ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
401 MCINTIRE ROAD – LANE AUDITORIUM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2017 – 4:00 P.M.
Joint Meeting with Board of Supervisors

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a joint work session on Wednesday, January 18, 2017, at 4:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Lane Auditorium, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Commissioners attending were Jennie More, Bruce Dotson, Daphne Spain, Mac Lafferty, Pam Riley, Tim Keller, Chair and Bill Palmer, UVA Representative. Absent was Karen Firehock, Vice Chair.

Other officials present were Andrew Gast-Bray, Director of Planning and Community Development Department (CDD) and John Blair, Deputy County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Ms. Mr. Tim Keller, Chair, called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

Ms. McKeel, Chair of Board of Supervisors, called the Board of Supervisors meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Norman G. Dill, Ms. Ann Mallek, Ms. Diantha H. McKeel, Ms. Liz A. Palmer, Mr. Rick Randolph, and Mr. Brad L. Sheffield.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Thomas C. Foley, County Attorney, Greg Kamptner, Clerk, Claudette Borgersen, and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis O. Morris.

Ms. McKeel announced that Mr. Sheffield would be arriving late to the meeting.

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Agenda Item No. 2. Joint Work Session with Planning Commission

Item No. 2a. Small Area Plan.

Mr. Andrew Gast-Bray, Director of Planning, addressed the Board and Commission. He introduced Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic and Mr. Mike Callahan of Renaissance Planning Group, who would be presenting.

Mr. Mike Callahan addressed the Board and Commission to present the outcomes of the first phase of the two-phased Places 29 small area planning project, stating that his

team would address concepts, application of them, and challenges for the study area. He said they would share findings from the process, including key concepts that were garnered from the public and key stakeholders, as well as identifying what is needed for Phase Two. Mr. Callahan stated that when the Renaissance team was before them in September, they shared some of this information, but he would reiterate some details. He explained that the Route 29 small area study area goes from Branchlands Boulevard at Toys R Us, up to the river, to the west to capture all of Berkmar, and to the east to capture the higher density residential and commercially zoned land. Mr. Callahan noted that it did not include the vast majority of single-family dwellings in the area. He stated that the area is largely a strip-mall retail environment now, and the Places 29 contains an existing vision to transform it into something new.

Mr. Callahan stated that Renaissance would affirm the vision of transformation in the area, but also had to assess the study area, explore data, understand the market conditions, both current and potential for the future, and conduct a lot of outreach, which was a major component of the 10-month effort starting in May 2016. He noted that the outreach included several public meetings, several meetings with property owners and citizen advisory committees for the area, staff-level discussions, and engagement with the Board and Commission.

Mr. Callahan emphasized that the vision for the area is transformational, not a continuation of past trends, and the key concept for making this happen is a 15-minute walkable community, which would organize future development into “nodes,” rather than spread thinly throughout the area. He added that one of the benefits of this form is allowing transit to serve successfully in the area, and through this effort, they have identified three potential nodes, with help from the public and stakeholders in terms of clear direction on priorities and phasing intent for development. He stated that the second phase would need to address the design of the nodes and form of development, the transportation issue and strategy for developing that, and zoning and implementation strategies to achieve that vision. Mr. Callahan noted that the strategies would need to include a new form of development for the area.

Mr. Gavrilovic addressed the Board and Commission, stating that Renaissance is honored to have been selected as part of the statewide team assigned to this urban development area grant. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that one of the focuses of the project was to refine and clarify Albemarle’s policy vision in Places 29 with concepts such as the 15-minute walkable community, which is evident in places like downtown Charlottesville and Arlington. He said this was the preferred form of development prior to the auto-centric era, but communities are returning to a more walkable environment. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that some of the characteristics are that you can walk five to seven minutes from center to edge, so it is a quarter to half-mile radius, with a mix of uses and destinations that provide a diversity of walkable options, and a grid of streets that support multiple modes of travel. He said this contributes to healthy, active transportation lifestyles, and there has been much research that supports the increase in property values from these walkable communities, and both millennial and baby boomer demographic groups have shown preference and need for this model as an alternative to suburban sprawl-type development.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the County established a policy framework that recognizes these nodes of mixed-use centers and nodes, and Places 29 calls for quarter to half-mile centers of activity, particularly in this area. He presented a few examples of where this is and is not happening, beginning with Rio/29 and drawing a five to seven minute walk from center to edge, which clearly is not a walkable area now. He noted that one of the study's focuses is making each of the four quadrants into walkable centers and whether there are safe ways to cross these major road facilities, but not looking at making Rio and 29 walkable main streets.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the same scale in downtown Charlottesville goes from the Omni Hotel to the Pavilion, with richness and diversity of destinations, economic activity, housing types, open spaces and parks in the area, with 200-250-foot blocks. He mentioned that Shirlington in Arlington County is hemmed in by 395, but within that quadrant has a very successful walkable center with entertainment, restaurants, shops, a walkable main street, apartments and condominiums, and a pedestrian walkway across 395. Mr. Gavrilovic noted that this development is generating two to three times the revenue of the mall, and has a shuttle bus that takes passengers to the Metro.

Mr. Callahan stated that there is a lot of support for this concept coming from many different places, including the existing policy in the County's comprehensive plan, which calls for directing growth into growth areas; the Places 29 Master Plan, which calls for compact development organized around centers, pedestrian orientation and mixed use connected by multi-modal transportation, and parks and open spaces. He said this is what Mr. Gavrilovic is describing. Mr. Callahan stated that many surveys have shown that both millennials and baby boomers have a strong preference for walkability, and in the recent statewide transportation plan, 75% of millennials said they would live in a place that does not require a car, and 77% of baby boomers said that transportation options influence where they chose to live and work. He said that there is a lot of fuel for transformation in the Albemarle area, with continued population growth and limited land for urban intensity development, as well as a softening local and national retail market.

Mr. Callahan presented a slide showing recent population trends, which indicate about 40,000 more people by 2035 that could go as infill in the City or into the County into greenfield sites, so the small area plan for 29 should make this an attractive area to absorb growth in the future. He stated that there has been some kind of threshold reached with retail, with online sales taking over and bricks and mortar shopping declining, including hundreds of big box store closures in 2017. Mr. Callahan said the concept for the small area plan has been bolstered by positive public feedback, especially for the kinds of principles called for in Places 29.

Mr. Callahan pointed out that there are several key caveats and concerns, which would have to be addressed in the small area plan, especially in the second phase. He stated that one of these items is transportation and traffic on 29 and the impact of higher density development; a second is the potential for a canyon effect along 29 and Rio, favoring the node-type development instead; a third is to minimize impact on existing neighborhoods, with height being a significant issue. Mr. Callahan reiterated that there

is strong support for the concept of a 15-minute walkable community applied in the study area, and the key question is where the elements should be located.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that in applying the concept as discussed, their team went through a process of distilling the information received from stakeholder input and the County's policy platform into seven core principles for the plan. He explained that they are: creating a place that is attractive as a destination to both people and employers; having more housing and employment in a mixture of uses, including vertical mixed use in the same building; establishing multi-modal travel choices, such as sidewalks, trails and friendly streets; offering open spaces, parks, plazas, civic areas and river access; balancing the need for concentrating development in the nodes while protecting surrounding neighborhoods; providing an intergenerational community with diverse age groups; and featuring this as the gateway to the development portion of Albemarle County, highlighting it from a design standpoint.

Mr. Gavrilovic said there are solid planning principles for this type of development, and one of the Urban Land Institute's "Reinventing the Suburban Strip" study findings was establishing pulses or nodes of development , which concentrates the available market within these areas, rather than spreading it out and applying the same standards to an entire corridor. He said that one of the big recommendations is to concentrate the development in the quarter to half-mile nodes and having a logical sequence of which nodes should go first. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the team presented three alternatives to the public for placement of the nodes, and this is one of the big picture conclusions of the work, as they took the approach of establishing the big framework of land use and transportation first, with the next phase getting into the detailed design site by site.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the first alternative looked at the primary node at Rio and 29, one mile from edge to edge, consisting of an inner core with a strong mixed-use center with an office focus, surrounded by a mixed-use area with more of a residential focus, and a mixed-use node edge around it that considered employment flex uses, housing and neighborhoods, feathering the density away from the center to be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood areas. He said a second node would look towards the river to take advantage of the strong hospitality market in the County and surrounding region, to establish more of a hotel/conference center focus to take advantage of a gateway site and protects the river, but also benefits from the views and natural setting of the area. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that a third node would focus on the Gander Drive location area, with a mixed use office center focus and residential around it. He noted that their planning excluded areas that are established residential neighborhoods and is only showing the vision on the existing commercial areas, which is somewhat of a "transformative vision" of the redevelopment of the area over time, probably decades.

Mr. Gavrilovic said the team looked at areas outside of the nodes and proposed mixed-use corridor retail with housing above and flex industrial employment to address high-tech uses that are between light industry and office uses, and developing new residential neighborhoods to be compatible with surrounding areas. He noted that secondary centers are possible in the area outside of the primary nodes, such as in the

Berkmar area should it develop as more of a main street served by bus lines. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that this was the framework presented, and the comments from the public meeting led to a phased approach and potential policy platform, with the Rio/29 node having the strongest support, so it seems the best approach is to develop a more detailed plan that transforms those four quadrants into a future "downtown Albemarle." He said the second node at the river also had support, but it was more of a secondary approach that would be later in phasing and would be dependent on the primary mode at Rio and 29. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the third node at Gander and 29 had mixed support and some concerns, so the next phase of work would help establish whether this was supportable, and it would only proceed if the other two nodes were moving forward.

Mr. Gavrilovic presented information on the two primary nodes, stating that there would be a fairly aggressive mix of uses, more on the office side of the center, and some fairly aggressive densities, with 60 units per acre housing and 1.4 FAR in the center, down to 20 units and 0.5 FAR toward the edge. He stated that both the node center and node edge need to have a compliment of green spaces, pocket parks, trails, and a grid of connected streets with traditional blocks. Mr. Gavrilovic emphasized that the design of these areas would be critical, and multi-story centers at the crossroads of the nodes could be designed with streetscape amenities and modulated architecture to provide a very walkable streetscape even with higher densities. He mentioned the Marriott Hotel in downtown Charlottesville across from the Lewis and Clark statute, noting the street front façades at the sidewalk and the bulk of the building stepped back and are somewhat invisible from the sidewalk side. He said the mixed-use residential centers would have more of a traditional feel, with walk-up apartments and condominiums, with crosswalks and bike lanes to make the areas multi-modal.

Mr. Gavrilovic presented renderings of how the Places 29 area might develop over time, creating a framework for investment from the private sector in pedestrian scale, mixed-use, walkable developments. He presented examples of how this has been done in other areas, including Newport News, which has a downtown city center at Oyster Point, with walkable streets, mixed uses, and a lake; and Carlisle in Alexandria, which created a framework of urban walkable blocks in a single neighborhood with stepped-back density and modulated façades to minimize the canyon effect.

Mr. Callahan stated that one of the early things the team did as part of Phase One was a market assessment to explore if the vision was supportable by the marketing demand that recent trends and forecast growth would indicate, as well as what this area has captured in the past in terms of that growth. He pointed out that this is a transformational vision, not a continuation of past trends, and the team feels there is support for transformation, but it is fundamentally transformative. Mr. Callahan said this is a fast-growing regional market that is economically fairly strong, and the County has a policy to encourage development in these areas, which are two key aspects that support the type of transformation proposed. He noted that in this area, it would depend on redevelopment as there is not a lot of vacant greenfield land available, and this was ultimately more complicated.

Mr. Callahan presented a slide showing estimates of development demand in this area, and said this slide shows some of the assumptions, with a moderate capture of the demand in the market for broad categories of development: residential, office, hotel, and retail. He stated that some specific assumptions are that multi-family housing would be the most likely housing type, with vertical mixed-use development possible, and the regional forecast used shows about 2,800 units for the City and County combined over 20 years, and the 29 North corridor has been capturing about 20% of that demand. Mr. Callahan said that a moderate assumption would be 20-30%, with the County being more proactive to help nurture redevelopment in the area. He stated that they also used a 20-year forecast of about 5,800 office-using jobs, which would yield about 1.5 million square feet of office space. Mr. Callahan noted that there is not a lot of higher end office space in the area currently, nor is their space for high-tech industries. He mentioned that historically this area captures about 30% of office growth, and the team assumes a moderate capture rate with a slight increase. Mr. Callahan stated that it is very difficult to predict retail trends at this point, with occupancy rates increasing and rents decreasing, so that would likely not be a driver of change. He stated that the strong hotel market would continue to grow at the rate of the economy, with high occupancy and high rates, and this area would yield a capture rate of 20-30% and about 2,500 new hotel rooms over the next 20 years.

Mr. Callahan reported that in terms of development potential, the working estimate is 550-850 multi-family units, which is about two or three Stonefield Commons-type developments, with about .5 million square feet of office, upgrading or re-tenanting of retail, and 500-750 hotel rooms, either two or three Doubletree-type properties or four to six of the type typically seen in the corridor now. He noted that this amount of development is likely providing the change in the area to be transformational, and the team feels that national and state trends point in that direction. Mr. Callahan said the team feels that phasing would be important with marketing demand so that the nodes are not competing against each other, so the objective is to focus on Route 29 and Rio Road. He stated that there is not a lot of square footage in the area currently for high-tech industries, but there is an economic development strategic plan and potential in that sector, which can be further developed in phase two.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that challenges and opportunities tend to switch roles when working with these types of developments, particularly in transportation, and increasing intensity of development will generate more trips in the area. He said that two cornerstones are enhanced transit and total capture, and bus rapid transit system geared towards commuters through dedicated lanes and signal priority is one mechanism by which to address traffic; and getting enough housing and employment within the nodes could create a lot of internal trips and not create a load on the external networks. Mr. Gavrilovic added that walkability and urban design from a walkable standpoint supports both of those cornerstones in the future. He noted that Places 29 looked at bus rapid transit as a spine along 29, with one of the stops shown in the Woodbrook area, and one of the values of this planning process was refining those concepts, perhaps moving that stop to Rio and 29 and the potential for other stops added. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that successful transit-oriented development and design is a characteristic of a successful community, and better travel choices, livability, and

property values for the areas are part of the inherent urban design that supports the transit.

Mr. Gavrilovic presented images of developments inside and outside the U.S. with both higher and lower densities, including Broad Street in Richmond, and pointed out a model in which a crosswalk was raised and the potential existed for light rail transit. He stated that walkability and safe crossing of Rio and 29 were key to this development, and Places 29 had a good idea for a crosswalk to Fashion Square, with potential to cross at grade there.

Mr. Callahan stated the challenge is that it is not easy to build the vision, and the opportunity lies in making it easier. He said he did not think the challenges were anything that could not be overcome, and many of the things listed were mentioned directly by people who own property in the area, such as height limits, and ensuring there is enough height to incentivize redevelopment and make it worthwhile. He stated that another issue is zoning, so future zoning would need to be aligned with the future vision to make it the by-right zoning and facilitate development. Mr. Callahan said there is currently not much flexibility in use and there is not perfect knowledge of what the future is going to be and what the uses are going to be, so providing flexibility is important, with more focus on the form of development with the standards in the future. He stated that transportation continues to be a challenge, and public transit is viewed, in the long run, as an opportunity, with the node concept providing an opportunity to make it work, and the transit helps the development concept work, so they depend on each other.

Mr. Callahan stated that incentives to take on the risk of redevelopment typically would address things like blight and other conditions that require effort in order to attract investment, but this is not necessarily a blighted corridor, with most of the property owners having land that is economically productive for them. He said that redevelopment in this case requires taking on some risk, and ways to alleviate or share that risk provide opportunity, such as tax incentives, TIF, to support infrastructure, higher density in the area, and form-based zoning, as well as supporting the transportation aspects, walkable internal streets, trails, and storm water management of the property.

Mr. Callahan stated that some big picture conclusions from the first phase are validation of the land use direction, a 15-minute walkable community and concentrating the development in nodes, including the location and phasing of them with a focus on Rio/29 in the beginning. He said there are a lot of issues left unaddressed, with this being the first phase and the second phase looking into transportation challenges and how to design a system that will make this development concept work. Mr. Callahan stated that there are some unanswered factors, such as how millennials and baby boomers will view this type of development in the future, the increasing income and purchasing power in the area, the economic development strategic plan and how that fits into the ultimate area plan. He noted that there are no data sets that perfectly match this study area, but there has been supportive public feedback in terms of crossing

Route 29, building height, impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, and avoiding the canyon effect of buildings.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they found from Phase One that a lot of what they have learned has helped inform how Phase Two will go, and if they are going to achieve multi-story complex development, they will also need to look at a process by which to achieve that, because even if the County had the world's best form-based code today, it still would not fully achieve the objectives. He said that staff and the Renaissance design team would be coming back to the Board and Commission in mid-February to present some additional concepts needed in order to be comfortable with endorsing Phase One and moving onto Phase Two, which would be coming to the Board in March.

Ms. Mallek asked what "mid-rise" and "low-rise" buildings were. Mr. Callahan responded that Renaissance purposefully showed a range, but around node cores there would be four to eight stories, with two to four and two to six-story building heights toward the edges. He stated that those details would be contained in the design of the development, and the impacts were as much of a design question as a height issue.

Ms. Mallek stated that there was a significant amount of development approval from 2004 to 2008 and asked if they had taken into account the thousands of units that have been approved but have not been built yet. Mr. Callahan responded that a classic market study is done by looking at absorption rate and how much the market absorbs from time to time, and sometimes that can be constrained by approvals, but you can assume that is the logic of the market. He said they did not look at these as being the unbuilt approved ones, but the idea is that if the market is supporting it, they are going to get built and that is a sign that policies are not holding the market back.

Ms. Mallek stated that when too many are approved, none of them can actually finish, which is what is happening now, with three developments trying to finish but not having quite enough demand.

Ms. Palmer asked if there was value in making the nodes with different centers so they might be able to build out faster, since the center point is a major highway, which is a barrier. Mr. Callahan responded that as they get into the urban design of this, each quadrant would have its own center, either a park or plaza, etc., and there are some technical issues in terms of where to place the bus rapid transit station. He stated that there is a grade-separated interchange there, so it may be able to be put on Rio, but depending on the engineering, they may put it north or south of it. He emphasized that they need to get the main composition put in first, prior to filling in the detail of the stations, streets, etc.

Mr. Sheffield stated that it would be hoped to have the node facing the corridors that are not the congested state highways, building instead on Berkmar and Hillsdale. He noted that Albemarle Square is probably the only quadrant that does not have a secondary road to assist it, and he would like to see the secondary corridor enhanced to take the brunt of the transportation impacts as well as the multi-modal walkability and transit aspects. He stated that he is concerned about seeing lines on the map for things that

VDOT may not endorse, and he did not know at what point they needed to be sure these were things they would back up, such as the light at Greenbrier and Hillsdale, which VDOT mentioned at the last minute they would not support. Mr. Sheffield said he would prefer not to leave a legacy behind of roads that would never be created, adding that VDOT has mentioned the Carter Myers Road can no longer exist because of the separation of the grades at that point. He said that at Berkmar, there was enough space to build the extension, but it could have meant tearing down several homes otherwise.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated this is why it is important to be design specific in Phase Two, because with every piece of transportation investigation there are alternative analyses, but part of Phase Two has to be a concrete modeling of what it really will perform like, with assumptions of true modality and other elements. He said that while Route 29 is currently a barrier, it does not necessarily have to stay a barrier, and other places have done innovative things to get across that. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they cannot answer that question at this point, but they need to think flexibly to come up with the best solution.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that they have been very careful to put the nodes where there are signalized intersections or grade-separated interchanges, and it would be very difficult to get them in between that. Mr. Sheffield responded that he was just hoping not to have any surprises, even if he is just a resident at that point.

Mr. Randolph stated that he appreciates a higher level view, stating that there is a fourth node south of Rio and east of Route 29 that is also a concern, with fragile markets for stores like JC Penney and Sears. He said he hopes the mall area would be considered another node, which gets into how that would interact to the north roundabout. Mr. Randolph noted that he was struck by the lack of any discussion of cultural institutions playing a role in this corridor, and there is the potential to attract them through a partnership with the County. He said this could function as a public space during the week and/or a performance space, which would attract another level of people wanting to live in that community. Mr. Randolph said that regarding hotels, the planning group is proposing a transformational view, but is falling back into the old mode of putting hotels on 29, which is a distance from the attractions people come into the area for. He commented that if the vehicles are EV, there would not be a pollution problem, but if that is not the case then there will be carbon pollution generated as people drive their cars to sites like Monticello and surrounding vineyards. Mr. Randolph stated that there is a missed opportunity by not capturing the Rivanna River's economic development potential for restaurants and cafés, with an ambiance that would make it inviting for people to use, and just looking at it as a hotel corridor, they would lose some circulation effect from other economic engines.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that he appreciates those thoughts, as they start to fill in some of the details that they did not have time to get into as they discussed the big picture nodal concept. He said that regarding Fashion Square, RPG did look at the mall redevelopment market and had just done a mall redevelopment project for the City of Norfolk, and the node edges probably need to be modified to deal with Albemarle Square and Fashion Square.

Mr. Sheffield suggested that they leave time to hear from staff on the small-scale neighborhood investment items, as the RFP is now out, and it would be good to have Commissioners weigh in since they all serve on CACs.

Mr. Lafferty commented that in looking at node one and Albemarle Square, it would be good to come up with a view of what it would look like to put buildings there instead of just the asphalt stadium that is there now. Mr. Gavrilovic responded that this is a primary opportunity, and Places 29 did some visualizations of Albemarle Square redevelopment, and the property manager, who was in the business stakeholders group, was very receptive to this concept and talked about some of the challenges in terms of managing risk. He stated that another issue discussed was how to take care of existing tenants without breaking their leases, if you want to redevelop, and RPG's Norfolk plan shows areas around the periphery where new development can be created in place of existing excess parking.

Ms. Spain asked if he saw a role for UVA in this type of development in terms of collaboration with transportation, such as another incubator system like their Center for Innovation, and whether these nodes would be in competition with the research park. Mr. Gavrilovic responded that there was a UVA Research Park representative on the business group, who said they were looking at the same market trends as a "rising tide to lift all boats." He stated that he did not think they would be in competition so much as in collaboration, providing they can partner with UVA and the City in terms of implementation of a regional approach for things like bus rapid transit. Mr. Gavrilovic said that if a market study was to be done, it would be good to have UVA and other major partners to share what they have had in their research and how it might contribute.

Ms. McKeel commented that the City may be very interested in partnering on this endeavor, as they were struggling to find land.

Mr. Callahan added that RPG's mission in the first phase was to identify the nodes, and their location and phasing, but in the market potential discussion they did not talk about the possibility of including the public sector for entities like UVA.

Ms. McKeel said it would be good to include them sooner rather than later.

Mr. Lafferty stated that in his experience with people looking for a place to put their business, UVA wants some affiliation with those locating in the research park, which is very expensive. He added that he thinks they should be included, just as good neighbors.

Mr. Dotson said that there has been a lot of emphasis on Route 29, but they could also benefit from more focus on Berkmar. He also asked if RPG could offer some thoughts on "soft implementation," or people-based elements in the final report, as he feels they need to be proactive and flexible, and would like to discuss how the County can act as facilitator and identify champions within the business community for the plan. Mr.

Gavrilovic responded that RPG could certainly incorporate some of those in the final report, and hopefully create a better platform for Phase Two, including a branding for this area in the public consciousness.

Ms. More asked about the statistic given of 2,800 residential units over the next 20 years, and whether that was for the City and the County. She also asked if the statistic of 29 North area capturing 20% of predicted development was for just the small area plan area or 29 North in the larger sense. Mr. Callahan responded that it was for the entire 29 North area, and the residential units were both City and County. He also confirmed that existing developments, such as Springhill, were not factored into those totals.

Ms. Firehock stated that as she was standing at Stonefield earlier that day, it occurred to her that the "commons" were not particularly noticeable, and she echoed Mr. Randolph's comments about using the river and natural areas. She said that she had just located a tech-type company in the 29 North corridor and hired millennials to work there, and while they would like to take a walk and see some greenspace, those options are not currently available. Ms. Firehock stated that RPG's renderings show a flat area, but it really has more changes in elevation, so she would like to see more of a 3-D image. She said that tech companies want to provide greenspace for their employees, so the County is going to need to be creative and intentional in their design, going beyond just having a beautiful building.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that if you want to go for a walk today on Route 29, you are restricted to the four feet of sidewalk, and agreed that Ms. Firehock's point was valid, but said the design plan would focus on the areas off of 29, because creating greenspace would require breaking up existing asphalt.

Ms. Firehock stated that there are a lot of stormwater management facilities along Route 29 that are not working properly, so in the redesign they could create some creative, beautiful space, such as playground space, that also functions in this capacity.

Mr. Keller complimented the Supervisors, staff, and consultants for being willing to provide an opportunity to think about a vision for this, adding that it has been frustrating for him as a Commissioner to not have this point sooner. He commented that he did not hear anything about bicycles and wonders if that needs to be part of their multi-modal discussion. Mr. Keller also said that they need to add information regarding challenges, because these "dream schemes" of low, mid, and high-range heights are somewhat unrealistic in this market, due to the lack of economic viability for the mid-range buildings.

Mr. Gavrilovic responded that there are limitations in terms of elevators and other costs, but Albemarle has more land area than the typical Charlottesville site, so there is more opportunity to create a stepping down of densities. He stated that the development community strongly encouraged risk mitigation through increasing the height limits and densities to make redevelopment worthwhile and competitive against greenfield development.

Mr. Keller stated that this challenge needs to be put forth, as the Supervisors need to understand there is an economic impact to that. He commented that Stonefield was caught in somewhat of an "economic press," but he also knows from the Urban Land Institute's discussions and forums on form-based code, there is tremendous difficulty in the banking community to accept vertical mixed use. Mr. Keller said this needs to be in the forefront as a challenge, because there may be ways for local government to mitigate it with offsetting certain requirements, but they have been in the mode of wanting money from developers to assist with infrastructure, but in this world order, it may actually be the opposite. Mr. Gavrilovic responded that it was key to find out where the market is and what can be done to support it, noting that the public sector put $80 million into the Hampton Coliseum Mall redevelopment, and it did not go well because they day lighted it and focused on retail, when the market was for residential. He said that in contrast, in Belmar, Colorado, $6 million was put in by the public sector, with the remainder from the private sector, and it was enormously successful. Mr. Gavrilovic emphasized that providing flexibility to see where the market is going would help ensure the success of these developments.

Mr. Dill commented that he would like to see the investment of County staff and consultants and the effect of putting more resources into this to accelerate the process, perhaps using a "celebrity architect" and publicizing that this is an area of focus. He stated that it needs to be determined whether there would be an onsite building where people can come to have questions answered and other logistics, as all of that seems vague to him at this point. Mr. Gavrilovic responded that other localities have the economic development arms of the municipality take a strong role, aligning economic development vision and energies to attract industry with local policy. He said that in Norfolk, they have taken one of the anchor stores in the mall and turned it into a mortgage banking business that has brought several hundred jobs to a dying mall. He added that the locality knows exactly what is needed to make its vision a reality, and is looking to those developers or industries.

Mr. Dill commented that those resources exist in town and asked if they have the kind of dynamic real estate investors needed.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that a lot of the complex redevelopment schemes have brought in developers from the outside, but property and business owners have said they are very interested in this if they can make the economics work and bring in partners from the outside, so some input from them in that regard may be very useful in the next phase.

Mr. Doug Walker addressed the Board, stating that the Board would receive two updates at their February 1 meeting related to the item Mr. Sheffield had mentioned, including a follow-up report to a conversation the Board had in December on a neighborhood improvement funding initiative. He stated that more information and a detailed process model, as well as a funding formula, would be presented to them to address funding distribution for neighborhood-level improvements, with direct involvement by the CACs, and that should inform the Board's direction in moving forward. Mr. Walker said there is also an RFP for a development advisor to work

specifically with the County on a public/private partnership, and staff would update the Board in February on that effort as well.

(Note: The Planning Commission adjourned its meeting at 5:27 p.m.)

Adjournment:

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m. to the Tuesday, January 24, 2017 Albemarle County Planning joint meeting with the City of Charlottesvllle at 5:30 p.m. at Water Street Center, 407 East Market Street, Charlottesville, Virginia.

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Andrew Gast-Bray, Secretary

(Submitted by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 7-11-2017
Initials: sct