they should at least start the process of developing them instead of giving up entirely. He said that in that respect, he was supportive of the proposed connections.

Mr. Clayborne said that finally, the Route 29/Interstate 64 interchange was ripe for commercial development, and acknowledging the wide range of units proposed was vague, he felt the location may dictate the ultimate uses in this development. He said that with these considerations, he would likely be voting in favor of this proposal.

Mr. Missel said that he had been generally supportive of fully developing out their development area in the County; however, this site had some issues that gave him pause. He said that while this was in the development area, there was currently no water and sewer to the area, and that

would need to be brought to the site at the cost of the developer. He said that there were opportunities for pedestrian connections, but he shared many of the concerns raised, which related to the reality of those connections being established and the timeline associated.

Mr. Missel said that he was fully supportive of strengthening their economic development opportunities, and this site was originally envisioned for light industrial and highway commercial, which seemed reasonable. He said that he agreed there was a significant need for housing, but he was not convinced this was where it should be. He said that in the previous Comprehensive Plan, this was designated as regional mixed use, and this insinuated it was an intersection with opportunities for commercial uses that interstate travelers to access.

Mr. Missel said that this area was part of his commute every day, and everyone agreed that it was a horrible experience. He said that he assumed the reason it had taken so long to make improvements to the roads was due to budgetary constraints. He said that the current traffic patterns were overly congested to the point it became dangerous. He said that he appreciated the applicant reading the statement regarding impacts to schools, and while he agreed, the schools were all overcrowded, and the County needed to focus seriously on addressing it.

Mr. Missel said that the walkability seemed unrealistic, and disturbing 22,000 square feet of critical slopes was also concerning to him. He said that the preserved open space was also more critical slopes, and while he understood the developer's logic behind it, he would not categorize that space as being dedicated to residents. He said that regarding affordable housing, he appreciated the applicant's comments; however, it was an afterthought. He said that regarding the County's considerations on this topic, he was surprised it was not more of a focus, and the applicant had done this in the past, so he was disappointed.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed with another Commissioner that this development was disconnected and the pedestrian connections seemed forced. He said that the traffic and vehicular circulation was a major impact. He said that he was unsure, even with a signalized crossing, how people could get across Route 29 at the speed that traffic was moving. He said that finally, he agreed with Ms. Firehock that the uncertainty of the range the applicant had provided was of serious concern.

Mr. Missel said that flexibility was part of all rezonings the Commission considered, but the range given was extremely wide and significantly impactful in terms of transportation and adjacencies. He said that based on the uses as described in the application and reasons he just stated, he would not be able to support the request.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to name walkability a red herring. He said that there was no newer collection of communities that had been built, which had been subjected to that level of scrutiny for a yes or no.

Mr. Missel said that he would also say that there were not a lot of communities that were as isolated by interstates as this one.

Ms. Firehock said that the applicant had greatly emphasized the walkability.

Mr. Bivins said that the applicant was attempting to read the panel and sort of put their things before them that they thought would help them move to a yes or a no. He said that from the perspective of the Commission, he thought that they often used multimodal connections to things as a way to perhaps lift a project to a different level of scrutiny than they would have maybe five years ago.

Mr. Bivins said that he just wanted to be careful that they did not weigh projects with characteristics that they were not consistent with in other places. He said that he thought everybody should be aware that there was a Regional Transit Authority that was being incorporated, so the ability to have transportation in places that would not naturally have transportation would actually have a different approach to it in some short amount of time.

Ms. Bivins said that it was not like it was before where there had to be an extraordinary deep negotiation with the officials at CAT and to be ready to sort of put up a bunch of money to sort of try stuff. He said that he thought they were moving away from that stance as far as the community, as far as transportation was concerned once that got stood up. He said that he understood the cloverleaf issue there. That was his exit for 20 years going into Fontaine and it was going to be what it was. He said that he thought some of the issues that they were going to have to get communities to look towards was the fact that several decisions were made about how they did exits around here.

Mr. Bivins said that while this area may seem prime for commercial uses supported by the interstate connections, there had been a lack of support for commercial development in the districts that had those interchanges. He said that this ultimately rested with the Board of Supervisors, and their past decisions had signaled that future commercial development at intersections may prove difficult to bring to fruition. He said that he did not want the Commission to think that such development may be more likely to occur.

Mr. Missel said that regarding walkability as a red herring, he wanted them to take into consideration that as a serious way to reduce the amount of traffic on the roads. He said that while it was maybe not going to be an instant impact and savior for all that, it was one way. He said that he agreed that the idea of having only one type of use, whether it was light industrial, commercial, may not be appropriate, and the Neighborhood Model Development allowed for its own code of development together and the developer could put the appropriate mix that helped to reduce impacts everywhere else.

Mr. Missel said that if this were not surrounded by roads that were already really highly stretched, he would fully support building residential there because then they were actually going to absorb some of the trips internally. He said that however, the land, the proximity, the existing location, and the other factors that he mentioned did not make it a good fit for that approach.

Mr. Murray said that the lack of walkability was not something that would say that the Commission should not approve something, but if there was a project that was maybe not perfect, if they added walkability to it, it could make it a better project. He said that it was not necessarily, would not necessarily be a reason to deny something, but viable walkability was something that could make a project more feasible.

Ms. Firehock said that this site happened to be so isolated that it was completely car dependent, so she did think it would be great if there were other ways to get out of this site. She said that she did not think that every single site had to have a major greenway or walkability plan with it.

Mr. Missel said that when they considered the Albemarle Business Campus, they had talked a lot about its ability to get across interstate 64 on the overpass to walk to 5th Street and how important that piece of it was. He said that that was a long trek, but it was doable because they were crossing over Route 29. He said that this development, in comparison, did not have that component.

Mr. Clayborne asked if staff could explain the worst-case scenario for residential uses in the context of the existing Highway Commercial zoning of this land.

Mr. Langille said that to assume all the properties zoned Highway Commercial, totaling 18.6 acres, if they wanted to pursue a residential special use permit, he could get a minimum of 279 dwelling units, potentially up to 373, depending on the specifics. He said that to clarify, that did not include the 43-acre R-1 property.

Mr. Clayborne said that if they did nothing with regards to this rezoning, there could still be substantial development of residential uses there, and it did not have to be walkable.

Mr. Moore said that he appreciated Mr. Clayborne bringing up the alternative, which was that either the land lay vacant as-is, or a by-right development was created, or an SUP for residential was submitted.

Ms. Firehock said that another alternative was that the developer could return with a more specific proposal that she could more accurately assess, along with a reliable traffic plan. She said that she was not against mixed-use development on this site.

Mr. Moore said that he agreed it was a huge range and was difficult to estimate the potential impacts.

Ms. Davies said that given the Commission's discussion, she would be happy to return with an updated plan that provided a more defined range of uses, giving them a more comfortable assessment of their approach. She said that she thought they could use this time to also run the numbers on the tax abatement program for housing affordability and to analyze the self-storage use. She said that if they would be amenable, she would like to defer and revisit this item with the Commission once they had that information. She said that she would like to request deferral to a future date.

Mr. Barnes said that they could defer it to a date specific of December 16, 2025.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission defer ZMA202200002 to December 16, 2025, at the request of the applicant. Mr. Bivins seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Mr. Carrazana was absent)

Committee Reports

Mr. Moore said that the Rio 29 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) recently met and held a community meeting regarding the Burley Point Apartments project, which spanned 3.7 acres where the Flaming Wok used to be. He said that the proposal would rezone the property to allow for a100% affordable multi-family residential development, at four stories and 92 units. He said that he had suggested a taller height, but the developer, Woda Cooper, had a good track record of this type and size of development and had done this for about 35 years.

Mr. Murray said that the Crozet CAC met on August 25 and received an update from Parks and Recreation, who discussed some of the projects they were undertaking at Biscuit Run, including the stream restoration and trail expansion. He said that he had also been told about the new trails at Mint Springs, which he had had the opportunity to try out since then. He said that he was impressed by the significant improvement. He said that thanks to volunteer effort, including Charlottesville Area Mountain Bike Club (CAMBC), they made significant improvements, including switchbacks, which greatly enhanced the trail experience. He said that they also established a new trail system at the top of the Ridge Line trail.

Mr. Murray said that however, this left lower trails below that could benefit from similar treatment. He said that the volunteers contributed an impressive 525 hours of labor. He said that the economic value of this free labor was substantial, with the County reaping significant benefits from the removal of invasive species and other trail maintenance efforts.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: September 3, 2025

Mr. Barnes said that he appreciated Mr. Murray mentioning CAMBC, as a prior Rivanna Trails Foundation (RTF) Board member. He said that the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 3 included a build-out analysis presentation to the Board in the afternoon work session. He said that the Commission should receive a report on that item by tomorrow. He said that it was an excellent discussion with the Board, and the bottom line was that this report showed there was still room to accommodate growth in the development area.

Mr. Barnes said that the analysis estimated that there was enough capacity to accommodate 21,000 more residential units. He said that the report also took into account the estimated 31,000 people expected to arrive in the next 20 years, based on Welden Cooper's estimates. He said that there were many complications in the analysis, and he would ensure that the Commission received a copy of this report tomorrow.

Mr. Barnes said that the next step was to develop two deliverables for the Board, one of which was a scorecard; this scorecard would help the Board evaluate rezoning applications by using a percentage of the available area to its theoretical maximum density. He said that they would also be working on improving the model by incorporating factors such as market conditions and other relevant information. He said that they planned to present this improved model to the Commission on November 25, 2025, then to the Board in January.

Mr. Barnes said that Ann Wall, Deputy County Administrator, really emphasized that one of the key benefits of this analysis was that it enabled them to ask the right questions, in addition to providing a number. He said that the 58% figure they were using for development density was

context-sensitive and depended on various factors. He said that he wanted to caution the community and the board not to take a specific number out of this analysis and assume it meant exactly that; instead, it was about understanding how they were using their development area and what they needed to do to use it more efficiently.

Mr. Missel said that for the Planning Commission, the development build-out analysis was huge for their decision-making, and he thought one other aspect that was eye-opening for himself was that approximately 50% of the development area capacity would need to be redeveloped. He said that this meant that they were not looking at a blank slate for 50% of that development; rather, they were working with existing land that needed to be utilized more efficiently.

Mr. Barnes said that it was also essential to consider that the land value must be greater than the building value to be included in the parcel they might select. He said that there were parcels, such as large tracts of land with a single house, where the balance tipped towards the house, and therefore, they were not pulled into the analysis. He said that the 7% figure referred to approximately 1,500 acres of land, with about half of that being vacant land, and a significant portion of the remaining land requiring redevelopment.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to see more evaluation of certain aspects, such as the Rio Hills Shopping Center, which was excluded from the possibility of redevelopment based on the criteria used. He said that it seemed to him that this site could potentially be redeveloped in the future.

Mr. Barnes said that the point was that it was not just about looking at individual pieces of land, but rather about asking broad brush questions and highlighting the need for them to think critically about how they wanted to build their community. He said that two other items that might be of interest to the Commission were the Federal Department of Transportation's approach to the Board to obtain authorization for condemnation on a piece of land to support a sidewalk project on Commonwealth Drive. He said that while this in itself was not unusual, it was somewhat atypical for their County, as they typically tried to build out their infrastructure through other means.

Ms. Firehock asked if in that case, the County had tried to purchase the land and the landowner had refused.

Mr. Barnes said that although he did not know the specifics of the situation, yes, that was the essence of the process.

Mr. Barnes said that the final item before the Board on September 3 was the rezoning for Brookhill, which the Commission saw a few weeks prior, and that item was approved by the Board.

New Business: Reschedule September 23, 2025, meeting to September 30, 2025

Mr. Barnes asked if the Commission would consider cancelling the September 23, 2025, meeting and reschedule the September 30, 2025.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission cancel the September 23, 2025, meeting and reschedule to September 30, 2025. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0). (Carrazana was absent)

Adjournment

At 9:45 p.m., the Commission adjourned to September 30, 2025, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.

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Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: