Albemarle County Planning Commission
May 2, 2017

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Room #241, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were: Tim Keller, Chair; Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Daphne Spain, Mac Lafferty, Pam Riley, Bruce Dotson, and Bill Palmer, University of Virginia Representative.

Members absent were Jennie More.

Other officials present were Will Cockrell and Wood Hudson, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission; Francis MacCall, Principal Planner; Bill Fritz, Manager of Special Projects; Elaine Echols, Chief of Planning; Andrew Walker, Green Infrastructure Center; Sharon Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission; and John Blair, Deputy County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Mr. Keller, Chair, called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

From the Public: Matters Not Listed for Public Hearing on the Agenda.

Mr. Keller invited comment from the public on other matters not listed on the agenda.

Mr. Neil Williamson with the Free Enterprise Forum addressed the Commission and said this was the first opportunity provided to speak about the change in procedures. Mr. Williamson stated that he would like to comment on the Crozet survey update but cannot because there is not sufficient information about it. He said there was no hotlink in the materials and there would not be an opportunity to have correspondence with the Commission until the following week. He commented that this was a flaw in the system. Mr. Williamson stated that he also thought the idea of independent neighborhoods having to fund their own surveys – with the best intent – was a flawed program. He said that the County was potentially relying its Comprehensive Plan on their survey, and regardless of how objective any survey was, there was bias. Mr. Williamson encouraged the Commission to read and discuss this with a skeptical eye, and the FEF intends to hold the Commission, which is responsible for the Comprehensive Plan, accountable as the CPA moved forward. He added that how they utilized outside information would be critical to the development of the Comp Plan.

There being no further comments, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

Public Hearing Items

3a. ZMA-2016-00016 Woolen Mills
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Scottsville
TAX MAP/PARCEL: 078000000021B0
LOCATION: This property is located at the terminus of East Market Street and Broadway Street. It borders Moores Creek where it joins the Rivanna River. This is the location of the historic Woolen Mills factory.
PROPOSAL: Request to rezone the property from LI, Light Industry to C1, Commercial. The intended uses of the existing buildings include residential development (See Special Use

Permit), office space and restaurant space. Other by-right commercial uses would also be permitted. A new building intended for industrial use is also proposed.
PETITION: ZMA201600016 Woolen Mills - Rezoning for 10.4 acres from LI, Light Industry with allows industrial and office uses to C1, Commercial which allows retail sales and service uses and residential by special use permit (15 units/acre).
OVERLAY DISTRICTS: Flood Hazard, Steep Slopes, Airport Impact Area, Entrance Corridor
PROFFERS: Yes
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Community Mixed Use - Community Mixed Use – residential (up to 34 units/acre), community scale retail, service and office uses, places of worship, schools, public and institutional uses. Parks and Green Systems - (parks, playgrounds, play fields, greenways, trails, paths, recreational facilities and equipment, plazas, outdoor sitting areas, natural areas, preservation of stream buffers, floodplains and steep slopes adjacent to rivers and streams)
(Bill Fritz)

AND

3b. ZMA-2016-00021 Woolen Mills
PROPOSAL: Rezoning 1.54 acres of Steep Slopes Overlay District, Preserved Slopes to Steep Slopes Overlay District, Managed Slopes. The Steep Slopes Overlay District is an Overlay District to protect steep slopes. (Bill Fritz)

AND

3c. SP-2016-00027 Woolen Mills
PROPOSAL: Special use permit in the C1, Commercial to allow residential development. R-15 Residential under Section 22.2.2(6) of the Zoning Ordinance. Residential use will consist of 94 multi-family units on 10.4 acres for a total density of 9 units per acre. (Bill Fritz)

AND

3d. SP-2016-00028 Woolen Mills
PROPOSAL: Special use permit under Section 30.3.11 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow engineered structures, including, but not limited to, retaining walls and revetments made of non-natural materials such as concrete which are constructed along channels or watercourses for the purpose of water conveyance or flood control. The Flood Hazard is an overlay to provide safety and protection from flooding. (Bill Fritz)
THE WOOLEN MILL PETITIONS ARE BEING REHEARD DUE TO AN ADVERTISING ERROR.

Mr. Keller said the Commission would move onto public hearing items, with several items linked that pertain to Woolen Mills: ZMA-2016-00016, ZMA-2016-00021, SP-2016-0027, and SP-2006-00028.

Mr. Fritz presented the staff report, stating that on March 21, the Planning Commission attempted to hold a public hearing on these items – but after that meeting, staff discovered that the ad that ran in the *Daily Progress* was inaccurate. He stated that this appeared to be due to an issue with the computer system, so staff was trying to determine the source of the problem. Mr. Fritz stated that they have now run the correct ad and need to hold a public hearing, and he would not go through all the details since he thought the Commissioners recalled the material – and they had unanimously recommended approval. He said there were comments the Commission made that staff would pass on to the Board of Supervisors, with this item scheduled to be heard on Wednesday. He said he would be happy to answer any questions and had motions prepared for them. He reiterated that this was a formality to make sure they have properly held the public hearing.

Mr. Keller invited questions for staff. There being none, the public hearing was opened and the applicant invited to address the Commission.

Brian Roy, developer and manager of Woolen Mills, LLC, said it was pleasure to be before the Commission again on this topic. Since it was just a short while before he did not have anything to add other than that over the last month he had been aggressively pursuing the federal tax standards. He said he had submitted part II to the Department of Historic Resources, which was very specific in detail on what happens to the building – preserving the exterior windows, etc. and being sensitive to the site. Mr. Roy pointed out that application has been submitted and generally, it was a 30 to 45-day period of comments, so he would expect that those would come back over the summer. He stated that nothing with his plan had changed, and he had heard the Planning Commission's statements a month earlier as it related to water quality and runoff into Moores Creek. Mr. Roy said he had met with the Rivanna Conservation Alliance and their Board, gave them a tour of the site, and discussed possible ways they could have an open dialogue about that. He stated that he would certainly be sensitive to that going forward and would continue to be as the project moved forward and went through the site plan.

Mr. Keller invited questions from the Commission for the applicant. Hearing none, Mr. Keller invited public comment on the four applications. Hearing none, Mr. Keller invited additional comments from Mr. Roy, who declined.

Mr. Keller closed the public hearing to bring the matter before the Planning Commission for discussion and action. He asked if the Commissioners would like to reference their earlier comments from March 21 and if there was a motion on the first item.

MOTION: Mr. Lafferty moved to recommend approval of ZMA-2016-16 Woolen Mills with acceptance of the proffers offered by the applicant. Ms. Riley seconded the motion.

Mr. Keller invited discussion. There being none, he asked for a roll call.

The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6:0. Ms. More was absent from the meeting and the vote.

Mr. Keller noted that the ZMA-2016-16 carried and they would move to the second item.

MOTION: Mr. Lafferty moved to recommend approval of ZMA-2016-21 Woolen Mills. Ms. Riley seconded the motion.

Mr. Keller invited discussion. There being none, he asked for a roll call.

The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6:0. Ms. More was absent from the meeting and the vote.

Mr. Keller noted that the ZMA-2016-21 carried and they would move to the third item.

MOTION: Mr. Lafferty moved to recommend approval of SP-2016-27 Woolen Mills with the conditions outlined in the staff report. Ms. Riley seconded the motion.

Mr. Keller invited discussion. There being none, he asked for a roll call.

The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6:0. Ms. More was absent from the meeting and the vote.

Mr. Keller noted that SP-2016-27 Woolen Mills carried and they would move to the fourth item.

MOTION: Mr. Lafferty moved to recommend approval of SP-2016-28 Woolen Mills with the conditions outlined in the staff report. Ms. Riley seconded the motion.

Mr. Keller invited discussion. There being none, he asked for a roll call.

The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6:0. Ms. More was absent from the meeting and the vote.

Mr. Keller noted that SP-2016-27 Woolen Mills carries and this will go to the Board of Supervisors. He reiterated for the record that the reason this occurred the way it did was that there was a mis-advertisement. Mr. Keller said the Commission had already been through this process, and anyone could go back to our discussions of March 21 to hear their thorough discussions of the four elements of the Woolen Mills project. He thanked the applicant and the Commissioners.

The meeting moved to the next agenda item.

Presentations

Hydraulic Planning Process Update

Mr. Keller stated that the Commission would receive a presentation from Chip Boyles of the TJPDC regarding an update of the Hydraulic planning process, the small area plan and the upcoming schedule.

Mr. Chip Boyles of the TJPDC addressed the Commission and stated that he was presenting on behalf of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is part of and staffed by the TJPDC but a separate organization – and the entity participating in the Hydraulic/Route 29 Small Area Plan study currently underway. Mr. Boyles said the MPO has asked to be able to present to the Commission and provide periodic updates on the process that's occurring at 29 and Hydraulic, as well as the surrounding area. He commented that there has been lot written about this small area plan, so he would share some of the history.

Mr. Boyles explained that as part of the Route 29 Solutions package founded by VDOT for roadway improvement of Route 29, there was a City of Charlottesville project to fund both the design and construction of the Hillsdale South Extension – a new roadway that would connect Hydraulic to a point in the 250 Bypass/Holiday Road area. He stated that this was never totally designed out, but the intent was to design and construct the roadway, with $10 million approved in the state's six-year plan to fund that project, which was scheduled to begin in FY17. Mr. Boyles said in addition to that $10 million, an additional $10 million was approved as part of the Route 29 Solutions package to do the preliminary engineering report for the intersection of Route 29 and Hydraulic Road. He stated that it was not a full design, but it was enough engineering work to look at feasibilities of different scenarios, the costing out of those scenarios, what properties would have to be acquired, and any environmental impacts that would occur with a project at that intersection.

Mr. Boyles stated that as the current work on Route 29 is being completed, and as the City was looking at the Hillsdale South Extension, the City came to the conclusion that there probably wasn't a need to build that road now when whatever happened at Hydraulic and 29 could change the need and the future for that road. He said the City asked if the project could be delayed until the MPO could look at the entire area. Mr. Boyles stated that in October 2016, the MPO voted and made a recommendation to VDOT Secretary Aubrey Lane to combine the two projects, move the money up so it could immediately be planned ahead of any type of construction or preliminary engineering activities.

Mr. Boyles said that one of the concerns arising from the Route 29/Rio project was that the grade-separated interchange was selected, designed, and built without a land use plan preceding it. He stated that at the Advisory Panel an MPO levels, they recommend that a land use plan precede any design and construction at the Hydraulic intersection. Mr. Boyles commented that there was no real secret that traffic patterns and congestion are greater at Hydraulic than they were at Rio, but for a number of other reasons, it was selected that Rio would be the project going forward with immediate construction. Mr. Boyles explained that Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne agreed with that and approved putting $2 million – $1 million each in FY17 and FY18 – towards a combined land use plan and the initial stages of a preliminary engineering study for the Hydraulic/29 project.

Mr. Boyles said that with that approval, Mr. Layne had a few stipulations, including one that said the MPO had to look at Hydraulic and 29, 250 and 29, and 250 and Hydraulic intersections as part of the land use and preliminary design process, because all three would impact each other – but especially at Hydraulic and 29. He stated that the other stipulation was that there had been a number of studies of Hydraulic and 29, and while those should definitely be referenced and used as research materials for what should be decided in the future, for this study there would be no preconceived idea of what should be at Hydraulic and Route 29. Mr. Boyles said that some previous studies suggested a grade-separated interchange at Hydraulic, but Secretary Layne indicated that it should be a "blank sheet of paper" since they are going through a land use planning process. He stated that this leaves open the possibility of a different transportation product – and even an outcome of no change – but that is the direction in which they should go.

Mr. Boyles explained that the third stipulation from Secretary Layne was that all of this had to be completed so that if a project or several projects were recommended, that they be ready to submit to the state through the Smart Scale funding process by August to September of 2018, which is the next round of funding opportunities for state transportation projects. He stated that if that deadline were not met, it would be August to September of 2020 before the next funding process began. Mr. Boyles noted that the other factor that makes that so important is if a project is funded through Smart Scale, it only then gets into the state's six-year plan, so while the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) would conceptually approve a project in June of 2019, with that funding spread out over six years to be completed. Mr. Boyles emphasized that even with a recommended project; they were six to eight years out – if it is even funded – so it is important to get the application in as soon as possible.

Mr. Boyles stated that the MPO's request was to go through the facilitated discussion and advisory panel process, given the success of the Route 29 Solutions project, so included in the $2 million put up by VDOT for this process is the continuation of the facilitation contract with Philip Shucet, who is the facilitator and has been involved with the Route 29 Solutions project for more than three years now. Mr. Boyles stated that Mr. Shucet was now working for a public-private partnership in the Hampton Roads area, so a new facilitator would be coming in with

similar experience and demeanor – and his first day to facilitate a meeting would be May 11.

Mr. Boyles stated that to expedite the Hydraulic/29 area project, VDOT contracted with two on-call national and international consulting firms for the land use plan: Kimley-Horn Associates, which was already doing work for Charlottesville on the Belmont Bridge and has done work for VDOT all over the state; and Michael Baker International, which would handle the preliminary engineering component of the land use study and transportation elements. He said that they were able to immediately sign contracts, noting that the MPO was managing only the land use plan of the project, which is the Kimley-Horn contract, and Baker would come in a bit during the land use process, with their role being to follow the land use process and ensure they bring all planners into line so they weren't planning something that couldn't be built or was completely unaffordable. He noted that they would monitor the land use process, and once the land use plan was developed, they would then come in and turn those plans into documents that could be used to apply for Smart Scale funding.

Mr. Boyles emphasized that with two process underway and required, with an August 2018 deadline, it did not leave much time for either – so the land use portion with Kimley-Horn had begun in March and was expected to provide a deliverable to both the Albemarle and Charlottesville planning commissions in September. He stated that this was a very, very quick turnaround, but it took about a year from that date to be able to compile all the pieces necessary for a Smart Scale application the following summer. Mr. Boyles said this was not the approach they would typically have selected, but they do believe it is possible and Kimley-Horn has provided assurance of its feasibility. He added that it required some creative public engagement and work with the planning commissions, so the MPO was currently working on the communications plan for this and would take the lead on that aspect, working with VDOT and Kimley-Horn. Mr. Boyles said that rather than try to coordinate public meetings with the consultants, it was easier for the MPO to coordinate with VDOT, MPO staff, City and County staff, to establish outreach and get the public's input. He reiterated that this had been a successful process during the Route 29 Solutions construction, and there were times there would be small informal gatherings where they would be reviewing what was happening with Route 29 Solutions.

Mr. Boyles stated that this was the MPO's intended approach, and they realize there are some disadvantaged neighborhoods within the planning area so they will reach out to them as much as possible as they would be affected by the different types of transportation changes that may occur. He said that for the planning commissions, they can dictate how they wish to get information – and they will be the delivery point at the local government level, deciding how this would move forward to the elected bodies. He said that one of the most important parts of this was that they develop a plan that the City and County can both buy into. Mr. Boyles pointed out that Albemarle County is only in the Stonefield quadrant and the immediate intersection area, and all other three quadrants were in the City of Charlottesville. He stated that the planning area was approximately 600 acres – half City and half County – so it was imperative to find a plan that both local governments can embrace, which could be challenging.

Mr. Boyles stated that although just one informational public hearing had been held, an additional meeting would be held in August – and the consultants would be inviting both commissions to come in and work within a charrette process on land use patterns being proposed. He said that prior to that, he and his staff were prepared to come to them, bring information to them, and take information back, just like the Route 29 Solutions process. Mr. Boyles stated that the public advisory panel meetings were held twice a month and were live-streamed, with email, text and phone comment options for feedback – with every comment

made regardless of its source addressed at the next meeting. He said that the compressed timeframe would not allow for the normal Comp Plan process with a lot of public meetings, but this would allow for a lot of smaller public meetings.

Mr. Keller commented that he and Mr. Lafferty had been at the last session.

Mr. Lafferty said that one of the items that arose at that meeting was why there wouldn't be meetings between now and August, but he assumed that would be addressed through the smaller meetings.

Mr. Boyles confirmed this, stating that they had already begun discussing adding a public neighborhood-type meeting at which several neighborhoods can come together, and they may add two or three of those to the process.

Mr. Lafferty responded that this was a good idea, as there were several neighborhoods that were pretty densely packed in the fringe area of this location.

Mr. Boyles agreed, adding that there were also a lot of businesses there that had to be involved. He stated that through any of the public discussions thus far, there was either a great need or a strong turnout from bike/pedestrian advocates.

Mr. Lafferty acknowledged that there was a lot of bike/ped discussion at the first public meeting, indicating a need there, because it was very difficult to get across Route 29 except all the way down at the University crossing.

Mr. Boyles mentioned that at the first charrette, the businesses were a strong advocate for pedestrians, because those were customers and employees that needed to get across 29.

Mr. Keller stated that his takeaways from the meeting were former Supervisor Dennis Rooker's point that regardless of all other things discussed, this was really about the flow of traffic along Emmett Street and 29; there was a significant contingent that was interested in greenways and parks, in addition to bike and pedestrian amenities; and there was a vocal group supporting and promoting affordable housing.

Ms. Spain asked if it was known whether any of those businesses would be displaced.

Mr. Boyles responded that they have not even looked at any type of roadway changes at this point, and with the clean slate approach, they would be looking at a lot of different options, but at this point they have not considered any specific one.

Ms. Spain stated that her understanding from Mr. Boyles' presentation is that Kimley-Horn is doing the land use planning and would, along with Baker International, submit reports that would then be submitted to Smart Scale.

Mr. Boyles clarified that Kimley-Horn would put together all of the information but would more than likely, because this is a multi-jurisdictional transportation element, conclude that the main roadway project there will be the intersection. He stated that this was a safe bet but not guaranteed, and if it is an intersection that is both in the city and county, it would more than likely be the MPO that would submit the application, based on the information provided by Baker International.

Ms. Spain asked if this needed to be done by August/September 2018.

Mr. Boyles responded that the actual date hadn't been set yet by the CTB, but it was somewhere in that timeframe.

Ms. Spain asked if it would be 2 or 3 years from that point until the funding started, and then six years for completion.

Mr. Boyles explained that it is in the state's six-year plan, so at that point – whether it was front-loaded or rear-loaded – the money would need to be spent during that six-year cycle. He stated that if there were smaller projects that had available funding, such as local sources or residual from Route 29 Solutions, there is $10 million of construction money now available. Mr. Boyles said the CTB could possibly reassign that money to smaller projects, they just don't know what those projects will be until they get through the process. He emphasized that he did not want to imply that the plan would be just a hundred-million dollar grade-separated interchange and nothing else, and the plan should come up with different projects to be considered. Mr. Boyles said the priority for consideration – and the item that got them in the door – was the necessary intersection improvements. He stated that one suggestion made in the planning process was the possibility of improvements on the Route 250 Bypass that would eliminate the need for changes at Hydraulic and 29.

Mr. Dotson commented that in a sense, this was an advanced committee report, and there was other small area plan work taking place at Rio and 29. He said that on May 11, there would be a charrette regarding land uses and configuration of that area, and decisions made about Rio/29 were relevant to the decisions made about Hydraulic. Mr. Dotson noted that scenarios would be presented, one of them being a hypothetical situation wherein the study area was the dominant center – such as Albemarle's downtown, Albemarle's uptown, or the County's center. He stated that another scenario is that this becomes the dominant center in the 29 corridor, but not necessarily a countywide center; and another scenario is that it becomes one center along a number of major intersections.

Mr. Dotson said the May 11 charrette would address what land uses would be associated with each of those options, and he thought that Mr. Boyles would want to follow along with that because of the TJPDC's work. He noted that at 3:00 p.m., the working group and steering committee would meet to pre-process these options and get some thoughts out; and at 7:00 p.m. at the Albemarle Square shopping center, there would be a public open house with people providing input and completing the charrette.

Mr. Boyles stated that the TJPDC was aware of this, and he failed mention that the advisory panel was compiled from the County, the City and the MPO, with County representatives as Supervisor Diantha McKeel and Director of Community Development Mark Graham. He said their consultant spent a lot of time putting boundaries for this planning area, with a lot of concern because once you put a line on a map, it is interpreted as a very rigid border with nothing to be addressed beyond it – and they don't want to convey that impression because what happens at the development node at Rio/29 affects the traffic patterns at Hydraulic. Mr. Boyles pointed out that the 29 traffic would definitely be accounted for at the Hydraulic interchange, trying to estimate the traffic changes based on those land use changes.

Mr. Boyles stated that they would focus in and do the most planning in the four quadrants around the 29/Hydraulic intersection, with a lot of land use review in the area going out from the center, then evaluating current land uses in the third ring out – with a community center or other

types of light activity uses such as parks might be placed. He noted that they wouldn't be doing the full design work on those areas like they would in commercial areas around the intersection.

Mr. Keller asked if County staff wanted to weigh in.

Ms. Echols responded that she did not.

Mr. Lafferty asked Mr. Boyles to help keep the Commission informed.

Mr. Boyles stated that if you Google "Route 29 Solutions," it will take you to the website, and every presentation the advisory panel receives is posted on that site, with all the comments made included, along with responses to the comments. He said that live meeting video is also available on that site.

Mr. Keller thanked him for coming, stating that while the City and County have different structures for their representatives on these committees, the Planning Commission is well represented in both the Rio and Hydraulic projects.

Mr. Boyles encouraged them to not spread themselves too thin, because they would soon be starting the long-range transportation plan.

Mr. Keller said that the TJPDC had done a bicycle plan, and at some point the Commission may want to hear how those various pieces are being coordinated – especially since there is so much public interest on this subject.

Recess

The Planning Commission recessed their meeting at 6:41 p.m. and reconvened at 6:44 p.m.

County Green Maps

Mr. Walker presented information staff from the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) Inc., stating that he would provide a general overview of the project and some background and definitions – including what green infrastructure is at the landscape scale, the maps and data products coming from this effort, and the project applicability. Mr. Walker stated that the GIC is based in the County and builds landscape models and teaches courses and workshops, as well as doing research into new methodologies and working with localities to create strategies to conserve and enhance natural assets and green infrastructure.

Mr. Walker explained that with the GIC started as a nonprofit, they did a guidebook for how to conserve green infrastructure, with the first one based in Virginia for use by all localities. He stated that they also have a national guidebook, in addition to others pertaining to individual states. Mr. Walker reported that this project is one of 10 projects across the state, launched through a competitive process whereby localities could apply for technical assistance from GIC, with funding from the U.S. Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Forestry, and several DOF representatives were present at this meeting. He noted that the County provided an in-kind match through staff and volunteer hours from the Natural Heritage Committee and other staff.

Mr. Walker stated that GIC wants to create new data and maps that will inform the County's decision-making and help it plan for its natural assets. He said this could be the Natural Heritage Committee, which has been doing an update of its biodiversity action plan – or a Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Walker noted that they were thinking about daily planning

such as site review, but also long-range planning. He stated that the funding for this ended in April, and they were excited to have the final transition following a productive meeting with staff the previous week.

Mr. Walker reported that the term “green infrastructure” was somewhat of a jargon term dating back to efforts by the state of Florida, which was trying to come up with a way to map its large landscape-scale natural assets and the network that’s between them – so they coined the term to account for the fact that the lands provide a lot of services that aren’t always accounted for. He stated that green infrastructure consists of trees, shrubs, wetlands, and other things that provide services. Mr. Walker said the term “green infrastructure” has also been used for low-impact development techniques, which are “constructed green infrastructure.” He noted that in 2006, a political appointee to the EPA found the term “green infrastructure” and liked it, and started calling a lot of things by that name – including raingardens, green rooftops, and silt terra boxes – but that led to some confusion.

Mr. Walker said what they were talking about today was the original definition, encompassing landscape scale, forest, wetlands, etc., and the primary takeaway was to conserve natural green infrastructure wherever feasible. He stated that when development does occur, effort should be made to protect and connect the landscape, and to build in the least impactful manner possible. Mr. Walker stated that impacts should be mitigated where they occur with best management practices such as the low-impact development strategies. He summarized by stating that the green infrastructure approach should be, “first conservation, then mitigation.”

Mr. Walker said that trees are the original and best green infrastructure, providing a lot of services including cleaner air, shade, aesthetic benefits, storm water benefits, and other things do for very little cost. He noted that trees can uptake from 760 gallons to 4,000 gallons of storm water per year per tree, depending on the tree’s size, and that’s water that doesn’t have to be treated or built into the County’s storm water system. Mr. Walker stated that trees preserve biodiversity and wildlife habitat and conserve working land such as farms and forests, so productive agricultural soils are green infrastructure as they are part of the landscape that society depends upon. He said they want to protect the water supply and quality, and storm water management including public health and livability in general. Mr. Walker stated that there were many different ways this could be applied, and he is trying to provide some data tools and maps that can feed into a lot of different things the County is already doing or will do in the future – so it’s not intended to be just another report or another measure the County has to deal with. He mentioned that the County supports a lot of these things through zoning decisions, comprehensive planning, parks and open space planning, location of easements, view shed protection, etc.

Mr. Walker stated that this ties into existing County planning and policy through the Comprehensive Plan in its discussion of natural resources, and the strategies being proposed support those efforts, including developing an action plan for biodiversity to protect significant areas of biological importance in the County – which the Natural Heritage Committee was currently doing; and regularly repeat the land use/land cover data gathering process as begun in 2009 to monitor landscape change. He mentioned that the state had recently produced a new update to land cover for the whole state, and that may be one potential thing the County can do to keep this updated – rerunning the analysis using the tools GIC provides to monitor any change. Mr. Walker stated that one objective is to protect the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the County in both the rural and development areas. He noted that there were locally endangered species in the County such as the James spiny mussel, the Virginia long eared bat,

so the goal is to protect species that are already rare, threatened and endangered, but also to prevent additional listings wherever possible.

Mr. Walker stated that the County's first natural resources Comp Plan objective is to ensure clean and abundant water resources for public health, business, healthy ecosystems, and personal enjoyment, by preventing shortages and contamination. He said that large landscapes and forests actually protect the water supply, and one end goal is less costly, more effective water treatment. He stated that forests also help improve air quality, as they can sequester carbon and reduce harmful compounds, so the idea is that well-treed landscapes equal healthy communities overall – and there is a lot of research showing that those neighborhoods have lower incidences of childhood asthma.

Mr. Walker mentioned that trees are also tied to real estate values, and having a park within 1,500 feet of a home increases its sales price, with larger parks corresponding to larger property value increases. He summarized by stating that bigger intact natural forest areas equal more tax revenue for the County. Mr. Walker stated that the GIC cites non-controversial sources, such as the National Association of Realtors, which found that only 1-2% of homebuyers golfed and 5-6% swam, but over 50% of people interested in buying a home use paths, making it the most desired landscape feature. He stated that the NAR statistics also show that about 7% are more likely to purchase a home near the greenspace and are willing to pay a significant amount more.

Mr. Walker reported that related to job development, high-paying, skilled workforce tech companies all place a strong importance on the green of the local environment, and they want their employees to be able to recreate, use trails, and experience nature. He stated that artists, media, lawyers and analysts comprise an increasingly large percentage of the U.S. workforce, and cities were becoming more competitive in trying to draw these businesses based on their natural assets. Mr. Walker said there were also health benefits to trees and green infrastructure in general, ranging from encouraging people to get outside, cleaner air, well-being, and mental health – and there was actually less crime near trees despite some commonly held misconceptions. He stated that people tended to exercise more near greenspace, so trees equal safer, healthier communities.

Mr. Walker stated that parks and open space planning was an obvious link, but they will want to think about where there are key areas to connect and protect that can also serve as community recreation assets. He said that they need to consider protecting important views, with a great example in Monticello, and these tend to be voluntary measures such as working with developers to disguise rooftops or limit visual obstructions. Mr. Walker stated that heritage tourism is another benefit, as these types of tourists spend about 2.5 times more than all other types of tourists – and they like landscape-related things such as hiking and being able to see and touch history. He said that the Comp Plan strategy supporting this principle is "promote tourism that helps preserve scenic, historic and natural resources."

Mr. Walker said the data were mostly geared toward landscape-scale analysis, it was certainly applicable in the urban ring in the development area, and while it was a different scale, a lot of the considerations were the same – trees, woodlots, habitat patches on a smaller scale, streams and wetlands, trails and pocket parks. He noted that all of these things could still connect to larger networks throughout the County.

Mr. Walker stated that the big picture goal is to connect the landscape and maintain corridors of natural lands and habitat, and the connections between them. He said that the GIC has a six-step process they use to help communities work through planning for green infrastructure

assets, with step one being to set goals; the second step is to review data; step three is to map ecological and cultural assets, including historic assets such as the best farm soils that rely on the landscape for their integrity. Mr. Walker stated that there are risks to the assets – those that were likely to go away or stay the same if no action is taken, and it was important to rank and prioritize assets, determine opportunities, then implement those opportunities. He noted that this could be done through day-to-day planning, long-range planning, etc.

Mr. Walker said that the state has the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment, done by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, with the latest update done in 2007 and another assessment currently being worked on. He stated that the assessment tries to find the highest ecological integrity of large landscape patches – natural areas of trees and wetlands – and those are ranked based on various attributes. Mr. Walker distributed a map from DCR marking intact landscapes and ranking them based on various attributes from topographic diversity to the presence of rare, threatened, or endangered species. He said that GIC essentially took the same general methodology and applied it using higher resolution and land cover data for Albemarle County. Mr. Walker noted some of the metrics calculated for each core and said that this generally follows the same process done at the state level, except with better data.

Mr. Walker said that in thinking about the intact habitat areas, a primary consideration is interior forest that is somewhat of a distance from the disturbances created by human activity, such as roads and buildings, and some species can only thrive in interior habitat and forests. He stated that interior habitat is calculated by taking the average tree height in Virginia – which is technically 67 feet but is rounded up to 100 feet – multiplying it by 3, for 300 feet, and using that distance for "the edge." He noted that the edge accounts for different disturbances created by things such as roads, buildings, and human activity. Mr. Walker explained that they take away the edge and look at what is left over in the middle – the interior forest – and consider how much is left. He said if there is greater than 100 acres of contiguous habitat, that's a good rule of thumb for a habitat core, and it has enough area to support a majority of the species in Virginia that depend on interior habitat. Mr. Walker noted that shape is also a factor, and there may be an area that has a significant amount of forest, but due to its shape, there is no interior habitat. He stated that this was why the calculation was important, to look at things using maps and GIS.

Mr. Walker stated that in terms of connectivity, even when direct corridors do not exist or are lost, species can still migrate and hop across. He said that if cores are lost, that can create isolation, which is usually not a good thing from an ecological standpoint. Mr. Walker said they could not repopulate if something happens, if there is a disturbance in that area, and connectivity is key. He stated that corridors are one way to maintain connectivity across the landscape, and generally, the ideal is about 100 meters of interior forest with 100 meters accounting for the edge on either side, which equals about a 300-meter corridor. Mr. Walker noted that this was theoretical but was a good rule of thumb to use in comparing whether corridors were meeting needs. He emphasized that these were not just corridors for large mammals, although they were one consideration, but were also supportive of plant and seed propagation.

Mr. Walker explained that the more edge that's created, the more impacts are created, and there are a lot of species that thrive in the edge – and there is plenty of edge in Virginia and in Albemarle County, but interior habitat was declining in a lot of places. He stated that the brown-headed cowbird was an example of a species that thrives on the edge, and these birds tend to decrease the native songbird population in a given area. Mr. Walker said that Wintergreen was an area that had a lot of cowbirds, and housecats and invasive species also thrive at the edge.

He stated that the type of edge matters, with a hard cutoff at the top tending not to be as good at supporting species diversity as a soft gradient edge.

Mr. Walker stated that there are a few strategies to address issues with landscape fragmentation, such as cluster development with slightly smaller lots and buildings to conserve greenspace and open space, but that in itself is not a panacea. He presented examples of several different sites that still end up with a disconnected landscape, with isolated patches of habitat. Mr. Walker emphasized that they want to plan at a larger scale to be able to think about these connections beforehand – so there may be one site deemed low from a development suitability point of view, and a nearby site may be suitable for development, but connectivity is maintained throughout.

Mr. Walker reviewed the differences in development approaches, stating that in traditional development, gray infrastructure – roads and pipes – is planned first, with anything leftover being available for greenspace. He stated that with green infrastructure development, natural features and their functions are assessed first, protecting them first as much as possible. He said that in traditional development, greenspaces are the leftover lands that may not be as suitable for traditional development, but with greenspace development those assets are planned for first, making sure there are good connections before siting buildings. Mr. Walker said that in working within the confines of a parcel, standard development doesn't consider the space outside of the parcel – whereas green infrastructure based development, there is a larger scale with a focus on maintaining connections and habitats at a regional level, across ownership categories. He stated that even at a yard scale, landscapes can make a difference, and people provide a lot of positive feedback in learning what they can do in their yards, such as bee and butterfly gardens. Mr. Walker said that going back to the Comprehensive Plan, one strategy is to "encourage use of native plants in landscaping to protect and provide habitat for native biodiversity, save on water, and connect landowners to the local ecosystem."

Mr. Walker stated that in terms of a big picture timeline and order of events, they want to assess the character of the landscape first, considering where the intact habitat corridors are, their different characteristics and biodiversity, and how they are connected. He said they would then move onto some of the other themed overlays and risks. He explained that one of the major components of his project is mapping habitat corridors, and in looking at the county, they can agree there is a lot of complexity going on in this landscape. Mr. Walker stated that to come up with conservation priorities at a high level, the first step is to look specifically at natural land cover, looking 300 feet in from disturbances and things that create edge effects. He presented an overlay map showing which areas constitute poor habitat and edge, but from an aerial view, it looks pretty well forested. He noted that it does not show up as core habitat because there is a lot of human activity and impact to the forest that has created edge effects.

Mr. Walker reported that there are 179 areas in the County that meet the criteria to be a habitat corridor, so there are greater than 100 contiguous acres of interior forest, and 109 habitat corridors account for about 44% of the forested land in the County. He stated that the smaller areas also shown on the map are 10-100 acres of interior habitat fragments and should still be mapped because they still provide a lot of habitat value even though they do not meet the 100-acre benchmark. Mr. Walker said that once they have identified assets, they need to look at which are protected, and he referenced an overlay map showing elements that affect the protection status of these lands. He noted the location of parks, conservation easements, and areas protected under the water protection ordinance – with buffers on streams and surface water, and the cores underneath all of the area. Mr. Walker pointed out that while these maps are a good data asset, they are ideally supposed to be treated as living maps that are updated

as conditions change. He noted that land use changes happen every day, and land use land cover data provides a snapshot in time, which should be updated as development occurs. He presented an example of Route 29 and Polo Grounds Road, which meets the criteria for being a habitat corridor – but due to development plans, there will be development that fragments the core and will no longer meet that definition.

Mr. Walker explained that the overall objective is to consider the connectivity between the habitat corridors, and they want to be able to have a healthy landscape that supports the movement of plants and animals. He said that one consideration is which corridors are most important for connectivity and the implications of corridor loss on the landscape overall. Mr. Walker said they can also use GIS to start to estimate the path of least resistance between corridors, and it's preferable to go through natural landscapes to try to preserve a corridor, through forested landscapes, without crossing things like major roads or developments. He commented that riparian zones tend to be great natural corridors, and the Mechums River shows up highly as a natural corridor throughout the County. Mr. Walker stated that this is a non-species specific model, and the goal is to find the path of least resistance between corridors – going through natural lands where possible – with elements such as traffic counts considered, and any road having more than 1,000 daily trips discounted in the GIS for having a corridor go over it.

Mr. Walker stated that this was the general process for taking a complicated landscape and evaluating the most valuable habitat and connections between them that may be important for conserving. He said that in Albemarle, they used a similar process to the state's, but used finer grain data, with the state using 30-meter land cover data versus 1-meter resolution used in the County. Mr. Walker stated that Albemarle County is large and they can't survey every inch, but this process can help inform some of the priorities, using the maps and data sets. He commented that relating to the Comprehensive Plan goals, transportation planning, and economic development; strategies include providing information to potential land subdividers on the importance of protecting habitat when creating lots for developments.

Mr. Walker stated that different assets for consideration with green infrastructure planning include landscape-dependent features such as nature-based recreation assets and agriculture. He provided the map from the Comp Plan that shows important agricultural soils and other categories of important farm soils. He stated that GIC likes to incorporate this type of information to show a different perspective, but it can be a bit misleading when overlaying on top of it what's actually forested. Mr. Walker noted that the areas narrow quite a bit, so they are looking at other areas as desirable agricultural lands. He said that nature-based recreation data is overlaid on top of the corridors and includes water access, birding and wildlife trail sites, County trails, proposed trails, bike lanes, etc. – these things depend on the landscape for a lot of users' experiences. Mr. Walker mentioned that popular running routes are also mapped, as there was previously no complete map, and landscape is a big factor in the integrity of those landscapes. He pointed out that this data is now in the County's database and can be used going forward. Mr. Walker pointed out alcohol-related landscape assets, including wineries, cideries, and breweries, and emphasized that the landscape influences some of the value created by these assets. He said that overlaying public drinking water wells is also valuable in terms of identifying their location, as landscape supports water quality. Mr. Walker stated that historic resources also tie into the landscape, including everything from rural historic districts to house museums, scenic byways and rivers.

Mr. Walker concluded his presentation, stating that these assets would be compiled into a single database and allowing this to inform the County's future planning.

Ms. Firehock stated that they have also invited the County's greenway planner, Dan Mahon, to discuss this with the Commission, because the work being discussed affects his ability to provide great outdoor recreations experiences for residents and visitors to the area. She said that they also have live GIS so they can zoom in and look at specific places in their districts to see how they ranked in terms of high-quality landscape.

Mr. Dan Mahon addressed the Commission, stating that when he was in school for landscape architecture, he read a book by Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* – and while it was interesting information, the author had taken all of the layers and values and made them a bit tedious. Mr. Mahon said that once GIS became available, it started making complete sense to him, with the realization that immediately applying layers and seeing the relationship brought the landscape into a much more integrated system. He stated that parks and recreation drives a lot of what the County does, and underlying that with greenway acquisition is informed by green infrastructure planning. Mr. Mahon noted that this means the public's interest in a trail or greenway may be related to fitness, but what he is looking for is a landscape corridor that can be established.

Mr. Mahon explained that most of the corridors in the County are leftover landscapes or areas that are not otherwise buildable, such as floodplains and critical slopes, and these are the places that are pursued if there is recreational potential. He said that Darden Towe Park has been approached as a linear park, but they could see a dedication of a trail for biking or hiking – but generally, when he works with a plan and dedicated greenway land, they first start by seeking the floodplain because it is unbuildable and is an area that becomes a manageable landscape. Mr. Mahon emphasized that they are always looking for corridors and seeking to connect fragmented landscape.

Mr. Mahon stated that it was also important to assess what drives people's interest in greenspace, and he works with a volunteer group in Crozet that has the County's greenway comp plan on their t-shirts. He said that the information on green infrastructure can help inspire the community to more easily understand how important the linkages and core areas are. He commented that in looking at Hedgerow and Ragged Mountain, the property the County owns that's adjacent to it connects and secures a large portion of the Ragged Mountain property – with the Hedgerow property (formerly the Arrowhead Farm) down the road from it. Mr. Mahon stated that the County is looking to combine these areas as a park complex, designating Hedgerow as a natural heritage preservation area that involves access to natural and cultural heritage amenities. He emphasized that overlaying the values of those amenities can inspire people and help the County in further pursuing the connections.

Mr. Mahon mentioned that overall, the County owns more 4,000 acres of land in parks and hopes to continue making connections and linking core areas. He stated that there is existing park staff and a new generation of park staff being hired, and the County is seeing their role as land stewards, going beyond taking care of ball parks and fields. He added that wildlife management is also part of this stewardship. Mr. Mahon commented that he greatly appreciates green infrastructure planning as a tool, and the more staff can be informed of it, the better.

Ms. Firehock stated that they have called the projects "mini-grants," which are small projects in comparison to the full-blown multi-year processes with lots of engagement, and one thing they have commonly done in these processes is re-rank some of the areas based on cultural values – such as discovery of Native American artifacts or slave cabins. She said the County can manipulate this and add cultural layers, with economic development interests such as historic tours and opportunities. Ms. Firehock emphasized that they key is that a lot of the complicated

modeling has already been done, and they have made this easy to update.

Mr. Mahon commented that they have the foundation for this, and it is very easy to continue to add layers, such as the running trail overlay. He stated that County GIS staff is incorporating things they find, and it is convenient to use this as a design and planning tool.

Ms. Firehock stated that it is valuable to have these maps available for the development community, and a past president of the Virginia Homebuilders Association commented to her that the first person he hires on the job is not the landscape architect – as that's the last person to come and add enhancements – so having a map that showed the location for open space was important. She said that he had taken an already approved development and preserved 20 acres of hardwood forest that he had previously planned to develop, conserving a habitat that he hadn't known was there. Ms. Firehock noted that there was no new law being passed tonight, and they were simply saying there is more information than what can be gleaned from an aerial.

Ms. Spain asked how these maps would get into the hands of local developers.

Ms. Firehock responded that this could be placed as a layer into the County's current GIS, which is an award-winning online tool that is very easy to use. She added that when she purchased her house in the County, she used it to see what was around that area, what was conserved, etc. Ms. Firehock said there was an old hazardous spill noted on the map that was no longer there. She stated that when a developer is coming in for a preliminary discussion with the County, staff can point out that there's a map available showing these amenities. She noted that a lot of developers do come in early in their application process, and not everything is platted out in those preliminary planning steps.

Mr. Dotson asked if this was currently on the County's GIS online.

Ms. Firehock responded that it was not yet available but is complete, and they are in the process of bundling up metadata and packing information, which they would be giving to the County this week. She stated that GIS staff would be trained so they are ready to run this, and then they will consider the next steps.

Mr. Dotson asked if it would be a single summary layer or multiple layers with different parameters.

Ms. Firehock responded that she did not know the answer to that, but at least the cores would show up and historic sites were on it, and things like running paths could be added – with other layers created over time to enable different comparisons.

Ms. Riley stated that they had been involved in discussions of trail connectivity in the southern and western urban development area, and opposition from neighborhoods is often related to perceptions that green space is either habitat preservation or recreational use – and this kind of information shows people that those things go hand in hand. She said that they have been struggling a lot in her district to demonstrate to neighborhoods where they can go with using these corridors. She said it would also help organizations such as land conservation groups identify what parcels of land they want to prioritize for linkage.

Ms. Firehock agreed, stating that it might be determined through this objective data that a 100-acre tract is more valuable than a 300-acre tract because it provides water quality protection,

buffers a neighborhood from I-64, etc.

Mr. Mahon pointed out on the GIS map the location of the future Biscuit Run State Park, noting its proximity to Dudley Mountain and commenting that there are core areas that where linkages could occur, even at a neighborhood level. He commented that in looking at the new development along Old Lynchburg Road, there are trails and common open space – which is a useful value in current development.

Ms. Firehock noted the location of proposed trails on the map.

Mr. Mahon said that being able to use this data is a useful way to communicate with the community and show them the big picture with connections. He stated that this is so easy to put the elements together, as opposed to sketching it out, and the layers can be turned off and on as desired.

Ms. Firehock mentioned that finer grained urban scale will often do other analyses like tree canopy, five acres of open space in an urban area is considered significant, and these details are important amenities in making it pleasant to live there.

Mr. Mahon stated that the large green areas on the GIS map show land that is in conservation, such as in conservation easements. He said that he had been at a conference in Williamsburg recently where land trust and land conservation groups met with greenway and trail corridor planners for the first time, and they worked together for a week. Mr. Mahon commented that it was remarkable to look at case studies in which conservation lands were able to incorporate the corridors linking these areas. He stated that they all learned a lot about how they could work together better in the future, and many of these properties – especially along the James River – are held in land trusts, with any potential trail or use locked up in the agreement, which was very encouraging.

Ms. Firehock asked if anyone else had questions or a desire to zoom into an area on the GIS map.

Supervisor Liz Palmer stated that as she's looking at this map, she's seeing areas that are obviously a few years old because this was started a while back, and she asked how difficult it was to keep these updated given all of the development. She noted that the most obvious change to her was the Ragged Mountain Reservoir.

Mr. Walker responded that the most expensive part was acquiring recent land cover data, but fortunately the state had produced a new land cover data set, which was based on 2014 imagery, whereas the land cover data used by GIC when they started was 2009 land cover information. He stated that it can be rerun with newer data, and GIC has been working with County GIS staff to make sure they can repeat the methodology. He stated that the workflow is already outlined in a GIS-type format, showing which layers should be put in where, which parameters should be used, etc., so it can be rerun fairly easily.

Ms. Firehock pointed out that most of the difficult work had been done with creation of the method, and the Natural Heritage Committee sat in a lot of meetings to address how the wanted to represent soils and geology – so those meetings did not need to be repeated. She commented that Scott Clark of the County had commented that he was excited to be able to use this information to do finer grained planning outside of the urban ring, as there is currently a bit of a sharp delineation between urban and rural areas.

Ms. Firehock thanked Mr. Walker and Mr. Mahon for their information.

Mr. Keller echoed his thanks, stating that when he was a landscape architecture in 1974 working for PEC, they were excited about bringing Ian McHarg's work to the region. He said that 20 years later he had the opportunity to spend some time with Richard Foreman, a landscape ecologist, who brought a lot of the kinds of components into this that are being seen today – lifting it to another level. Mr. Keller stated that having spent a career with cultural landscapes, he would also argue that there is a cultural landscape component that warrants some thought and integration into this. He said that it is exciting that the County is finally having these tools to use, which he viewed as long overdue given the scenic and cultural values here.

Mr. Keller reiterated his thanks, adding that he hopes to see these referenced by County staff in the review and analysis of certain kinds of projects.

Recess

The Planning Commission took a break at 6:41 and the meeting reconvened at 6:44 p.m.

Committee Reports

Ms. Spain reported that she had attended the Pantops Community Advisory Committee held the previous week, stating that Ms. Echols had been there to set the priorities for the projects identified through the NIFI process. Ms. Spain said Ms. Echols had done a spectacular job, and they had their priorities set within 24 hours, with bus stop improvements coming out on top.

Ms. Echols stated that the second-ranked priority was sidewalk improvements on Route 250.

Ms. Spain said that greenway work around the river was also a priority, and she heard from attendees that they were very pleased with the process and the ranking system created.

Mr. Dotson reported that the Places 29 CAC had also met for the NIFI prioritizing, with bus stops tied for first, with proposals for use of the land area opposite CATEC ranking second. He stated that there were three different proposals, ranging from a wildlife meadow owned and maintained by VDOT like those found around interchanges, making it into a park with benches and an improved bus stop, and making it partly a parking area for people who use the John Warner Parkway trail.

Old Business

There was no old business presented.

New Business

Mr. Keller stated that he and Ms. More were surprised that the Crozet survey update showed up as a new business item on the agenda, as it was her intent just to mention in the committee reports that there was something going on, just so it would be in the public record. Mr. Keller said that Ms. More had provided a written statement of several paragraphs, which he would read into the record, and he and Ms. Echols would try to address questions arising from the public.

Ms. More's statement read as follows:

"I would like to give you a brief overview of a survey that will be given to the Crozet Community and surrounding areas soon.

The survey committee is a group of volunteer community members. The committee has been open for anyone to join and all meetings have been public and advertised within the community. The committee consists of myself, Crozet Community Association President Tim Tolson, retired planning commissioner Tom Loach, White Hall Supervisor Ann Mallek, Tom Guterbock director of UVAs Center for Survey Research and Crozet resident, Shawn Bird a Polling polling expert and Crozet resident, Crozet Board of Trade President Mike Marshall and County Senior Planner Elaine Echols. Other interested citizens have been present at several meetings.

The last survey of the Crozet area was done in 2009. There were just over 700 responses and over 1200 written comments. There are many new residents in the Crozet area and the survey committee has been working to update the survey and create and administer the survey to create an opportunity to gather community feedback.

After a series of meetings the committee has created a 34 question survey that will take less than 20 minutes to take. The Committee has gathered input from the County, various community members and stakeholders about questions they would like to have asked. A letter containing instructions and a personal ID code will be sent to 2,000 households within the Crozet Growth area and 1,000 households in nearby areas. These addresses will be randomly pulled and those individuals that receive this letter will be part of this random sample. The Committee hopes to get around 500 responses from this random sample. The survey will then be available for anyone to take. The survey will be available online and in paper form. Once the random sample has received their letters and been given a time to respond the survey will be available in the Gazette, at the library, through social media and the Crozet Board of Trade and Crozet Community Association email lists. The committee has many resources to ensure that the survey will be available online or in paper form to anyone who wishes to participate.

Currently the survey is being entered into an online platform that will allow for community members to take the survey online. The survey is also being formatted into a paper version that will be available as well. The current timeline is to have letters go out to the random sample in mid May and then the survey will be available for anyone to access by the end of May. Random sample results will be kept separate from the results of those that were not part of the random sample. The results will be made public once they are compiled.

There is a huge amount of volunteer time that is involved, but there is a cost associated with pulling the addresses, paper and postage. This cost is being covered by donations given the The Crozet Board of Trade. The Crozet Board of Trade is a civic non profit that traditionally has raised money for Crozet's Independence Day fireworks. CBT also raised funds to create the Crozet Historic District.

This survey will provide a way to reach many community members and gather their input. Careful thought has gone into every step of this process. The committee is thankful for the volunteers and any donations that make this effort possible."

Mr. Keller said that his question is why this item has come to the Commission at this point and what effect it would have on the planning process.

Ms. Echols stated that Ms. More had mainly wanted to let the Commission know what was going on, because this had arisen from concerns of those in the community for the need to update the master plan. She said that this is a community-driven survey, and the County's participation has been somewhat minimal because the community wanted to find out what its people had to say about any number of things. Ms. Echols stated that the results of the survey would help potentially provide some focus for the master plan update, and the variety of questions in the survey really range far and wide. She said there would be questions regarding what the community wants to see along 250 in the area between the development area boundary and the Yancey Mills community, which has the schools on it and is already partially developed. She stated that the community wants to get input on the preservation that's occurred so far and whether they were interested in more commercial development, which residents had previously said they did not want – but there were now new people in the community. Ms. Echols emphasized that there was genuine interest in determining what was important to the community, and another survey objective has been to determine what businesses were desired in Crozet that residents felt they would frequent, which would help inform the Crozet Square project in terms of what people wanted in town.

Ms. Echols stated that staff asked the CAC to include a few questions that would help with the master plan update, although it was not totally geared towards that, and it was a bit unusual to have a survey like this – except for Crozet. She stated that Crozet has some unique attributes that the urban areas around the development area don't have, as it is a self-contained place that people identify with. She said that the Village of Rivanna might benefit from a survey, but most of that is the Glenmore community, and when the master plan for the village was being developed, there were some surveys of Glenmore residents. Ms. Echols pointed out that the survey was a unique kind of thing for the County, but not something they viewed as problematic, as it was one piece of what would go into the development of a master plan update for Crozet.

Ms. Firehock asked if there was a need to distinguish this survey as to whether it is an official County survey, and Ms. Echols confirmed there was no County investment in the survey.

Mr. Keller stated that to him it is like the Woolen Mills and budget issue, whereby he did not have an opportunity to review this before it was added to the agenda, and Ms. More did not realize it was going to be on the agenda. He said that he would speak with Mr. Gast-Bray about it when he returned from a planning conference.

Ms. Echols clarified that Ms. More had actually asked her to be present here because she intended to bring this item up. Ms. Echols apologized and said it was her own fault for misunderstanding that it was an item for the agenda, as it was information Ms. More had wanted to share with fellow Commissioners.

Mr. Keller stated that he also thought Ms. More wanted this to be part of the public record, because there had been discussions about what this was, which was why it was important to her to clarify who was involved.

Ms. Echols noted that she did not attend all the meetings and had been there on the invitation of the committee, which asked her after they'd gotten into the process whether she would come to a few of the meetings and provide input as to how this could be used in the master plan update. Ms. Echols said she was glad to do that, and was also glad to see the committee's use of a professional statistician – Tom Guterbach – as well as a new member of the community who brought some very different perspectives to the group.

Ms. Firehock mentioned that a previous County survey about water, which had also been sent by mail, had asked the highest level of education obtained – and the majority of those returning the surveys had bachelor's or master's degrees, which was not representative of County residents. She commented that this was always a challenge with surveys, as respondents may not be representative of the entire community.

Ms. Echols said she did not remember the demographic details in the survey, but said that the committee was trying to get some idea of who was answering it. She stated that the reason why they were doing two levels of surveys was because they wanted to make sure they have a statistically valid group to know it's not just people who are interested in all of the issues.

Mr. Keller thanked her and indicated there were several other items under new business.

Mr. Keller asked fellow Commissioners whether October 26 was a viable date for their next joint meeting with the School Board. Absent any feedback, he stated that he would ask Ms. More and Mr. Palmer, and then get back to staff on this.

Mr. Dotson mentioned that the Places 29/Rio CAC meeting would be held that same evening, beginning at 6:00 p.m., and stated that he would miss it if necessary.

Mr. Keller suggested that the Commission hear from the person who would be presenting to the Board of Supervisors the following evening regarding transient housing.

Ms. Echols mentioned that Rebecca Ragsdale would be the presenter on that item.

Ms. Echols reported that the Board of Supervisors has been very interested in transient lodging and short-term residential lodging for a while, with great interest in ensuring that the transient occupancy tax (TOT) is shared across all lodging facilities – because currently the tax provision is only for hotel, motel, boarding house, or travel campground. Ms. Echols stated that other forms of tourist lodging were not captured, and staff was recommending that they change the tax part of the code to accommodate other purveyors of transient lodging, so they would be required to pay the sales tax. She said that the General Assembly has also allowed communities to create a registry, which would enable the County to collect the taxes, and staff is recommending that the registry be created so that Finance and Zoning department staff can keep track of this activity.

Ms. Echols stated that staff has determined that about 2/3 of the businesses found online could meet the County's regulations, but about 1/3 could not because their types of operations were not allowed. She explained that it is permissible to rent up to five rooms inside a single-family detached structure in the RA, with a second unit on the parcel available for rental if development rights exist – but a person cannot rent out an entire house, an apartment or townhouse unit, or a detached structure. Ms. Echols said they cannot have weddings or special events without a special use permit in the rural area, and rooms cannot be rented without a resident manager. She noted that there have been concerns in the community about various aspects, and staff was not suggesting that the Board change the regulations, but was suggesting that they consider whether renting out a whole house was appropriate or whether other types of housing like a townhouse could be rented out.

Ms. Echols stated that they were trying to take this in steps, with the first being whether they wanted to change the tax regulations, then whether they wanted to establish the registry, then whether they want to consider changing the zoning regulations. She said that if the Board

decided they did want to change the zoning regulations, those would go to the Commission – so the Board may ask for a work session with the Board to hear what other communities were doing, along with opportunities for public participation.

Ms. Firehock asked if someone registering their property would be told at that point if they didn't meet the requirements.

Ms. Echols confirmed that staff would tell them then that they couldn't meet the regulations and would have to discontinue what they were doing because of noncompliance with zoning. She said that this was a preview of what the Board would be considering, but she didn't want to get too far into specific details with the Commission yet.

Mr. Keller commented that staff had done a good comparison matrix with what was on the Supervisors' agenda, and he suggested that Commissioners review that if they were interested. He stated that he was assuming that owner occupancy or management in those units had the potential to trigger the issue of a home occupation, which had additional tax implications.

Ms. Echols clarified that there were two areas of taxation: the transient occupancy tax (TOT), which is what's paid with any hotel lodging, and that is limited by state legislation; and the BPOL tax is dependent on how much income is gained from an operation, which the Board is contemplating increasing. She noted that their discussion at the May 2 Board meeting would focus just on the sales tax.

Mr. Keller announced that their next meeting would be Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

Adjournment

Mr. Lafferty moved for adjournment. Mr. Dotson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 6:0. Ms. More was absent from the meeting and the vote.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m. to the May 23, 2017 Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m., Auditorium, Second Floor, County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

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Andrew Gast-Bray, Secretary

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 9-5-2017
Initials: sct