Albemarle County Planning Commission
Draft Minutes Regular Meeting
February 24, 2026

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Corey Clayborne; Nathan Moore; Lonnie Murray; Mary Katherine King.

Members absent: Luis Carrazana, Chair.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Cameron Langille, Principal Planner; Jenny Tevendale, Deputy County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commissions.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Ms. Firehock 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 (None)

There was none.

Public Hearing

ZMA-2025-00001 600 Rio Road W

Cameron Langille, Principal Planner, said that he would be presenting the staff recommendation on ZMA 2025-00001 600 Rio Road West. He said that the proposal sought to rezone four parcels of land from Commercial Office (CO) to the Neighborhood Model (NMD) Zoning District, covering approximately 3.2 acres. He said that if approved, the property would be subject to the application plan and Code of Development, which were included in the staff report as Attachments 2 and 3.

Mr. Langille said that there were two special exception requests associated with the ZMA: one waived the mixture of uses within the Neighborhood Model District Zoning Ordinance requirement, and the other reduced the minimum area of required amenities. He said that these exceptions would be acted upon by the Board, and the Commission did not need to provide a recommendation on them. He said that he would elaborate on the specifics of these exceptions later in the presentation.

Mr. Langille said that provided in the presentation was an aerial view of the properties, which showed there were currently five townhouses and two structures resembling single-family homes, one of which had previously been used as a daycare. He said that the other two properties were undeveloped, located on the north side of Rio Road West, between Woodburn Road and Berkmar Drive. He said that t surrounding area had a variety of uses, including professional offices, medical

offices, commercial, and retail spaces to the east. He said that to the south lay the Berkmar Crossing development, which featured mostly commercial businesses, including office space.

Mr. Langille said that another nearby area was known as the Oakley development, and this building itself was an assisted living facility. He said that the parcels in question would eventually be developed with residential uses; they had been cleared, but nothing had been built yet. He said that on the zoning map the properties highlighted in teal, currently zoned CO, and the properties adjoining them to the east were also zoned CO. He said that to the west were single-family detached properties zoned R4 Residential and to the north was undeveloped land zoned R6. He said that the commercial uses further east or south were zoned in various districts.

Mr. Langille said that next, he would discuss the application specifics. He said that sheet four of Attachment 2 outlined the proposed development plan. He said that the existing five townhomes would be retained, and new multifamily structures, parking areas, and outdoor amenities would be built. He said that the minimum units required would be 28, with a maximum of 153. He said that this density translated to a maximum of 47.8 units per acre and a minimum of 8.7 units per acre. He said that the applicant was proposing to be consistent with Housing Albemarle, by allocating 20% of their units at 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Mr. Langille said that there was no minimum requirement for commercial space, but they had the option to expand up to 20,000 square feet. He said that some additional details included vehicular access from Station Lane and Greenfield Terrace, 20% of the total development would be dedicated green space, and 16% would be amenities. He said that the special exception request was based on the Neighborhood Model District's requirement for two general land use classifications. He said that since there was no minimum commercial requirement, the applicant had made a special exception request; however, the Ordinance allowed for this exception if there were existing uses within a quarter mile.

Mr. Langille said that staff found the applicant to be consistent with the finding requirements and recommended approval. He said that the special exception aimed to clarify the required amenities, as the Rio Small Area Plan stated that private developments should have between 15% and 20% of their site acreage as amenities. He said that the applicant proposed 16%, which was within the allowed range. He said that staff recommended approval of this special exception. He said that the recommendation was consistent with the County's Growth Management Policy, provided new housing, and met the Small Area Plan's form and site design standards. He said that the development also included a new eight-foot sidewalk along Rio Road West, a transportation improvement recommended by the Small Area Plan.

Mr. Langille said that the applicant had made a proffer to commit to providing a future public park on the County-owned parcel, which would reduce the need for a new entrance along Berkmar Drive. He said that Parks and Recreation staff had worked with the applicant to determine the optimal location and size of this reservation area, which would be in place for 10 years. He said that the only unfavorable factor identified was that Agnor Elementary School would be over capacity in future years, with the proposed development contributing an additional 20 elementary students.

Mr. Moore said that the application stated that the applicant was not fully opting into the Small Area Plan, but many of the elements were consistent with the Small Area Plan standards. He said that he would like to know what specifically differed from the Small Area Plan standards.

Mr. Langille said that they were not opting to develop the property by right under the form-based code zoning district regulations. He said that prior to submitting the ZMA application, they had worked extensively with County staff, who were the dedicated form-based code planners. He said

that it was found that some of the code requirements that would be triggered could not be met without going through a special exception process for approximately six different code requirements.

Mr. Langille said that with that being said, while their staff had been reviewing the zoning map amendment, in this case, the long-range plan that applied was the Small Area Plan. He said that as such, they were reviewing it for consistency with all the findings and recommendations contained in the Small Area Plan itself.

Mr. Moore said that it sounded like there were relatively minor technical differences.

Mr. Langille said yes.

Mr. Moore said that while it may be outside of the Planning Commission's consideration, but he was interested in the land between the proposed development and Agnor-Hurt, which the County owned, could potentially be used as a park. He asked where this land was on the Parks and Recreation priority list, and whether the 10-year proffer would be enough time for the County to develop it.

Mr. Langille said that he was unsure of the exact timeline, but this site had already been previously considered for a pocket park by Parks and Rec; however, the park ultimately was developed down Hillsdale, near the catholic church. He said that he knew this site was currently being looked at to some extent, and based on his conversations with staff, the proposed reservation by this applicant may put it higher on the priority list for parks.

Mr. Murray said that regarding the park, he was wondering if they had talked about creating the pedestrian connection first.

Mr. Langille said that he did not know and would have to ask Parks staff. He said that a pedestrian connection was one of the options they could do in that area. He said that if they did both vehicular and pedestrian at the same time, he was not sure; however, they had worked diligently to get the size of the area to a size that would allow multiple modes of travel.

Mr. Murray asked where exactly the park would be on the map.

Mr. Langille said that the potential park would be in the forested area in between the subject property and Agnor Elementary.

Mr. Murray asked what the current pedestrian connectivity was like in this area.

Mr. Langille said that in the larger area there were sidewalks, with some missing segments here and there. He said that Greenfield Terrace did not have sidewalks, but Station Lane would have sidewalks on both sides and along the parking areas within the development itself. He said that there were sidewalks along Rio, but they terminated in front of one of the businesses near the subject property.

Mr. Clayborne said that he would like to follow up on Mr. Murray's comments. He asked, if there was access to commercial use within a quarter mile of the property, which would alleviate the need to commit to commercial within this development, did they feel that pedestrians could get to Agnor Elementary, Rio Hill Shopping Center, and the library via sidewalks?

Mr. Langille said yes. He said that if he were living there, he would likely walk down Greenfield Terrace and then access the sidewalk at the corner, near Berkmar. He said that there were two transit stops conveniently located on either side of Rio there, as well.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning said that there were some gaps in the sidewalk there. He said that there was an apartment complex constructed on the other side of Agnor Elementary, which included proffered money to create a pedestrian crossing at that intersection. He said that along Berkmar, there was a small section of shared use path near the Volvo dealership. He said that while there were some gaps, it was a fairly connected pedestrian path within the Development Area.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the issue of overcapacity at Agnor Elementary would remain if this development had been done by right.

Mr. Langille said that it was difficult to say. He said that if they had developed under the form-based code zoning regulations, there would be no established density cap, and as a result, it was difficult to estimate the number of students that would result. He said that if they had chosen not to rezone and instead pursued residential uses, they would have needed a special use permit (SUP), limiting the development to 15 dwelling units per acre. He said that he was unsure what the resulting math would be. He said that if they would like, he could attempt to run the numbers to provide a more accurate estimate. He said that he would estimate that the results would likely be the same under the form-based code.

Mr. Clayborne said that that was good enough for him; he was just trying to reconcile the concern there. He said that he wanted to know whether the impact would be the same, and it sounded like it would.

Mr. Barnes said that one of the reasons the form-based code was not a path for the applicant initially was that the County was in the process of rewriting the code, so the application would have likely been delayed. He said that once they finalized the new code, as Mr. Langille said there was no density maximum, so a proposal like this could be built by right.

Mr. Clayborne asked if by-right uses in the Code of Development could be altered. He said that his question was more about inappropriate by-right uses. He said that he recalled seeing water and sewer treatment facilities or other miscellaneous items such as telecommunications infrastructure and utility wires that seemed out of place in a project like this. He said that it was unlikely that these would be included in a project of this nature, yet it appeared to be a by-right use.

Mr. Langille said that he did not have the Code of Development in front of him, but some items, such as stormwater management facilities, were always listed out in Neighborhood Model Developments so there was no question about whether they were allowed to be done, since they were required anyway. He said that the applicant could likely speak more to the telecommunications infrastructure.

Ms. King said that her question pertained to the access for the future park. She said that based on the map, she assumed that the proposed access route would be through Greenfield Terrace, rather than Station Lane. She said that they would expect traffic entering the park to come onto Greenfield Terrace and then turn into the park, rather than using Station Lane, which would be a private road. She said that as a result, they would anticipate that future access to the park would be via Greenfield Terrace.

Mr. Langille said that that was one of the reasons they had worked to locate it in that spot, as it was situated where it intersected with the right-of-way of Greenfield Terrace, a public street.

Ms. King said that it appeared that there was currently an apron in the circle from Station Lane, as indicated in the aerial view. She asked if that would remain or would be improved.

Mr. Langille said that during a site visit, it became clear that the area was almost fully flush with Greenfield Terrace, and that would remain unchanged. He said that however, currently, there was a sidewalk that was demarcated near the apron. He said that the applicant may have provided pictures of that.

Ms. King asked if someone would be able to drive from one to the other.

Mr. Langille said yes.

Ms. Firehock said that she was intrigued by the park being located next to the elementary school. She asked if a child living in this new development could walk through the park to school.

Mr. Barnes said that one would hope that if they were to develop the park, there would be a connection. He said that at this time, that remained speculative. He said that the County owned all the property between the school and Greenfield Terrace itself.

Ms. Firehock said that it would be a wonderful amenity for the children.

Ms. King said that a fellow Commissioner had previously pointed out that one of the by-right uses in the Code of Development was a Tier 1 or Tier 2 personal wireless. She asked if that was referring to a cell tower. She said that it had a code number next to it, but she was unfamiliar with what it meant.

Mr. Langille said that yes, Tier 2 could be a tower. He said that he did not typically do telecommunications reviews, so he was unsure.

Ms. King asked if it was typical for a Code of Development to include a Tier 1 or Tier 2 tower by right.

Mr. Langille said that yes, he had seen it as an allowed use in most Neighborhood Model District codes of development.

Mr. Murray asked what features would differ from this development application if it had been proposed under form-based code.

Mr. Langille said that from what he recalled, and although he was not the primary staff member working on that, he knew there were certain requirements for the design of the streets that would have necessitated major upgrades and changes to the existing Station Lane configuration. He said that there were numerous architectural requirements, such as ground floor uses and transparency of windows and architectural elements, that would have been challenging for this applicant to meet while still seeking to provide the desired amount of residential units. He said that although he did not have a bullet-point list of all the identified requirements, it was clear that at least a half dozen special exceptions would have been necessary to accommodate the proposed form-based code district.

Mr. Barnes said that the version they currently had was different from what it would have been under the previous code. He said that he believed that there were elements in the existing code that would have been a hindrance to this, but he was not certain what they were. He said that it had been months ago that they made that decision, and he did not recall them at this time.

Ms. Firehock opened the public hearing. She asked if the applicant had a presentation.

Kelsey Schlein, Tatalein Land Planning and Development Services, said that she was working with Shimp Engineering to bring this application to the Commission tonight. She said that also

with her tonight from Piedmont Realty Holdings was Drew Holzwarth, representing the applicant for this project, and he was available to answer any questions the Commissioners may have. She said that since she did not have all of her prepared graphics, she believed it would be most productive to discuss the questions the Commission had raised and explain how this application came to be presented as a Neighborhood Model District rather than through the form-based code.

Ms. Schlein said that an image from their application plan provided context for the area subject to the Rio 29 Small Area Plan and form-based code. She said that this area encompassed approximately 400 acres, including their major shopping centers. She said that one statistic from the Rio Small Area Plan that stood out was that 39% of those 400 acres was covered in parking lots. She said that this high percentage was a factor in the County's decision to designate this area for more intensive, planned development. She said that when the form-based code was adopted, they had carefully considered how to make it work for this site, which was located within the flex area of the form-based code overlay.

Ms. Schlein said that the main challenge they faced was the relationship between Station Lane and Greenfield Terrace. She said that the form-based code had robust street requirements, which were beneficial for many properties but not suitable for this site. She said that they had struggled to find a solution that would meet the code's requirements without compromising the entire corner of the property. She said that after working with staff for a year, they ultimately decided to develop under a Neighborhood Model District. She said that she believed their application met many of the goals of the form-based code.

Ms. Schlein said that when reviewing this site and comparing the form-based code requirement to the Neighborhood Model proposal in this rezoning application, it should be noted that the form-based code did not specify a maximum density. She said that the applicant's proposal was for up to 153 units, with 48 dwelling units per acre, which was meant to provide some consistency, even though it was not required. She said that in the flex designation, which applied to this property, building heights of two to four stories were permitted, and five stories were allowed with affordable housing bonus factors; they were proposing up to five stories. She said that they also met the Housing Albemarle requirement of providing 20% of units at 60% AMI.

Ms. Schlein said that Mr. Langille had already discussed this, but for the amenity areas in the form-based code, they would be required to provide a minimum 15% civic space requirement; they were providing 16%, which she thought was consistent. She said that their Code of Development also included requirements for transparency, such as architectural articulation to prevent blank facades. She said that these items aligned with the intent of the form-based code and demonstrated their commitment to capturing that in this development.

Ms. Schlein said that she would like to address a few questions regarding specific uses listed in the Code of Development. She said that all of those uses were listed in section 20-A6 of the Neighborhood Model section of the Zoning Ordinance. She said that they were basically copied and pasted as boiler plate uses, but if any of those uses caused concerns, they were open to revising them. She said that their goal was to build a dense urban multifamily development, and they were comfortable revising any uses that caused issues.

Ms. Schlein said that she would also like to discuss the proffer commitment to the park connection. She said that she commended the applicant for working with staff to find a solution, and she appreciated the collaborative effort between the County and applicant that led to a revised plan. She said that she believed the proposal they had presented was not only advantageous for this project, but also beneficial for the County. She said that if a park were to be built adjacent to the project, it would provide a convenient entrance for future residents, which would be a wonderful amenity. She said that providing an entrance from Greenfield Terrace would result in substantial

cost savings for the County, as it had significantly less traffic than Berkmar and the entrance requirements were less stringent according to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) standards.

Ms. King said that on page six of the Code of Development, there was a chart discussing architectural standards. She asked if Ms. Schlein thought that these architectural standards were generally in line with the form-based code.

Ms. Schlein said that she believed they were keeping the main intent of the form-based code, which focused on urban form, transparency, and human scale at the streetscape. She said that one requirement that stood out was the 14-foot minimum height for the first floor, which was evident in the currently built application under the form-based code. She said that they had not proposed this requirement in this application, as it increased costs and they did not consider it critical for establishing a human scale at the streetscape.

Mr. Clayborne asked if this item was scheduled to go before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Ms. Schlein said yes; this development was within entrance corridors, so the site plan would be reviewed by the ARB.

Mr. Clayborne said that he assumed the ARB would give input on the facade facing Rio Road.

Ms. Schlein said absolutely.

Mr. Clayborne asked what the plan was for the existing townhomes.

Ms. Schlein said that the current plan was for them to remain in place. She said that they would be incorporated into the development and could be discussed further, but they were currently depicted as part of the concept plan.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there were any concerns about the left unit being slammed up against the newly proposed multifamily house and what would happen to the view from that unit.

Ms. Schlein said that it would certainly be a larger building than what was there currently, and the envelopes on the plan were a bit generous in terms of what would actually be built. She said that also, the exterior wall of the townhouse may not have been designed to meet the necessary fire safety standards for having another so close to it, so they would have to do some work to comply with all relevant building code regulations, particularly regarding the window openings on the side of the building. She said that in reality, the actual construction would likely be farther away due to grading and other factors.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was thinking about what the current resident would see when they looked out their window; it would be a bit of a surprise.

Ms. Schlein said that it was all under the same ownership right now, so they were not fee simple lots. She said that the owner had signed onto this application.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wanted to flag the area between the two buildings as an important aspect of the overall development. He said that currently, it was not represented on the plan. He said that as they moved forward, he thought it was essential to consider what would happen in this space. He asked, regarding the Code of Development, if they were to include commercial or religious uses, such as a place of worship, would the existing parking be sufficient to support those types of uses?

Ms. Schlein said that varying parking minimums were proposed for different types of uses. She said that for a religious assembly use, it would impact the footprint of a multifamily building. She said that consequently, they would need to demonstrate in their site plan that they were meeting the parking requirements, which had different standards for different types of uses.

Mr. Clayborne asked if they would accomodate any use, acknowledging there may be compromises in order to do so.

Ms. Schlein said yes. She said that the County's Code also provided some options, such as allowing commercial uses if there was interest or appetite, as long as they complemented residential uses. She said that a religious assembly use may not be the best example because residents would likely be home on Sundays, but something such as an office space could be suitable. She said that in this scenario, the office users would leave at the end of the day, and the tenants could park in designated spots. She said that these options were outlined in the Code of Development for parking.

Mr. Clayborne said that he had one final, specific question for his own knowledge. He said that on sheet two of ten, it talked about the flood zone and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood maps, referring to information from 2005. He asked if that was the most updated map available.

Ms. Schlein said that to clarify, this property was not located within a floodplain. She said that it did not have a floodplain overlay or any other similar designation. She said that this was simply a standard note that they included to confirm it was not located in a floodplain. She said that the 2005 maps were the most recent available at most locations, although they were currently being updated. She said that in fact, some of these updates had already been implemented in certain areas, and they could expect to have all the updated maps within the next year or two.

Mr. Murray said that the applicant had no minimum commercial requirements specified, but he wanted to offer a comment. He said that as they considered the mix of uses in their Development Area, it was clear that a balance between residential and commercial was crucial to avoid a tax burden on the County. He said that he also thought about the residents who lived in this area and could walk to some of the other amenities. He said that he encouraged the applicant to consider adding some commercial uses that would benefit the community, such as a small cafe, a childcare center, flex workspaces, or other services that could provide value to the people living there.

Ms. Schlein said that she appreciated the suggestion and would like to note that there would be an interior amenity space with the multifamily application. She said that although it may not be exterior facing, the residents would have an amenity such as a flex workspace or a gym.

Mr. Murray said that his main concern was not on commercial use specifically; rather, it should be something that can serve the people living there and encouraged interaction.

Mr. Moore said that he appreciated the proposal. He said that he did not have a problem with potentially waiving the commercial requirement in this instance, given the existing commercial presence in the surrounding area. He said that it was always valuable for neighbors to be neighborly, as well. He said that he also appreciated the decision to have parking underground, which reduced the need for additional surface lots. He said that this seemed like a wise decision. He said that in reviewing the conceptual sections of the presentation, he was wondering if they envisioned the buildings to be mostly four stories with a parking deck, followed by three stories of residential units, or alternatively, five stories with a parking deck and four stories of residential units.

Ms. Schlein said that both of the two buildings were primarily designed to have podium parking, with one story of parking and four levels of residential space above.

Mr. Moore asked if they anticipated this development to be mostly rental units.

Ms. Schlein said yes, they planned for them to be predominantly rentals.

Ms. Firehock asked if any members of the public would like to comment on this item.

Dean Wenger said that he had a few questions. He asked how many students were over the capacity of Agnor Elementary, and how many additional students would be added in total from the other developments approved by the Board of Supervisors but not built. He said that his second question was whether this development would be two-bedroom units or three-bedroom units.

Ms. Firehock asked if the applicant had a response to the comment from the public.

Ms. Schlein said that the development would include a mixture of one-, two- and three-bedroom units, but predominantly ones and twos.

Mr. Langille said that as of this school year, Agnor Elementary was one student under capacity. He said that the projection figures from the October 2025 report from the School Division, specifically in the 2035-2036 school year, they would be 45 students overcapacity.

Ms. Firehock asked the applicant when they anticipated this development would be fully built out, in general.

Ms. Schlein said that they estimated it would be built over the next three to five years. She said that they planned to move directly into site plan permitting and proceed with making this project a reality. She said that the school impacts were a significant issue that they faced in every application. She said that however, the density proposed in this application was not dissimilar to what was allowed by-right under the form-based code, so the impacts to the schools could be assumed to be similar.

Mr. Murray said that he had no further questions but wanted to reiterate the earlier point from Ms. Firehock that it would be incredibly beneficial to have a safe route from this development and through the park so students could walk to school. He said that he hoped staff could work with the applicant to designate a simple path between the two points. He said that it would be beneficial for this project and the students.

Ms. Firehock closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Moore said that this project was located in his district, and it was quite close to his home. He said that he believed it made a lot of sense, as it had been identified as an area for urban-style residential construction; it was a key growth area and densification of that part of their community was appropriately located. He said that the idea of linking up two roads and connecting to a park was clever, and he appreciated the design choice of having predominantly underground parking.

Mr. Moore said that he thought it was a positive step towards reducing the number of surface parking lots. He said that regarding the schools, he often brought up the issue of their growing County and the need to address various infrastructure needs. He said that in these applications, other essential services like police, Fire and Rescue, or healthcare infrastructure were not measured or noted, but he did not think that made this project any less viable. He said that as

their County continued to grow, they would need to find ways to build more classrooms and hire more teachers, but that did not necessarily mean this project would not work.

Mr. Murray said that he thought a taller building would be appropriate here. He said that he would not be concerned with more density than what was proposed. He said that the parking underneath was an excellent feature, and establishing connections between the park and school would be great.

Mr. Clayborne said that there was a lot that he liked about this proposal. He said that he appreciated the density and the units at 60% AMI, which he felt were often lacking in other developments in the County. He said that it was good to see those types of units come online. He said that he also liked the connections to nearby commercial, the land for the park that tied together to school and site and other positive elements.

Mr. Clayborne said that as the applicant moved forward, there were a couple of key factors would truly make this project successful and potentially serve as a catalyst for other developments. He said that the graphics would be crucial in articulating the facades as they moved forward. He said that it was particularly important along Rio Road that the sidewalk should not appear to be directly on the side of the building in order to create the transparency and scale necessary, and he believed this would be a critical aspect of the project's success from a design standpoint.

Mr. Clayborne said that additionally, it was essential to be thoughtful about the space between the existing building and the new one. He said that he thought this was pivotal. He said that the current illustration did not do justice, but as the site plan matured, he hoped it would be treated with care and attention to the facades and that space. He said that if they achieved that, he believed this would be a model for other great projects in that corridor.

Ms. King said that in general, she was in favor of the application, as well as the comments made by other Commissioners. She said that she particularly appreciated the podium parking, as not having extra surface parking was a good use of the space. She said that the placement of stormwater facilities underground was a nice touch, as it minimized the visual impact. She said that overall, she did not have any significant concerns.

Ms. Firehock said that she also concurred with everything the Commission had said. She said that she was particularly excited about the parking under the building. She said that at first, she thought she was seeing things because it was almost unbelievable to have such a progressive development after so many years. She said that in the past, land was cheap in Albemarle, and so they had so many surface lots and so much urban heat island as a result. She said that this proposal actually made good use of a tight space, and she would love to live here.

Ms. Firehock said that in college, she had an apartment, and she rode her bike through a park and arrived at school, and she felt refreshed. She said that research had shown that just 15 to 20 minutes of access to green space for a child before they started school increased their IQ several points. She said that just by walking to school, the kids would be smarter by the time they arrived.

Mr. Murray said that in terms of the underground stormwater management, he would like to see more emphasis on green roofs and less reliance on underground stormwater treatment systems. He said that the underground systems were notorious for causing future problems. He said that he would prefer to see more quality treatment rather than quantity treatment when it came to stormwater management systems.

Ms. Firehock said that she agreed; if she had a magic wand, she would put green roofs on top of all the buildings with access for people to enjoy the greenery and look out at the amazing views.

She said that unfortunately, she was neither invited to design this nor given an infinite budget, so that would remain a fantasy for now.

Mr. Moore motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00001 600 Rio Road W for the reasons listed in the staff report. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried (5-0). (Mr. Carrazana was absent)

Ms. King asked if the Commission needed separate motions to handle the special exceptions.

Ms. Firehock said that the special exceptions were typically handled by the Board of Supervisors, as the Commission was not required nor authorized to act on them.

Committee Reports

Mr. Murray said that he would like to report that the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met and had an interesting discussion about naturally occurring affordable housing, which was mentioned in the Crozet Master Plan in terms of it needing a study and a way to identify it. He said that they had a discussion on how to approach this, including how to identify naturally occurring affordable housing. He said that they explored the potential of leveraging Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to achieve that.

Mr. Murray said that they acknowledged Crozet's entire Development Area could likely benefit from this, and the County as a whole could, too. He said that they also talked about ways to utilize University of Virginia (UVA) students to do this as a project. He said that a potential outcome of this may include a letter sent to the Board of Supervisors from the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

Ms. Firehock asked what the project would entail.

Mr. Murray said that the project would map out the locations of naturally occurring affordable housing. He said that older homes inhabited by residents with modest incomes were the main point of discussion. He said that these homes were affordable because the residents were still living in them. He said that however, if someone were to leave these houses and the houses were sold or redeveloped, they may end up being way more expensive.

Mr. Murray said that there were several places in Crozet where they could see those homes, and it was essential that they did not lose the affordable housing they had. He said that preserving affordable housing was a crucial goal, in Crozet as well as in the Rural Area.

Ms. Firehock said that the Fifth and Avon Community Advisory Committee did not meet last week. She said that she missed the Historic Preservation Committee meeting due to a scheduling conflict, which was unfortunate.

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: February 18, 2026

Mr. Barnes said that the Board's meeting on February 18 had a fairly light agenda. He said that in the afternoon, Kevin McDermott gave an excellent presentation with their consultant on the Three Notch'd Trail application. He said that in the evening, there were several public hearings, but only one was related to the Community Development Department, which was the conveyance of some utility easements on Colonnade Drive.

New Business

There was none.

Old Business

Mr. Murray asked if there was a follow-up in regard to appointing a representative to the Natural Heritage Committee.

Mr. Barnes said that in talking to the Board Clerk, he learned that there were some committees that the Commissioners were required to staff and others they were not. He said that the Commissioners were welcome to attend those meetings but not necessarily serve on them.

Mr. Murray said that his thinking was that once they took up the Rural Area Master Plan, it would be relevant work for a Commissioner to be involved with the Natural Heritage Committee.

Ms. Firehock said that a long time ago, she served as the liaison to that Committee, but the Board told them it was not needed anymore. She said that another item under Old Business was regarding a training session that all of the Commissioners had been invited to attend in July. She said that she was wondering if there was funding for Commissioners to attend.

Mr. Barnes said that there was limited funding available, so he would like to know if the Commissioners were interested in attending and then he would determine if there was enough money to send them. He said that Ms. King had responded to say she was interested in attending, so he would offer that there was a virtual training held at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in the near term.

Ms. Firehock said that to reiterate, Mr. Barnes had sent an email to all the Commissioners, so they should let him know and he would figure out the budget implications. She said that along those same lines, she would like to mention that the state planning association, the Virginia American Planning Association, would have their conference in July. She said that she would be attending the planning conference, which included a dedicated day for a commissioner's session. She said that she had attended a few times, including last year, and it was very fun to interact with commissioners from other areas and learn what they did.

Ms. Firehock said that she learned from a commissioner that their planning commission held a retreat where they all met to discuss planning and other related aspects. She said that it was also very cathartic to hear about some of the challenges other commissioners had experienced in the position, as well. She said that there were some hotel costs associated with attending, but the general admission for commissioners to attend the conference was $50 for all three days. She said that in addition to the commissioner-specific forums, there were other professional sessions that they could look into.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to mention that he would be attending the annual Active Mobility Summit, hosted by Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), on March 5 and March 6, 2026. He said that one of the speakers he was particularly excited about was likely to be someone who had worked on Roanoke's successful marketing and development of their outdoor recreation economy, which he had previously discussed.

Ms. Firehock said that she would make sure to circulate the email with that event's information so that all the commissioners could attend if they were interested.

Items for follow-up

There were none.

Adjournment

At 7:03 p.m., the Commission adjourned to March 10, 2026, 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: