Albemarle County Planning Commission
Draft Minutes Work Session and Regular Meeting
March 10, 2026

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Luis Carrazana, Chair; Corey Clayborne; Lonnie Murray; Mary Katherine King.

Members absent: Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Nathan Moore.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager; Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning; Jenny Tevendale, Deputy County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk of the Planning Commissions.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Carolyn Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Carrazana 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

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Planning Commission approve the consent agenda as presented. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (4-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent)

Public Hearing

ZMA-2025-00012 Parham Circle Self Storage

Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager said that she would be providing the staff report on ZMA-2025-00012. She said that the request was for a rezoning in a planned development district, focused on an amendment to a shopping center to allow for a self-storage facility. She said that when this was rezoned in 1996, certain uses were prohibited at the time, and those uses would continue to be prohibited, so this request was solely focused on the self-service storage facility, as it was now commonly referred to. She said that they had previously referred to it as light warehousing. She said that there were also special exceptions associated with this request.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the Commission was not required to act on the special exceptions, but she would discuss them. She said that the site was located on Parham Circle, behind the bank on Mill Creek. She said that the site was marked in blue on the map, near the upper center, and was part of the Mill Creek Shopping Center Planned Development Shopping Center (PDSC), approved in 1996. She said that the subject site was approximately 1.73 acres in size, and that it was situated near County-owned properties zoned R-15 and R-1, which included a fire station and Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) facilities in the area.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the 2015 Comprehensive Plan designated this area as a Community Mixed-Use area, where self-storage was one of the commercial uses consistent with that district.

She said that the master plan did not include any prohibitions for the type of use, so staff concluded it was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She said that also included was the application plan. She said that upon zooming in, the parcel was located at the back of Parham Circle and behind the bank. She said that it was proposed as a multi-story self-storage building.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the concept plan and application request a reduction to the 50-foot commercial setback, while maintaining the 20-foot buffer, which applied to parking areas and required screening to adjacent residential-zoned properties. She said that the request was limited to only allow self-storage as the permitted use, and included proffers in support of that.

Mr. Murray asked for more details about the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) facility and what it was used for.

Ms. Ragsdale said that she believed it was a maintenance facility and a cell tower on the property.

Mr. Barnes said that initially, there was a water tank, and recently they had added some other uses. He said that he believed Ms. Ragsdale was correct that they were maintenance facilities that supported ACSA's operations.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was trying to get a sense of the topography as one drove up Mill Creek Drive. He said that it was an uphill climb to drive past the high school and approach the traffic light on Avon Extended. He asked if the proposed building would be towering over the road, since it was four stories tall.

Ms. Ragsdale said that yes, the applicant had submitted a photo simulation, which was included in the staff presentation. She said that they provided a rendering of the building height and sight line from the entrance corridor. She said that because it was within the entrance corridor overlay district, the application would be reviewed by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). She said that the applicant was proposing four stories and requested a waiver to the stepback requirements.

Mr. Clayborne asked if Ms. Ragsdale could provide the attachment with the photo. He said that he must have missed that in the documents.

Ms. Ragsdale said that it was included with the materials for the stepback waiver request.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the applicant had a presentation.

Laurie Schweller, Attorney with Williams Mullen, representing the applicant, and she was joined tonight by representatives from Live Oak Capital Partners and Timmons Group. She said that they were here to request the Planning Commission's recommendation of approval of an amendment to the zoning for this parcel. She said that the reason for the request was solely for a proffer text amendment. She said that to the southeast of the subject site there was extra acreage associated with the fire station, which was forested. She said that to the south, they could see the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) property, which included a cell tower. She said that Mill Creek Drive ran to the north and west, and they could see the Mill Creek subdivision and the Mill Creek Shopping Center, which was zoned as a Planned District Shopping Center.

Ms. Schweller said that this site was the last parcel remaining, and it had been on the market for over a year. She said that it had veery few steep slopes, and the managed slopes would not be disturbed. She said that the R-1 property to the south was ACSA, and the R-15 property to the southeast belonged to the County. She said that their request was to amend the 1996 proffers for the shopping center, which was originally planned in 1995 for the Mill Creek Shopping Center. She said that the area outlined in red was the subject site, and they were requesting to strike one of the prohibited uses from the list.

Ms. Schweller said that at the time of rezoning in 1996, this list of 15 uses was accepted, and none of these uses may be developed on this parcel. She said that they were requesting to strike "light warehousing" from the list, as self-storage facilities had evolved significantly since the 1990s. She said that the application plan showed a four-story building with a maximum of 48 feet, pedestrian facilities connecting to the existing sidewalk along Parham, and an existing bank and car wash associated with the gas station and shop. She said that the parking was located on the subject property, and loading was within the building, with an office within the building. She said that the property could be accessed by Parham Circle. Parham Circle was a private road used by the four parcels that comprised the car wash, gas station, bank, and the subject property. She said that there had been an agreement in place for many years regarding cost sharing and maintenance.

Ms. Schweller said that in terms of the view, the site appeared to be a grassy area with very little slope. She said that they did have elevations available if the Commission would like to see more detail. She said that the property was located in the Southern and Western Neighborhoods Land Use Map and was designated Community Mixed-Use. She said that community centers were intended to serve nearby residential neighborhoods, which was exactly what this proposal would do. She said that most of the customers for self-storage facilities like this come within three miles of the facility. She said that therefore, it would be convenient for nearby neighborhoods, particularly those with families, to use this facility. She said that this project aligns with the Comprehensive Plan. She said that the Plan's objectives include having a higher density of use, a higher intensity of use, and taller buildings.

Ms. Schweller said that additionally, the plan encouraged using infill lots with higher density development. She said that this project would provide a more diversified tax base, lessening the burden on residential property taxpayers. She said that she had provided a summary of the project's conformity to the Comprehensive Plan. She said the land use expectation for this area is a mixture of residential and retail uses that serve the community. She said that this was a self-storage facility designed to serve the community. She said that the footprint was under the 60,000 maximum, with a 24,000 square-foot building and a maximum four-story height. She said that the height called for by the Comprehensive Plan was one to four stories. She said that there would be no steep slopes disturbed, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be included.

Ms. Schweller said that Parham Circle is an interconnected street subject to an access easement agreement. She said that they were requesting a stepback waiver from the Board. She said that stepbacks typically avoid the canyon effect when properties were close together and pedestrians passing through those properties. She said that in this case, the site, the closest building, the bank was 88 feet away, and the gas station and car wash were over 110 feet away. She said that they would not have a lot of pedestrians passing through those areas to create a canyon effect. She said that the real interest in having that step back would be for visual purposes, and this could be handled with architectural elements.

Ms. Schweller said that they were also requesting a special exception for the setback requirement for commercial properties that border residential properties. She said that currently, the setback was 50 feet, and they were seeking a reduction to 20 feet. She said that this was due to the properties to the south, which were zoned residential but were actually used for public or institutional purposes. She aid that by allowing the site to utilize the full acreage, they could avoid the steep slopes and ensure proper stormwater management. She said that she had also provided photos depicting the ACSA and Albemarle County Fire Station facilities that abutted the property.

Ms. King asked if there were any proposed improvements to Parham Circle as part of the concept plan.

Ms. Schweller said that the road would remain unchanged. She said that it currently had a sidewalk, a gutter, but a new crosswalk would be added. She said that their conceptual location was situated across from where there was already a ramp on the bank side, so the new crosswalk would connect to the existing sidewalk. She said that parking would have drive-in parking and parallel parking.

Ms. King asked if there would be a curb cut to allow the parking spaces to fit. She asked if the applicant foresaw any issues with the traffic that would be taking Parham Circle to turn left into the gas station.

Ms. Schweller said that this use had very little traffic associated with it, so it was not anticipated to change the level of traffic flow.

Ms. King asked if the road would be narrowed.

Ms. Schweller said no.

Ms. King asked if the road would get markings.

Ms. Schweller said that the concept plan did not show any.

Mr. Clayborne said that regarding the height of the building, he was wondering if there were any other structures within eyesight that was remotely close to this scale.

Ms. Schweller said that to her knowledge, she was not aware of any other four-story structures in this area. She said that there was the water tower and the cell tower behind it, but there were no other buildings in this area.

Mr. Murray said that they would be handling stormwater at the site plan phase, but he would like to know if they anticipated being able to treat all stormwater on site, or if they foresaw purchasing stormwater credits.

Ms. Schweller said that they had a conceptual stormwater management facility located behind the building.

Kevin Flynn, Engineer with Timmons Group, said that the facility in the back was originally designed as a dry pond, intended for quantity only. He said that for water quality, they had two options: they could convert it to a wet pond, utilizing the same footprint, which should be able to treat most or all of the water on-site. He said that they could use off-site nutrient credit purchases to supplement that treatment. He said that this would be handled in more detail at the site plan level.

Mr. Murray said that one of the benefits of some of these facilities was the stormwater facility could also be designed to treat stormwater quality and become a visually appealing addition to the site. He said that if they were considering incorporating a feature that enhanced quality, he believed highlighting this aspect would be beneficial.

Mr. Flynn said that was something they could consider in the site plan process.

Mr. Carrazana said that he understood this was a concept plan and not a site plan, but he was questioning the parking being located so close to the curb and the parking spaces underneath the building.

Mr. Flynn said that they had standard parking spaces, on-street parking, and loading spaces within the building itself. He said that their envisioned layout was that if individuals were coming

to drop off furniture or load up items they had left behind, they would primarily be using the loading spaces within the building for the moving truck. He said that if they had an additional vehicle, either for personal use or for staff members who worked at the facility, they would park on the street or in the pull-in spaces.

Mr. Carrazana said that they would have to back out into the curb.

Mr. Flynn said that alternatively, they could back into the spaces and then pull forward out.

Mr. Carrazana said that he thought the plan could benefit from some additional study in terms of a safety standpoint and to ensure there were adequate lines of sight between the parking and the street traffic.

Mr. Flynn said that the traffic going through the curve would likely be coming at a slow speed so they did not think there would be any issue for cars exiting the self-storage facility.

Ms. King asked if it was a nine-foot parking bay in front of the building.

Mr. Flynn said that they had five on-street parallel parking spots and four pull-in spots located near the curb.

Ms. King asked where larger semi-size moving trucks would park.

Mr. Flynn said that the parallel parking would probably be the best place. He said that they could also look into something that could back into the loading bay itself.

Ms. King said that she thought it was important they ensure large moving trucks could have space to get off Parham Circle and have space to park.

Mr. Carrazana asked about the setback 20-foot request. He asked if it would apply to two or three sides of the property.

Ms. Schweller said that for properties adjacent to residential areas, 50 feet was required, so they were requesting a special exception only for the two sides abutting residential properties, which were on the left and on the bottom in the provided map. She said that the other side would be 20 feet regardless.

Ms. King asked if this property had been marketed since the last rezoning process.

Ms. Schweller said that she did not have much information on the history of the property; she was most familiar with the land use submittals. She said that there was a previous submittal for a self-storage facility back in 2020 that was ultimately withdrawn, and that was the most recent marketing she was aware of.

Mr. Carrazana asked if any members of the public wished to speak on this item. He read the rules for public comment.

Robert Finley, 1268 Timber Branch Court, said that he served as President of the Board of Directors of the Mill Creek Homeowners Association (HOA). He said that following the presentation of the applicants at the 5th and Avon Community Advisory Committee (CAC), they had invited the applicant to appear at their HOA Board meeting in December. He said that they had a thorough discussion at that time, covering topics such as the structure's appearance, operating hours, lighting, signage, and traffic. He said that one aspect that stood out to them was the presence of by-right options in the original proffer for the shopping center development, which could lead to increased traffic.

Mr. Finley said that given the high volume of comments the HOA received about traffic, this was a significant consideration for them, particularly since Avon Street Extended was a busy thoroughfare. He said that after approximately two hours of discussion and presentation, the Mill Creek HOA was not opposed to this amendment. He said that they did have some preferences, however. He said that they believed that adhering to the step-back requirement or incorporating an architectural element that ameliorated the structure's mass and size would be beneficial. He said that the picture from 5th and Avon illustrated that the structure did not obscure the ridgetop of Carter Mountain, which was an important consideration for them. He said that nevertheless, they felt that the step-back requirement would address the structure's appearance and mass in a way that could be helpful.

Mr. Finley said that while this may be a matter for the Board of Supervisors, it was still an important consideration. He said that they also discussed the preferred appearance of the structure, specifically that the side-facing Mill Creek Drive be brick, consistent with the general architectural appearance of many structures in Albemarle County and the shopping center itself. He said that they knew that the ARB would review signage, and they expected the applicant to work with the neighborhood and the HOA to address both the appearance and visual impact of the structure. He said that he would be glad to provide any further information from the HOA Board to the Commission if needed.

Teri McGrath, 43 Creekside Circle in Charlottesville, where Mill Creek runs along Avon Extended Street, said that she was concerned about the general encroachment of development on the wildlife habitat in the surrounding area. She asked if the applicant could sell some of their acreage to the ACSA to preserve, or preserve it themselves as a tax write-off. She said that on another note, she was wondering about the feasibility of a four-story self-storage unit in this location. She said that the applicant had said this building would be on a slab, but if they had to construct a basement, they would need to go underground and probably break into the bedrock in this area. She said that doing so could have negative environmental impacts, such as release of potentially harmful gases. She said that she thought a smaller building would pose less of an issue in that regard, and this was the reason this type of use was not listed in the permitted list in the first place. She said that additionally, if this was not a climate-controlled storage facility, there were limited things that could be stored in the building. She said that on a related note, the 5th Street self-storage was not full because they did not have full humidity control for the storage units. She said that perhaps the applicant could buy that building and make it climate-controlled so that both could have a more successful business. She said that additionally, ACSA had damaged nearby homes as they blew up bedrock in this area, so there had already been detrimental effects of construction here.

Beth Grader, 39 Creekside Circle, said that her property backed up onto Avon Street. She said that during the blasting that occurred at ACSA's changes to the area over the past year had significantly impacted her home. She said that the doors no longer aligned properly, and there were cracks in various areas. She said that she was concerned about the value of her home, so she did not want blasting to continue. She said that if someone was discussing parking underneath a building, it may require blasting through the bedrock. She said that she was not certain about this. She said that although she had missed the first 10 minutes of the meeting, she did not want her house to be damaged. She said that the value of her home was extremely important to her.

Ms. Grader said that if the structure of her home was compromised, the value would decrease. She said that she did not want that to happen. She said that if a project needed to be built in that area, she would like to know that there would be no further blasting. She said that the movement of her home was a significant concern. She said that they had contacted the County, and they stated that the changes were within the supposed limits. She said that however, those limits had altered the structure of her home. She said that she did not want this to happen again. She said

that she would like to establish limits on the structural changes to the bedrock to prevent further damage to her home.

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

Mr. Murray said that from what he had seen, it was an acceptable use for the property with low traffic impacts and support of the community nearby. He said that he supported the application.

Mr. Clayborne said that the use was appropriate; however, he did have concerns about the size and scale. He said that the ARB would weigh in on that aspect, but it seemed out of scale to him. He said that from the Commission's standpoint, he was supportive of the proposed..

Ms. King said that she agreed with the proposed use and special exceptions. She said that there were not any other commercial areas in the plan located nearby. She said that she believed the residents in that area would greatly appreciate a different use. She said that although the market was not providing that, and it was not the Commission's primary concern, she understood that a storage facility was being called for by the market, which was a reasonable consideration. She said that ideally, she would have liked to see a restaurant or community amenity. She said that nevertheless, she was in favor of the application.

Mr. Murray said that he thought Ms. King had brought up an interesting point. He said that he wished these types of facilities could be built with some additional adaptability, potentially converted into another use later on if the market changed.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was also supportive of the application. He said that he assumed the developer would take all the considerations necessary if they had to blast into bedrock. He said that he had faith that they would follow the requirements for those actions.

Ms. King motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00012 Parham Circle Self Storage. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (4-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent)

Public Hearings

ZMA202300007 and SP202300009 North Pointe Amendment

Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager, said that this item involved a rezoning and an associated special use permit (CUP) for North Pointe. She said that to provide some context, North Pointe had been rezoned in 2006, 20 years prior, and the application had been submitted in 2000. She said that since then, a significant amount of change had occurred. She said that as part of this update, they aimed to simplify the application plan and proffers, only including necessary information given their updated Ordinance. She said that the request would include these updates to the application plan and proffers, as well as amending the residential special use permit, which was for R-15 uses.

Ms. Ragsdale said that for background, the property was currently zoned as Planned Development Mixed Commercial, so a special use permit was required to allow residential uses. She said that the property encompassed approximately 152 acres, which was a portion of the overall 269 acres originally approved. She said that a comparison table was provided, highlighting the changes between the existing zoning and the proposed rezoning. She said that this request focused on 707 additional units and a reduction in commercial space to 250,000 square feet. She said that additionally, there were previously approved stream crossing special use permits associated with the original request. She said that the site location was primarily situated between Proffitt Road and 29 North, with Pritchett Lane serving as the boundary with the Rural Area. She

said that the development was near Forest Lakes, the Forest Lake Shopping Center, Hollymead Town Center, Airport Acres, and the University of Virginia (UVA) Research Park across Route 29.

Ms. Ragsdale said that she would now discuss the zoning map. She said that the current underlying zoning was not proposed to be changed. She said that the map showed a mix of industrial and planned development industrial park across Route 29, as well as residential districts and commercial areas. She said that this rezoning had been submitted in 2023, so the 2015 Comprehensive Plan was applicable, and the Places 29 Master Plan reflected a mix of uses, primarily urban density residential, neighborhood density residential, and commercial mixed use. She said that the Master Plan was adopted after the North Pointe rezoning, so the land use designations were somewhat reflective of the application plan approved at the time.

Ms. Ragsdale said that in this case, they would discuss the density, which was below the recommendations of the Master Plan and commercial areas, while the square footage would be reduced, aligning with the general locations shown in the light industrial areas on the map. She said that the parcel map indicated the parcels subject to rezoning, and this was only a portion of North Point, specifically the northernmost parcels along the Rivanna River and the intended commercial area. She said that the new application plan primarily established more blocks. She said that the existing street network would remain largely the same, with Cliffstone Boulevard already built.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the major change included the relocation of the school site, originally located in the purple area, to the yellow area, which would work better for the school and include additional acreage. She said that the commercial areas would remain in the same location on the application plan, while the residential areas were shown in purple. She said that the application plan included sheets on Parks and Open Space, which would continue to offer greenway dedication along the Rivanna River. She said that the open space had been adjusted to reflect the applicant's 20-year experience with wetlands and permits, streams, and areas that could not be impacted. She said that the map showed the minimum requirements, but not the full extent of site plan requirements that would be met at Ordinance.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the next slide showed the location of parks in the purple, including trail connections that may become shared use paths. She said that they had discussed this in the report, and the applicant would clarify on the application plan. She said that the arrows on this slide were not part of the application plan, but they wanted to establish connection points and ensure public access to the greenway. She said that the application continued to provide proffers to address specific impacts, including the relocation of the school site. She said that the affordable housing proffers had been updated, and the transportation proffers would continue to address offsite impacts, including future bus pull-offs and $25,000 towards bus stop improvements, with five payments of $25,000 towards transit.

Ms. Ragsdale said that North Pointe, when approved, had a proffer schedule requiring significant cash proffers. She said that two specific proffers included $300,000 for affordable housing, which had been approved around 2006 or 2007, and the other was $100,000 for a transportation study. She said that the school site was increasing from approximately 12.7 to 13.5 acres, and the proffer still required dedication within 270 days from the County's request. She said that this was for the northern feeder pattern elementary school, which had been identified as a priority for schools, and they aimed to acquire the site as soon as possible. She said that within that deadline, they would deliver it graded and compacted, pad-ready, with utilities, and then fine-graded to accommodate athletic fields.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the proffer for affordable housing was reviewed under the pre-2024 policy, which was applicable for affordable housing. She said that under this policy, they were focused on the new units and what was proposed with this rezoning. She said that a comparison table

showed that the proposed proffers were compliant with the applicable policy, except for the period of affordability for-rent units. She said that the transportation study would certainly help answer questions, and this presentation would address any specific queries. She said that this rezoning had been under review since 2023 and included a traffic impact analysis (TIA), which examined the capacity of existing roads, planned roads, key intersections, and offsite improvements to determine if any adjustments were needed due to the change in uses and increase in residential and decrease in commercial.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the studies concluded that the existing intersections would still function at an acceptable level of service. She said that one notable change was that this rezoning no longer required the proffered improvements on the application plan for the northernmost entrance. She said that the applicant would discuss this further. She said that the traffic study had been analyzed, and there were several access points in the North Pointe area, including the existing middle entrance, the future southern entrance, and a connection to Proffitt Road. She said that there were also two emergency access points provided from Pritchett Lane; however, this was not a required improvement or phased-in improvement concurrent with trips.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the applicant would need to submit a traffic study with each site plan or trip generation figures to ensure they were staying within thresholds of the TIA and the proffers. She said that she would continue the shared use path along Cliffstone to Proffitt Road and provide opportunities for additional shared use paths along the middle entrance and possibly the northernmost entrance. She said that in summary, they had identified several positive aspects, including the contribution to additional affordable housing, which aligned with the applicable 15%. She said that it remained consistent with the land use recommendations and density outlined in the Places 29 Master Plan. She said that as previously noted, the terms of affordability for the for-rent units did not align with the applicable 2015 policy.

Ms. King said that there was a lot to consider here, particularly with regard to the changes. She said that she would like to hold her questions until after the applicant had spoken. She said that she would like to gain a better understanding of the transportation changes in this context.

Mr. Murray asked if the stream depicted on the map was an intermittent stream and if it had been tested for perennial flow.

Ms. Ragsdale said yes; blue lines on this map were streams that were intermittent and therefore did not require a buffer. She said that buffers would apply if there were any perennial streams on the property.

Mr. Murray asked if staff had conducted a site survey that had specifically identified these intermittent streams.

Ms. Ragsdale said yes, where the site plan had been approved. She said that the applicant had provided some additional information over the course of the application review process.

Mr. Murray said that he had another question regarding the conservation areas and green space. He asked if there was consistency with the total amount of green space between the two applications.

Ms. Ragsdale said yes.

Mr. Carrazana said that he wanted to clarify the extension of the road, the northern connector, and the northern entrance that would tie into Lewis and Clark. He said that it was originally supposed to be a full street, but now they were just doing that small portion. He asked if the extension would still be there for a future connection.

Ms. Ragsdale said yes, and the development of this northern parcel would certainly be served by existing streets and the extension. She said that those streets would be reviewed at the time of the site plan, and the streets shown were those that were existing or were the major streets within the development. She said that within the blocks of the development, there would be streets that would be established.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was wondering why that future connection was not shown on the map while others were.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning said that the intent was not to extent that road to Route 29 and the intersection of Lewis and Clark. He said that there were several issues that made the connection difficult to create, including a nearby creek, steep grade, and the traffic study results that supported reducing the amount of entrances and friction along this stretch of Route 29. He said that he recognized that it would be nice to have a road that intersected with North Fork; there had been a lot of issues with trying to get that road built.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the traffic study took the future school into account as a factor.

Ms. Ragsdale said yes.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the applicant had a presentation.

David Mitchell, Construction & Development Manager with Great Eastern Management, said that they were the master developer of this project, having owned it since the 1980s. He said that the property was rezoned in 2006, when regulations and market conditions were different. He said that as Ms. Ragsdale mentioned, they were seeking a reduction in commercial and an increase in residential uses. He said that he would explain their reasoning and then they could address any questions. He said that there were four main reasons for their request. He said that firstly, regulations related to Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and streams had changed and therefore they must comply. He said that secondly, market conditions had shifted significantly since 2006, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of e-commerce, such as Amazon, altering consumer needs and preferences. He said that their community needed more housing, which he believed everyone agreed on. He said that there had also been code changes and new design requirements that did not exist in 2006 when this was approved. He said that they were supportive of following current regulations; their clients and engineers understood that and were glad to follow the rules as they existed.

Mr. Mitchell said that he would also address the traffic, which they anticipated to decrease. He said that the reason they were only asking for changes to be made to some parcels and not others was because some were already developed. He said that they already had apartments with 279 units, 107 single-family, and 163 single-family homes. He said that the road and infrastructure, as well as stormwater facilities, were part of this project. He said that they were not purchasing stormwater credits, although they did have to do that for the streams they impacted, but they were treating everything on site. He said that he acknowledged the map showing the current conditions was a bit confusing, but he wanted to use it to explain the deed regulations and why they were here for the southern half of the development, for the parcels that had not been built on yet. He said that the parts that were already built respected the streams and topography because that area used to be an old farm. He said that as Mr. Murray noted, there was one perennial stream here, but it stopped in one area and picked up farther south. He said that the same pattern was observed in some other places. He said that the core allowed for crossing streams at a 90-degree angle, which was necessary to traverse from one side to the other.

Mr. Mitchell said that in the southernmost section of the property, there were many other stream segments, both perennial and intermittent. He said that He said that this land had already been

permitted with the Army Corps of Engineers, so they had a federal permit allowing for the impacts that their zoning contemplated. He said that the County had been given a copy of that permit, and they would respect those delineations as they worked through their site plan. He said that he had provided another map as an example of the impacted areas due to the perennial streams. He said that the school system was concerned about one particular stream that essentially cut the site in half, making it unusable for a school site.

Mr. Mitchell said that there were some uses that could occur within these areas, such as stormwater facilities, located outside of streams within a 50-foot or 100-foot buffer. He said that County regulations would follow as they moved through the site plan phase. He said that he had provided a breakdown of the commercial floor area, residential area, and traffic summary information. He said that the overall reduction in commercial square footage was a significant aspect of this project. He said that the difference between Ms. Ragsdale's 924,000 square feet and their 849,000 square feet was due to subtracting the school building footprint, to clarify. He said that this square footage was used in their traffic analysis, as well. He said that they had a parcel that fronted onto Pritchett, which was a leftover and would be developed into two townhomes or duplexes. He said that it did not feed into the traffic study, it was a count within the system.

Mr. Mitchell said that they were requesting 1,600 but from a traffic standpoint, but it was actually 1,598. He said that it may seem counterintuitive, but commercial square footage and commercial acreage were more intensive in terms of traffic than residential areas. He said that townhomes generated approximately 6.7 trips per day, while single-family homes generated around 9. He said that if they swapped these out, they would actually experience a 27.8% reduction in traffic. He said that this reduction was a key argument against installing the other entrance; they had reduced their traffic generation by 30%. He said that as an aside, the original plan for these entrances had included lights, stoplights, and stop signs. He said that however, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) had approved an R-Cut, which could handle 20% more traffic than a standard intersection. He said that this design removed any conflict from left-hand turn lanes, allowing for smoother traffic flow.

Mr. Mitchell said that they had also provided their zoning map, which they had already seen. He said that they had already built approximately 75% of their parks and trails. He said that he would show them some pictures of the parks, which included a pool and clubhouse, as well as a playground with features such as stump jumps and rock climbs. He said that their parks and trails were designed to be safe spaces for children to play and grow. He said that these areas included basketball courts, pickleball, tennis, and volleyball facilities. He said that as part of this project, they would add trails and a multi-use path that spanned the entire property and connected to an existing trail at a nearby townhome site. He said that they would extend this path down to a walkable area, which he personally used, and it led to a creek accessible via a public right-of-way.

Mr. Mitchell said that the multi-use path would also be connected to Route 29. He said that this path would be a 10-foot-wide bike trail and walkable path that would link the entire site to the surrounding area. He said that currently, they had bike paths along the main roads, including the trunk roads, which were lined out for safe passage. He said that he believed he had covered the main points, and he was confident that the Commission's questions would uncover any additional details.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the Commissioners had any questions for the applicant.

Ms. King asked if the residential density for the new proposal would be townhouses, condos, and apartments. She asked if there would be no more single-family detached housing.

Mr. Mitchell said that yes, that was correct, and not because it was the most ideal solution, but because of a simple topography issue. He said that due to the stream and the shape of this land, he did not have 20, 30, or 40 acres of relatively flat, rolling areas that could be divided into quarter-acre or eighth-acre lots. He said that therefore, the only thing that would fit on the rest of this property was well-suited for attached housing, such as townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and condos. He said that if they visited Short Pump, where they had commercial space in the front 250 feet and residential space in the back 250 feet, they would see that it was possible to successfully integrate townhomes and condos into a mixed-use area.

Mr. Mitchell said that the townhouse footprints he had proposed were very similar to other developments, but there were lots of options here. He said that the idea was to have commercial space on the front, such as restaurants or offices, and then residential space directly behind. He said that the reason for this was that the site's entrance was defined by a 250-foot separation requirement from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). He said that at the midpoint, it became an appropriate starting point for the residential units. He said that the commercial uses would front Route 29 and structured residential buildings would be behind that.

Ms. King asked if Mr. Mitchell could provide the existing layout of the approved development.

Mr. Mitchell said that yes, the map with the red shading showed the approved layout and the undevelopable sections around the streams. He said that to clarify, the unusable area typically encompassed more than just the banks of the stream due to providing buffers. He said that he was trying to illustrate the constraints they faced in this southern section of the site. He said that there was a previously approved stormwater facility that the Corps of Engineers no longer allowed due to stream impacts, so all of their stormwater facilities would have to be adjusted, including near the school and some underground detention facilities.

Mr. Mitchell said that their engineers had taken their best guess, but they understood that they would have to treat on-site and could not fill or impound any streams as part of the development. He said that the red area shaded in on the map showed the large amount of land that was impacted due to restrictions. He said that they had to position their stormwater facilities in some offline locations due to the constraints of the site.

Ms. King said that she was intrigued by how this development did not have specified blocks for the development sections.

Mr. Mitchell said that they chose not to block it in a sequential order so they could be able to adjust the development schedule as necessary. He said that the only thing they blocked was their traffic infrastructure, which had already been approved by VDOT. He said that they had to do that before they reached 15,000 trips per day. He said that as each site plan was approved, the County would monitor their progress, and they would create a chart to track the amount of traffic generated at each site plan approval. He said that they could not reach 20,000 trips until the commercial connection was built, and the final phase was the 25,000, which was at full build-out, and that was essentially the third lane along the entire frontage. He said that the only phased approach was for the traffic infrastructure.

Ms. King said that staff mentioned there were some issues with making the connection to Lewis and Clark Drive. She asked if Mr. Mitchell could discuss that in more detail.

Mr. Mitchell said that the main decision was that it was not necessary to handle their traffic. He said that this development and the internal road structure they were building would help solve the problem at Airport and Route 29. He said that people coming from Worth Crossing, as well as those traveling from Route 20 and other directions, would now be able to access their middle entrance and continue north without having to negotiate the traffic light right there. He said that

those traveling south would also be able to turn here. He said that this aligned with the County's overall plan, except for the Lewis and Clark Road, which provided a parallel road network to alleviate pressure on Airport Road. He said that they had more than enough infrastructure and connections to handle their traffic and the traffic that would run through their site.

He said that the issue was with the ability to do any construction in this particular area, considering Lickinghole Creek ran approximately 50 feet off the road and was about 40 feet to 45 feet below the road grade. He said that building on this site would require filling a significant area, which was approximately 75 feet to 100 feet wide of right-of-way. He said that it would be a major fill project and would impact hundreds of feet of the stream. He said that also, the turn lane would need to be built within feet of the stream bed, requiring a wall and deep footings. He said that the DEQ was concerned with the environmental impact, regardless of the cost, and would require a VDOT road and wall. He said that this posed a risk of damage from a large storm, regardless of the quality of the infrastructure. He said that if there was a requirement for an emergency connection, that may have to happen. He said that they would also be bringing the multi-use path through there, so a public right-of-way would likely be necessary.

Mr. Murray asked what the tallest height was for the buildings in this proposal.

Ms. Ragsdale said that the Zoning Ordinance allowed up to 65 feet.

Mr. Mitchell said that the applicant's viewpoint was essentially that they were happy with the uses as they were, and they would comply with all necessary County regulations and design standards as they worked through the planning and permitting processes.

Mr. Murray asked if the 65 feet was adequate.

Mr. Mitchell said that he would not be opposed to having more height, but he felt it was appropriate for the site and their expected intensity of uses.

Mr. Murray said that he noticed all of the commercial was proposed to be located along Route 29. He said that however, there had also been comments received that emphasized a desire for a commercial use that served the neighborhood. He said that he admired the Old Trail neighborhood for successfully achieving that; the commercial uses there served the neighbors and people from outside the neighborhood. He asked if the applicant had considered moving some of that commercial into the development.

Mr. Mitchell said that he was open to a flexibility standard. He said that he had conducted the math on this, and he had found that a single residential unit generated approximately the same traffic as 1000 square feet of general commercial use. He said that he would love to have that flexibility. He said that he was not making a promise, but he thought that flexibility was possible, especially in the far southern end of their area, where there was more commercial activity and the stream no longer divided the site in half.

Mr. Murray said that he would like to see some commercial in this development, perhaps along Cliffstone Boulevard or other areas that were currently underutilized.

Mr. Mitchell said that he believed a service industry would be more suitable in terms of survivability. He said that this site was in the wrong location for coffee; everyone was heading south from here in the mornings. He said that the successful coffee shops were primarily located on the west side of Route 29, as well. He said that on the other hand, they had a good location for a grocery store, as it was easily accessible and convenient for people on this side of the road. He said that they had had tenants and operators in the past, that had been hesitant to relocate due to the traffic pattern, even when the rent was very enticing. He said that it was a significant

investment to take a chance on a new business, and it was a risk that not everyone was willing to take. He said that regardless, he would be very glad to have some flexibility with the commercial component.

Mr. Clayborne said that he believed that most of his questions regarding transportation had been addressed. He said that he would like to focus on the housing aspect, as he recognized its significance to the County.

Mr. Mitchell said that he wanted to first acknowledge that there was an error in their application; it had stated five years but it should be 10 years of affordability. He said that additionally, the apartments in this development were already operational and had 42 units under the old zoning regulations which were currently provided at affordable rates for five years. He said that all of the affordable units to be developed in the future would be affordable for 10 years.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was going to ask about that so he appreciated the answer. He said that in the staff report, in the housing section it read, "however, based on the current market conditions, Housing staff found the proposed sales structure may result in little to no difference in affordable units and the market rate units. The sales price structure is in accordance with prior standards; however, the structure at this point in time does little to achieve the intended depth of affordability in today's market conditions. " He asked how the applicant planned to address that.

Mr. Mitchell said that in his view, all housing contributed to affordable housing. He said that today's new housing would become tomorrow's affordable housing. He said that to provide new, affordable housing, it required government subsidies or a nonprofit organization that was gifted land. He said that new construction was too expensive to provide at significantly affordable levels. He said that he could meet the 80% Area Median Income (AMI) level, but the 60% and lower that was part of the County's goal was not achievable for most developers. He said that from his standpoint, providing 1,600 total units, 707 more units, and 107 units that could be considered affordable. He said that they would be building attached housing, which almost always had a lower price point than the average home in Albemarle or Charlottesville. He said that he fully understood staff's point with regard to the market conditions and affordability, but he knew that what was proposed was what the developer could support and provide, which he thought was substantial.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the applicant had considered providing a mix of affordability levels. He said that other previous development proposals had offered some number of units at 40%, 60%, and 80% AMI in order to meet the County's goals for affordable housing.

Mr. Mitchell said that he understood Mr. Clayborne's point, although it was different from their conversation about the rezoning request. He said that he did not speak for every developer, but from his own perspective it was evident that anything below 80% of the current AMI was difficult to provide. He said that the current AMI in this community was rising, and part of the reason for that was because demand for housing was outstripping supply due to a variety of local factors. He said that the way that developers could help with the situation was to build as much housing as efficiently as possible and at a lower price point. He said that he could make the 80% AMI work, but he did not see a way to make the lower prices work without subsidies. He said that the County's policy spoke to that issue. He said that further, the City had done some studies and published reports that supported his position. He said that this was a bigger conversation than what was included in this application.

Mr. Clayborne said that he understood Mr. Mitchell's perspective and agree that more units was a benefit. He said that however, the rapid increase in the AMI level in the County was also happening because people were being priced out and moving away to less expensive areas.

Mr. Mitchell said that he agreed. He said that when interest rates were low and a high amount of capital was in the market, people would pay more for the same thing that may be cheaper somewhere else. He said that in this community, they had a lot of people move here who were wealthy enough to pay a little bit more, and that built on itself over time. He said that when there was not enough housing in general, it compounded that problem. He said that he understood Mr. Clayborne's comment that people were moving out; he believed they were being forced out because they were not building enough housing.

Mr. Clayborne asked what the timeline was for full build-out of this project.

Mr. Mitchell said that it would be 10 or 12 years at least.

Mr. Carrazana said that he would like to also address the issue of affordability and highlight its relevance to their application. He said that this was a large development that had been constructed over many years. He said that previously, they operated under different housing guidelines. He said that the County had since updated its policies, and many developers were able to adapt and capitalize on available subsidies. He said that in contrast, this development was not taking advantage of these incentives. He said that as a result, they were revisiting their application to make an amendment, yet they were not revising their housing plan.

Mr. Mitchell said that he was meeting the policies that were in place in 2023 when they submitted this application, so he did not think that was a fair statement. He said that they were meeting the requirements.

Mr. Carrazana said that he was not saying the applicant was not meeting that policy. He said that he was questioning why they were not trying to address the County's new policy.

Mr. Mitchell said that their original rezoning from 2006 included 12.6% affordable housing. He said that they had provided 61 units under that agreement, and everything going forward, including units that had not yet been built, would be brought up to 15%.

Mr. Carrazana said that the 15% referred to the previous housing policy, not the current Housing Albemarle policy.

Mr. Mitchell said that yes, they were meeting the 2023 policy.

Mr. Carrazana said that they had a new policy now that most developments were meeting. He said that his point was that they were a large developer that was not meeting the new policy. He asked staff if the ten-year affordability period dated back to the original application.

Ms. Ragsdale said that she would need to review the old proffers to confirm, but she believed they were consistent with the proffers that were in place now.

Mr. Mitchell said that the proffers were written specifically for this project and before the County had any affordable housing goals. He said that they provided 12.6% affordable units and would bring 15% affordable units in the new construction with this development. He said that 400 units, plus the 707 others, would be 15% affordable units from 80% AMI for 10 years.

Mr. Carrazana said that he appreciated the clarification. He asked about the topography for the northern road at the intersection of Lewis and Clark.

Mr. Mitchell said that the elevation point in question was over 120 feet.

Mr. Carrazana asked if it remained at that level as one moved southward along Route 29.

Mr. Mitchell said that the stream bed was at the same elevation, approximately. He said that then, it diverted away from Route 29. He said that the land picked up there but was still flat. He said that they had to cross the creek at one point. He said that the buildable area of this lot was a knoll in terms of shape, and it dropped off steeply at the edges. He said that they also had to build significant retaining walls here.

Mr. Murray said that he had a question regarding that. He said that while a road may not be practical, he wondered if the applicant had considered the possibility of establishing a pedestrian or bicycle connection there.

Mr. Mitchell said that yes, they were going to do that. He said that they decided to take the multi-use path that was currently located in this traffic circle. He said that they would extend the multi-use path, which currently ended there, and run it through the entire project. He said that the specifics of how and where this would be done were still to be determined, as it would depend on the site plan. He said that it was likely that the path would cross an existing old farm road culvert, approximately 10 feet wide, located near the top of the roadbed. He said that he believed it should be possible to install a multi-use path across this culvert without negatively impacting the streams, by repairing the culvert, addressing the erosion, and avoiding a direct crossing into the stream. He said that they would change the proffer to reflect that as they moved forward.

Ms. King said that there may be some issues with crossing Route 29 there.

Mr. Mitchell said that it would depend on what VDOT determined as an appropriate solution.

Ms. King said that it was still difficult for her to envision which blocks were commercial in the previous plan versus what the new plan included. She asked if there was a major change in terms of what was commercial and what would now be residential.

Mr. Mitchell said that the reductions to the commercial square footage were primarily due to restrictions from the Army Corps of Engineers, which required them to protect more area around the streams. He said that the County's perennial stream regulations also impacted that.

Mr. Murray asked if the applicant would consider allowing all the blocks in the development to include both commercial and residential.

Mr. Mitchell said that as long as the uses remained the same, that was all that was necessary in order for the traffic study to remain valid. He said that ultimately, they would allow the market to dictate what would be built, and this plan was based on what people wanted. He said that if the numbers remained the same, he would be amenable to the possibility of having either commercial or residential, but he would be surprised if commercial development occurred on the east side of that primary road. He said that he would appreciate the flexibility, but he was wary of expecting commercial to happen in this area.

Ms. King said that they had received a lot of feedback from the community regarding safety and having Lewis and Clark Road. She said that the new road that connected to Proffitt would, as the applicant stated, provide a parallel option, and it would put commercial traffic back onto Route 29 without taking it into the residential area. She said that in that regard, she was less supportive of putting commercial in that residential area because it could lead to increased traffic throughout the neighborhood.

Mr. Mitchell said that if they had commercial in here, they would have a lot more people driving past this traffic circle and going to the middle entrance. He said that people would likely go as far north as possible before going back on Route 29.

Ms. King said that she thought it would be beneficial to keep the commercial closer to the highway and not flowing into the residential area. She said that she also thought it was important to note a community concern about the commercial uses. She asked if the applicant had considered proffering restrictions on commercial uses.

Mr. Mitchell said no. He said that the commercial uses laid out in the County Ordinance had been vetted for the past 20 years and were decided by the Planning Commission and elected officials. He said that if there were uses the County had decided may have negative impacts and needed special use permits, they should go through that process of mitigating those impacts. He said that he thought all the uses should remain available.

Recess

The Commission took a five-minute recess.

Mr. Carrazana called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Carrazana asked if any members of the public wished to speak on ZMA202300007 and SP202300009 North Pointe Amendment.

Mara DeCapua, 4013 Cliffview Court, said that her property was adjacent to some of the new development. She said that she would like to share a few thoughts. She said that she had a letter signed by over 100 residents in her community, which summarized some of the public comments received. She said that she wanted to be clear that the residents of North Pointe supported the continued growth of their neighborhood. She said that many of them had chosen to call North Pointe home because of its thoughtful planning and the vision of a growing community that welcomed new families of all types and provided opportunities for them. She said that at the same time, they believed that responsible growth must be paired with infrastructure and safety planning that matched the scale of that growth.

Ms. DiCapua said that these concerns were particularly relevant given the plan for a new elementary school within the development and the proposed significant increase in residential density. She said that when Mr. Mitchell shared his plans, he mentioned a 27% decrease in traffic in the commercial area. She said that however, this decrease would not be in the residential area, which was a concern because the proposed increase in residential units would add to the traffic in that area. She said that under the proposal, all that traffic would be funneled onto Cliffstone Boulevard, which would be the only way out of the neighborhood. She said that this was particularly concerning to them because Cliffstone Boulevard was also the location of many amenities, including a playground, community pool, neighborhood clubhouse, school bus stops, and green space. She said that once the new school opened, students would be walking to school, and they would be walking along that main road, which would be the only way for traffic to flow out of the neighborhood.

Ms. DeCapua said that this raised legitimate safety concerns for current and future residents that should be seriously considered. She said that when North Pointe was originally approved, the development plan had included an access point at Lewis and Clark, which was intended to distribute traffic more evenly and provide direct access to Route 29 through a signalized intersection. She said that this would have reduced congestion and provided another way out of the neighborhood besides the main road through. She said that although the developer had indicated that this connection was no longer feasible, they believed it was reasonable to revisit its importance.

Ms. DeCapua said that finally, because a new elementary school would be located within this family-centered community, they encouraged thoughtful consideration of the types of businesses

permitted in the commercial footprint. She said that specifically, they were asking the commission to consider excluding establishments such as adult-only bars, gun stores, tobacco or vape shops, 24-hour gyms, and storage facilities. She said that in closing, North Point residents supported thoughtful growth. She said that their request was straightforward: that growth be accompanied by infrastructure and safety planning that protected the families who currently resided there and those who would call this community home in the future.

Steven Taylor, 4019 Cliffview Court, said that he lived in the North Pointe Development. He said that he was not opposed to the proposed growth in their community and the additional higher-density housing units. He said that their region did need more moderately priced housing. He said that he agreed that increasing the supply in the right places was important to maintaining their community's vibrancy, accessibility, and economic competitiveness. He said that his comments tonight were not about NIMBY-ism; this was not about turning people away or closing off their community. He said that his concerns were genuinely about traffic and safety.

Mr. Taylor said that cities like Houston and Minneapolis had demonstrated that careful planning and attention to traffic and safety could lead to successful, well-curated, high-density unit neighborhoods. He said that his concern here was specifically that they had a number of children in their neighborhood who would be walking to the proposed school, and the increased density would inevitably lead to more daily vehicle trips, including heavier delivery vehicles.

Mr. Taylor said that currently, they already experienced traffic congestion during peak times, particularly on Northside Drive, where backups of a dozen or more cars were common waiting to exit onto Route 29. He said that this existing congestion already created challenges. He said that if they added more housing without improving traffic flow, those conditions would only worsen, and that raised real safety concerns for residents, families, and children. He said that fortunately, there was a practical solution that had been vetted and envisioned in the earlier planning process. He said that it had been mentioned in some of the documents shared by the developer earlier, and that was the extension of Lewis and Clark Drive through Route 29.

Mr. Taylor said that completing this connection would help disperse traffic, reduce congestion, and improve overall safety in the neighborhood. He said that notably, Lewis and Clark Drive would directly abut behind his house, so he was one of the residents most impacted by a busier road being put into the community. He said that however, he believed it was a necessary component of the growth plan for the community, and he thought the developers and the Planning Commission should consider requiring Lewis and Clark Drive to extend all the way to Route 29 to alleviate some of the traffic concerns, particularly in the northernmost part of the community.

Roger Hahn, 3272 Thicket Run Drive, said that he lived in the North Pointe neighborhood. He said that he had submitted his letter and shared it via email, so he would not be reading it verbatim here. He said that he wanted to share some of his concerns that he had been observing and hearing in this room. He said that from his perspective, he supported the previous speakers' statements and agreed that increasing housing availability and density within their community was supported. He said that he believed there was already sufficient shopping centers on Route 29, so converting more commercial properties to residential ones was a positive thing.

Mr. Hahn said that he was primarily concerned with the traffic and safety implications. He said that the elimination of the Lewis and Clark connection, combined with VDOT's refusal to add more traffic lights to Route 29, had created a perfect storm. He said that most traffic coming out of this area was heading south. He said that this forced all traffic to converge on a single bottleneck - the area in front of the elementary school - which would also be a critical walking route for students. He said that he believed safety should be the top priority, and he thought reinstating the Lewis and Clark connection was an option worth exploring. He said that ultimately, it came down

to prioritizing safety over financial considerations, particularly when it came to the well-being of their children.

Susan Pfeffer, 4012 Cliffview Court, said that her concern was regarding the northern extension. She said that specifically, she was referring to the large block of purple on the maps that was currently being proposed, which was not present before. She said that she had listened carefully to Ms. King's explanation, as it appeared that the proposed changes would result in the addition of 350 residential units within the circle, where the existing houses were located. She said that this would lead to increased traffic, with approximately 700 cars passing through the circle daily, multiple times a day, as the only exit would be via that current route. She said that they really needed the exit at the end.

Melissa Lissonberry, 3218 Cliffstone Boulevard, said that some of her comments would echo the concerns the Commission expressed, primarily regarding traffic. She said that she supported the development, and she understood the interest of the developer and the County in including more housing. She said that however, it was in no one's interest to create a bad situation. She said that as they had been trying to point out this evening, the proposed development was a recipe for disaster. She said that currently, only a fraction of the development was occupied, and even under the old plan, the County recognized that there would be traffic issues and warned of them; they were already seeing those issues. She said for instance, most of the traffic was currently going south on Route 29, resulting in backups.

Ms. Lissonberry said when traffic was really backed up, people would start taking unnecessary risks, such as cutting across Route 29 North in shorter time frames than are safe. She said that in the turnaround, people would form two lanes and attempt to turn south, creating a hazardous situation. She said that looking into the future, traffic in the development was expected to be more than fourfold, including visitors, contractors, and school traffic. She said that the problem had been noted for a long time and was only going to get worse. She said that now was the time to take action and address this issue. She said that if they did not, when an accident did happen, they would all be saying they should have seen it coming. She said that it may require significant funding to make the development safe, or perhaps the housing density should be reduced.

Ms. Lissonberry said it was a pressing concern, particularly around the school, as pickup times at other schools were already challenging. She said that bundling all community traffic through the school area was not workable. She said that when the developer presented his plan earlier, he mentioned alleviating traffic on nearby roads. She said that however, that was not possible if all the traffic was funneled into the neighborhood. She said that the development could not support the proposed traffic volume without other routes through. She said that she urged the County to take immediate action to prevent a catastrophic accident and ensure public safety through appropriate planning.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the applicant would like to respond to any of the public comments.

Mr. Mitchell said that first, he wanted to clarify that the school site had always been part of this development. He said that when it came to kids walking to school, that was why they had a 10-foot shared use path running down the middle of this project. He said that it was clear that conflicts between cars and pedestrians were inevitable, but this was the best way to handle them. He said that the traffic study was holistic, taking into account the entire project, not just the part they were redoing. He said that they had considered all traffic in the entire project, and the northwest residential area where the Lewis and Clark connection was previously had always been a residential section. He said that the addition of 166 townhome units had increased the number in the area, but the residential component itself was not new.

Mr. Mitchell said that R-cuts were safer than traditional intersections, with more capacity, and the VDOT standard was being followed. He said that they also did have emergency access points already in place, which had been reviewed and approved by the Fire Department, and any other necessary emergency access points would be built. He said that he also wanted to revisit the traffic aspect. He said that if the Lewis and Clark connection was built, it would drive even more traffic through the project, past the apartments and the middle traffic circle, and into the residential neighborhood. He said that most of the housing would be north of the main traffic circle and middle entrance. He said that creating a parallel road network would only exacerbate the issue, as traffic would follow the path of least resistance. He said that in the end, he believed that the Lewis and Clark connection was not a necessary improvement to handle the traffic they were generating.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the applicant could explain the difference between the R-cut and a traffic signal.

Mr. Mitchell said that essentially, an R-cut was an elongated, compressed traffic circle. He said that the intent was to prevent traffic from stopping as people merged into the flow. He said that going straight across or turning left through an intersection would require a light, so instead the R-cut would take traffic right, merging over, or making a U-turn if they wanted to go south. He said that the point was that the U-turn would not require traffic to stop to get on the main through-fare. He said that the design was intended to eliminate conflicts in the traffic movements and provide safer, quicker movements than traffic lights.

Mr. Barnes said that he wanted to add that they could signalize R-cuts if necessary. He said that the proffers for this application stated that the developer would signalize R-cuts when the traffic levels warranted it.

Mr. Mitchell said that that was correct; according to their proffer, if VDOT determined that a light was necessary, they would install a light.

Mr. Carrazana asked what the timeline was for the southern development and intersection.

Mr. Mitchell said that the first step was to address the purple area. He said that as soon as they received a rezoning within 60 days, they would submit a site plan for the entire project. He said that the reality was that he would need to build the blue section to meet the 20,000 vehicle trips per day. He said that they would be doing a lot of heavy work within two years and that connection would be part of that. He said that the pink-colored road was completed, and that blue section was the only thing that needed to be built to make the entire intersection functional. He said that the commercial improvements would likely occur after they reached full build-out at 25,000 vehicle trips per day.

Mr. Murray said that he strongly encouraged the applicant to work with staff to ensure that community-scale commercial was allowed in the two purple blocks behind the blue blocks.

Ms. Ragsdale said that she believed they could incorporate that comment and find a way to update the plan to accommodate a neighborhood-scale commercial development in those two purple areas.

Mr. Carrazana closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission. He asked if staff could discuss some of the improvements along Route 29.

Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning, said that there was a third northbound lane that the developer was proposing as a proffer.

Mr. Carrazana asked if there was a date associated with that. He said that he presumed that was a VDOT project.

Mr. McDermott said that the developer was required by the proffer to build it before they reached 25,000 vehicles per day. He said that it appeared that they may be considering building it earlier, but that was the requirement by 25,000 vehicles per day. He said that currently, VDOT had no proposals for any improvements in this section of Route 29. He said that they did have a future study planned for Airport Road, which North Fork had contributed to. He said that this study may lead to some improvements in the future on that section. He said that the developer had sufficient flexibility to avoid conflicting improvements at the intersection of Proffitt and Route 29.

Ms. King said that with respect to the applicant's proposals regarding the ingress and egress of this development, and the changes that had occurred since the original Lewis and Clark connection road was included, she would like to address the key points that have changed. She said that the applicant had mentioned two main changes: first, the updated DEQ requirements related to streams, and second, the changes to the Route 29 corridor. She said that she believed these changes were significant, particularly in light of the improvements made at Rio Road, which were part of a statewide effort to enhance traffic flow along Route 29 through their regional area.

Ms. King said that, as VDOT had stated, their intention was not to add more stoplights to Route 29, but rather to provide alternative access to the commercial development through secondary parallel roads to Route 29. This aligned with the R-cut, which she believed made sense in this context. She said that she appreciated the developer's inclusion of a proffer to add a third lane from Airport Road through the property, which would help increase traffic flow in the area. She said that she did not have any concerns regarding traffic, as the neighborhood was designed to meet VDOT standards, featuring roundabouts, crosswalks, sidewalks, and shared use paths, making it safe for the proposed amount of units and trips.

Mr. Murray said that he was generally in agreement. He said that he believed he understood the concerns. He said that it appeared that if the road could have been built, he would have advocated for its construction. He said that from an engineering standpoint, more connectivity was always valuable, but it did not seem practical in this circumstance, and he did not see it as a necessary component. He said that he thought this was the Development Area, where they had decided to prioritize density. He said that he thought this approach made sense. He said that as he mentioned earlier, he was not entirely comfortable with the commercial development along Route 29.

Mr. Murray said that if they were discussing long-term improvements to Route 29, having commercial lined up along the entire stretch as a strip mall was not ideal. He said that he believed if they truly wanted to achieve the vision of the Places 29 Master Plan, they would be integrating commercial into their neighborhoods, allowing people to walk to the commercial. He said that he hoped that some of that could happen. He said that he would like to call out the discussion in the staff notes regarding clarifying public access to the greenway. He said that he hoped that this clarification could be included in the design as well.

Mr. Clayborne said that he believed the proposal had its merits, but also areas for improvement. He said that he was in favor of reducing the amount of commercial space and increasing housing; however, he was not confident that the applicant was presenting their best case for housing and he wanted to be straightforward about that. He said that he had seen smaller projects have a greater impact, and he thought it was unfortunate that this amount of housing was being proposed here. He said that their housing experts, with only one staff member, had expressed concerns that the proposed sales price structure may have little to no difference between affordable and market-rate units. He said that he found this seriously disappointing, given this project's size. He said that when he reviewed the proposal, he was unclear about the applicant's intentions, and he

was not convinced that it was about the means. He said that he did not have the pro forma for this development, so he could not speak to that point any further. He also said that he thought it was disappointing that there was no willingness to restrict some commercial uses next to a school. He said that at this point, he was undecided on this project but was eager to hear his colleagues' thoughts.

Mr. Carrazana said that he did not disagree with Mr. Clayborne's disappointment; he shared the sentiment. He said that he believed that this was an opportunity to take a better step forward in terms of housing, although he appreciated the efforts being made in terms of schools, which they did not get with every development and this was a great location for that school. He said that however, while they appreciated that, he thought the size of this development seemed conducive to better housing options. He said that he was glad this request included 10-year affordability provisions, at least. He said that he did think that in terms of traffic and road improvements, more connections were better, so he would ask that staff look into ways for potential connections in the future. He said that they did not know what else would ultimately develop in this area, so cutting it off entirely and making it impossible to have a future connection may not be the most forward-thinking planning they could do.

Mr. Carrazana said that while he was disappointed with the housing component, he believed there were more positives and negatives to consider. He said that he appreciated the additional lane, which he thought would be beneficial for northbound traffic on Route 29, and he looked forward to seeing how VDOT addressed the southbound traffic. He said that he agreed with Mr. Murray's comments about having more flexibility in the placement of commercial areas. He said that he thought this would be a positive inclusion. He said that there were some potential locations on the southern side that could accommodate commercial development. He said that he would also encourage the developer to consider a more diverse mix of housing, including residential units above commercial spaces. He said that he believed they should strive to be more creative with their housing stock. He said that overall, he was supportive of the application.

Mr. Murray said that it was a shame that they had become locked into this concept of providing affordable housing for only a certain number of years. He said that what would be truly valuable would be if the developer gave ownership of some of the units to a housing trust, which could provide the affordability into the far future.

Ms. King said that it was important to note that doing that was not limited by this application and had worked in other areas of the County. She said that recently, other developers had worked with the Community Land Trust to provide permanent affordable housing in townhouse developments. She said that that could still be an option here. She said that although they could probably not require it, they could suggest it to the applicant as an option. She said that her opinion on affordable housing at this juncture was that they needed to provide all types of housing at all of levels of price. She said that increasing the inventory with this development was beneficial to affordability overall. She said that it would continue to help them with market-rate and affordable housing units, because the market rate would likely be lower due to a larger inventory. She said that this was an important factor in this application.

Mr. Clayborne said that he agreed that more housing was better. He said that however, he had a problem with seeing other developers push the envelope more. He said that he was looking for a good partner for the County.

Ms. King said that it certainly put a higher cost burden on a smaller development. She said that it was a good point.

Mr. Clayborne said that the median home price in the County was around $500,000. He said that he did not live in a big, fancy neighborhood, but there were few homes under $600,000 at this point. He said that 80% of that was still a high cost for normal people.

Mr. Murray said that he was just talking with his wife about the current affordable housing levels the County was considering would be barely affordable for their household.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was looking for a good partner in that sense, and did not necessarily see it with this development.

Ms. King motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA202300007 as presented. Mr. Clayborne seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (4-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent)

Ms. King motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of SP202300009 as presented. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (4-0). (Ms. Firehock and Mr. Moore were absent)

Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: February 25, 2026 and March 4, 2026

Mr. Barnes said that at the February 25, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting, the County Executive presented his proposed budget, and that was the only item on the agenda that day. He said that the March 4, 2026 meeting had a few presentations in the afternoon, including the Zoning Modernization process, the current Smart Scale applications being considered this year, and a public hearing on the proposed budget.

Committee Reports

Mr. Murray said that although it was not a committee, he attended the Active Mobility Summit, which included a lot of interesting information. He said that a presentation covered the work being done in Roanoke and their outdoor recreation economy. He said that it was interesting to hear how Roanoke's program originated from their Economic Development Authority. He said that when they conducted an analysis, they realized they had been overlooking the significance of their natural surroundings, treating them more like a backdrop rather than a valuable asset. He said that the presence of mountains and natural features was a major draw for companies looking to locate in the area, as it provided employees with access to parks, connectivity, and other recreational opportunities.

Mr. Murray said that their analysis effectively quantified the economic impact of these factors on the community. He said that notably, the presentation highlighted the significant economic impact of the active recreation economy in Virginia, with a total value of $14.4 billion. He said that it also cited the role of quality of life in attracting major businesses like Wells Fargo to Roanoke. He said that considering these findings, he began to think about the implications for Albemarle County, particularly in relation to their parks, greenways, and the Three Notch'd Trail, their connection to the Shenandoah, and Blue Ridge Mountains in terms of how their environment might impact their community in that sense.

Mr. Barnes said that he could send those presentations to the Commission.

Ms. King said that she attended the 29 Hydraulic Community Advisory Committee meeting. She said that this month, they did not hold a community meeting, but they did hear a transportation update, which was quite interesting. She said that there was a significant amount of feedback, and some exciting developments were on the horizon for Hydraulic. She said that one notable

example was the roundabout at District Avenue and Hydraulic, which was scheduled to begin construction in the fall of 2027. She said that the bidding process was expected to open soon.

New Business

Mr. Clayborne said that regarding the County's budget, he was wondering if there was a schedule for budget outreach meetings for their Community Advisory Committees (CACs) this year.

Mr. Barnes said that yes, he could send that to the Commission.

Old Business

Mr. Murray asked when the Riparian Buffer Ordinance would be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Barnes said that he could not recall the exact date, but he knew it was scheduled within the next couple of months. He said that he could find the date and would provide it to the Commission.

Adjournment

At 8:45 p.m., the Commission adjourned to March 24, 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: