Albemarle County Planning Commission
May 20, 2008

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a meeting, work session and public hearing on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Lane Auditorium, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were Marcia Joseph, Bill Edgerton, Thomas Loach, Linda Porterfield and Calvin Morris, Chairman. Commissioners absent were Eric Strucko and Jon Cannon, Vice Chairman. Julia Monteith, AICP, non-voting representative for the University of Virginia was absent.

Other officials present were David Benish, Chief of Planning; Susan Stimart, Business Development Facilitator; Joan McDowell, Principal Planner; Bill Fritz, Chief of Current Development; Amelia McCulley, Director of Current Development and Zoning and Greg Kamptner, Deputy County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Mr. Morris called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and established a quorum.

Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public:

Mr. Morris invited comment from the public on other matters not listed on the agenda. There being none, the meeting moved to the next item.

Consent Agenda:

SDP-2008-00020 Whitehouse Commercial Preliminary Site Plan
Request for preliminary site plan approval for construction of commercial office space in three two-story office buildings totaling 65,120 square feet on 4.81 acres zoned HC - Highway Commercial. The property, described as Tax Map 78 Parcel 11 is located in the Rivanna Magisterial District on the proposed Olympia Drive in the Pantops Development Area between the Pavilions Townhomes development (currently under construction), the CarMax and Free Bridge Auto sites. The Comprehensive Plan designates this property as Regional Service in Urban Area 3. (Lisa Glass)

Mr. Morris asked if any Commissioner would like to pull the item from the consent agenda for discussion.

Ms. Joseph commented that she appreciated Lisa Glass sending her a copy of the previous site plan. After comparing the new site plan she felt that there was an improvement in the site plan itself.

Motion: Ms. Joseph moved, Ms. Porterfield seconded for approval of the consent agenda.

The motion passed by a vote of 5:0. (Mr. Cannon and Mr. Strucko were absent.)

Work Sessions:

ZTA-2006-00001 Country Stores ZTA (Joan McDowell)

In summary, the Planning Commission held a work session on ZTA-2006-0001, Country Stores, which was in response to the Board's direction to propose ways to improve and preserve Albemarle's country stores. The work session provided an opportunity for discussion of some issues which have surfaced during the development of the proposed zoning text amendment. In a power point presentation, staff reviewed several implementation methods being considered. Since some of these methods represent changes in the standard practices and policies, staff wanted input from the Planning Commission before progressing in the ordinance language development. The Commission reviewed and discussed the proposal, made comments and suggestions and answered the questions posed by staff. Public comment

was taken. No formal action was taken. The Planning Commission provided the following comments to staff's questions.

Issue One: Septic Systems: Question - Would the Planning Commission support alternative septic disposal?

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to agree with staff's recommendation to allow alternative sewage disposal fields on country store sites for the country store use only with the following caveats.

- Only accept with Health Department approval;
- Maintenance of the alternative systems required before 2009 if put in effect before the July, 2009 State Health Department regulation; and
- The country store use itself must justify the need; the other uses within the building are optional and should not be used as a justification for an alternative sewage disposal field.

Issue 2: Mixed Uses: Should country store buildings be allowed to contain other uses?

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that country store buildings be allowed to contain other uses as recommended by staff. There were some concerns expressed about the office use being supportive of the country store use. The Commission supported that the percentage of building square footage devoted to the country store use must be a minimum of 51 percent, in order make certain that the country store use is the primary use in the country store building.

Issue 3: Expeditious Review
Encouraging a revival of country stores includes providing a review process by which the County can assure that the public health, safety and welfare are protected, while providing an expeditious review for the applicant.

Question: Four classes of country stores are proposed:

1. Class A – an existing country store that is continuing or will be re-established in its original country store building, without need of exterior changes in appearance. This will be a by-right use.
2. Class B – a country store or other use to be located in an existing country store building that has undergone a material change in appearance in the 50 years prior to the date of the application.
3. Class C – a country store to be located on an existing footprint (or portion of the footprint of a former country store building). The original building no longer exists. The footprint would be determined by the Director of Zoning.
4. Class D – a new country store not located on a footprint that was a former country store. These will require a special use permit.

Should Class B and Class C be required to have a special use permit or should they be processed with an administrative (technical) review?

Discussion: Applicants for special use permits in the RA are typically novices in dealing with these types of applications. In most cases, this is the first and only time they will have individual contact with a legislative process. Staff recognizes that the special use permit process can be expensive and timely to complete, especially for applicants not familiar with the process. In the interest of providing all the necessary reviews, but in the most expeditious way, administrative review should be considered for country stores that want to expand (Class B) and country stores to be constructed on the footprint (Class C) of a store that is no longer standing. Existing stores (Class A) would be by-right uses and new stores would be required to be reviewed under the special use permit process, as there may be adjacent or community concerns that require public input. The primary distinction between a special use permit process and an administrative review is that of public involvement, but any administrative review application may be "called up" for Planning Commission review. However, denial of this type of application is limited to those cases in which specific requirements of the ordinance are not met. Also, all applications on Entrance Corridors would be subject to the review of the Architectural Review Board.

Staff recommends that country stores Class B and Class C be administratively reviewed.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to support staff's recommendation to treat Class A and Class B Country Stores as a by-right uses, since they would be located in existing buildings. The importance of the historic building was stressed. Class C and Class D should require a special use permit, since the building does not exist. It was suggested that Class C and Class D should be merged into one Class; these would be evaluated as new construction. Public comment was received from Mr. Joseph Jones, owner of a country store in Whitehall, asked that consideration be given to allow a post office in a country store, which would require some loosing of regulations to allow alternative systems and some additional uses such as offices in the country store.

Staff will take the Planning Commission's direction and bring back proposed ordinance language.

Economic Development Policy (Workforce Strategies) (David Benish/Susan Stimart)

In summary, the Planning Commission held a work session on the Economic Development Policy to discuss in greater detail the workforce data, programmatic opportunities for addressing workforce needs and possible changes to the Policy's "Objective VI – Provide Workforce Development Opportunity." The Commission agreed at their April 29, 2008 work session to focus on priority strategies for improving workforce development and helping to foster career-ladder jobs. Susan Stimart presented a power-point presentation concerning employment trends, poverty data, median income data and suggested revisions to the Economic Development Policy's strategies under Objective VI. The Planning Commission held a discussion and provided comments and suggestions. No formal action was taken. Public comment was taken.

- Valerie Palamountain spoke concerning several local programs specifically geared to career development and workforce training initiatives such as the One-Stop Center and Piedmont Futures.
- Neil Williamson, of Free Enterprise Business Forum, said that it was important that everything in the Comp Plan and the actions they take focus on the overall economic development. It is important to note that the accountability he sees clearly written into this policy is refreshing. He encouraged specific metrics be created that provide data for Ms. Stimart's office to create an annual report card. Albemarle County has a striking 54 percent of folks with degrees and they still have an underserved population and they need to be certain that they recognize that as they move forward with economic development.
- Mike Harvey, Executive Director of TJPED, spoke concerning the organization's role as a service provider, including holding the regional site license for the new business-retention software, "Executive Pulse."

The Planning Commission proposed the following changes to the suggested revisions to the Economic Development Policy:

- On 1 and 2 there was a request to provide more intent of this strategy to be followed by the specificity. The first two sentences struck through should be left in.

- Regarding the specific measures make them more inclusive of other options including the specific measures provided.

- Add retraining in 4 into the initial statement to read, "education, training and retraining.

- More emphasis should be made on teaching real life skills. Add should focus on being well rounded.

- Add "executive pulse" or similar software in future.

Old Business:

There being no old business, the meeting moved to the next item.

New Business:

There being no new business, the meeting moved to the next item.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Edgerton moved, Ms. Porterfield seconded to adjourn to the Wednesday, May 21 joint Board of Supervisors meeting. The motion was approved by a vote of 5:0. (Mr. Cannon and Mr. Strucko were absent.)

With no further items, the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m. to the Wednesday, May 21, 2008 joint Board of Supervisors meeting at 1:30 p.m. at the County Office Building, Room 241, Second Floor, Auditorium, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

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V. Wayne Cilimberg, Secretary

(Recorded and transcribed by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)