Minutes

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
August 11, 2026 – 5:30 P.M.
Hybrid Meeting

I. COMMISSION PRE-MEETING (Agenda discussion(s))

Beginning: 5:00 PM
***Location*:** City Council Chambers
Members Present: Chairman Schwarz, Commissioner Mitchell, Commissioner Roetttger, Commissioner Harness, Commissioner Yoder
Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Remy Trail, Dannon O'Connell, Matt Alfele, Ben Koby, Tori Kanellopoulos

II. COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING – Meeting called to order by Chairman Schwarz at 5:30 PM.

Beginning: 5:30 PM
Location: City Council Chambers

A. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Carp – Absent – No Report

Commissioner Mitchell – The Annual Meeting is September 9th. The protocol for that is that the secretary will moderate the annual meeting part of that meeting. Commissioner Solla-Yates and I will make a recommendation as it relates to the nominees. I am happy to share with the body who we are recommending, or I can wait until the 9th. We are recommending that we continue with the incumbents.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – Absent – No Report

Commissioner Harness – June 17th was the Quarterly Neighborhood Leaders meeting. Sam Sanders gave an update on replacing the Public Works Assistant City Manager. It used to be Evan Pelchowski. He has received 75 candidates and narrowed it to 10. This was over a month ago. I don't know the status of it currently. That seemed to be a popular position that people were interested in. Thomas Safranek gave an update on his neighborhood walks that he has been doing across the city and how successful they have been. Jen Hendricks, the Chief Strategy Officer discussed moving toward trying to get the city to have more dashboards for KPIs that residents and internal stakeholders can follow so we can make a little more data centered decisions and updating the My Cville App, which people can use to submit things that are broken or need attention throughout the city. Updating that service and how the internal processes flow from getting the information from the app. Abigail Wade gave an update on economic mobility. Brennen Duncan gave an update on upcoming construction projects around the city. There are going to be a lot of road and transportation related construction projects coming up in the next couple of years. Bids and RFPs have been submitted in the last couple of months for several of them. It will be interesting to see how those estimates come back and if those remain in budget and how those projects progress forward. July 9th was the Development Code cleanup subcommittee on active depth, build-to, and setbacks. I will not go into detail into that. We had a work session on the same topic. On July 28th, we had the missing middle subcommittee. Commissioner Roettger and I met with city staff and several city developers and architects to align on what our goals and agendas are for the group. The goal that we came up with is to identify the technical challenges that are preventing us from seeing more missing middle

housing in the community. As part of that, we defined missing middle as anything up to 12 units. That includes what are known as accessory dwelling units. That is not what they are known as in our code. It is a growing flat or carriage house, duplexes, triplexes, cottage courts, small apartment buildings. The primary objective of this group is to develop a set of technical issues in a report that they will bring to the Planning Commission and City Council to determine any necessary future actions. That effort is scheduled to have a report sometime in the spring or summer of 2027. The first topic we are going to investigate later this month is utility issues.

Commissioner Roettger – With Parks and Recreation, I did not go last night. I was at the CHS Open House. In the previous week and this meeting, they were going over changing fees to a lot of their programs and facility rentals. It seemed fine to me and made sense. They were keeping up with the times and evaluating city versus county in all these different scenarios. With the Tree Commission, they have updated the tree species list that links into the code for what you can choose from to plant where for street trees versus other trees on site. An urban forestry plan is coming out soon. It has more emphasis on how to think about private land. With the public land tree canopy, we can work with that. The Azalea Hill residents from the new subdivision that is going in, where it had rained heavily on the construction project, it was shut down. We had 12 to 15 community members come in, which is unusual for the Tree Commission. They were mostly looking for advice on who to go to and how to work on that. What I thought was interesting, besides that sediment was flying off the site, which was unfortunate. There is a paper street or alley. There is this whole strip of land where the developer isn't in charge of it. The homeowners are not in charge of it. There are several trees, because the land was stripped up until that line, the root balls have been damaged. They are no longer with their other trees. They are probably going to fall. I thought that was interesting for us to think about delving into the alley situations more. They did not understand why the developer was in charge. There is no onus on the developer because it is sort of city property. These alleys are undetermined.

Commissioner Yoder – We had a meeting of the MPO Technical Committee last week. There was not a whole lot of notes. MPO staff talked a little bit about their upcoming UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program). It is essentially the MPO's budget for the next year and their work program. There are two things that I think are interesting. They are going to be doing a study of what it would take to stand up a regional bike-pedestrian count program. That would not just be the city, not just be the country. It would be everything from what are locations that would be good, what are our devices or technology that would be good for doing the counting, etc. They will be working with city staff and other jurisdictions as well on that. They are going to be doing a travel demand management study, which is essentially looking at all the trips that come into the city; typically commute trips. They are highly peaked at office hours and come up with strategies for shifting those trips to something else. If you can cut off a tiny bit of the peak, you can solve 80 percent of your traffic problems. That would be shifting to different modes, different times of day, etc. VDOT gave an update on STARS and pipeline studies. The city has requested a study at the intersection of Preston and McIntire. The county and city are both going to be jointly requesting a study of 250 bypass over Free Bridge and the intersections directly adjacent and High Street to Locust. That is a section of that corridor that has not been touched by any of these studies, taking it up to the current streetscape project. The VDOT Central Office must approve these locations. It goes into the study process. One thing that was interesting is that the VDOT rep discussed that they are going to begin these studies with a framework phase, pre-study phase. They get the stakeholders together. They essentially determine the study's approach. What are the geographical boundaries? What kinds of dates are we going to collect? What kind of technical analysis are we going to do? Who is the study work group? To hopefully smooth the kind of interjurisdictional coordination on these studies that maybe was not there in some previous studies. All the smart-scale applications for the current round have been submitted as of August 1st. They are being evaluated by OEI, which is the state agency that manages that. They had to do preliminary cost estimates at the pre-application stage. They now have done another cost estimate, which is based on more detailed design information. Costs have changed. One interesting thing is the 5th Street and I-64 bridge DDI (Diverging Diamond) with some paths and sidewalk connections. The price estimate went down from $44 million to $39 million. I was shocked. That almost never happens. The bypass ramp extension at Old Ivy Road, the northbound

went from $13 million to $20 million, which is a massive price escalation. The ramp on the other side in the southbound direction went from $10 million to $11 million. The Rt. 250 off-ramp at Barracks Road is going to have some sidewalk and path improvements on Barracks Road. It went from $21 million to $46 million. The way the formula works is you take your technical score for all the benefits you are going to provide, and you divide it by the cost. The cost is important for scoring well. If you see the price going up, that means the likelihood of being funded is going down. That was the most interesting thing about that meeting.

B. UNIVERSITY REPORT

Commissioner Joy – Absent – No Report

C. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Schwarz – The BAR in June approved the LV Collective Building on West Main Street. We approved just the building. The site needs to come back to us for approval. They still cannot get a full building permit yet. They must get approval of the whole project. The reason for this was that they could move ahead with the design of the building and get their drawings done while also working with the neighborhood to develop the site plan. There is going to be some kind of Memory Walk to connect West Main Street to Westhaven and further down to 10th & Page and other aspects of the site to make it more connected with the rest of the community. Next month, we have some interesting projects coming up with LV Collective for special exceptions and looking at an apartment building on the parking lot site of the old Martha Jefferson Hospital.

D. DEPARTMENT OF NDS

Matt Alfele, Development Manager –There will be another missing middle working group that will be coming up on the 20th to address utility conflicts. There will be another subcommittee meeting with the Development Code 2026 clarification revision round. That will be coming up prior to your next meeting. The date and topic will not be set until tomorrow.

E. MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE FORMAL AGENDA
No Public Comments

F. CONSENT AGENDA

- **a.** Minutes – March 24, 2026-Work Session
- **b.** Minutes – April 14, 2026-Regular Meeting

Motion to Approve – Commissioner Mitchell – Second by Commissioner Yoder – Motion passes 5-0.

III. PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS
Beginning: 6:00 PM
Format: (i) Staff Report (ii) Public Hearing (iii) Commission Discussion & Motion

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Chapter 9: Community Facilities & Services and Appendix

i. Staff Report

Tori Kanellopoulos, Long Range Planner – This is a public hearing for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Chapter 9-Community Facilities and Services. I am joined this evening by Jason McIlwee, Director of

Utilities, and Anthony Allard, Utilities Regulatory Compliance and Operations Administrator, to assist with answering any questions that might come up.

Next Slide – Agenda
The agenda for this evening is to review the scope of this amendment, the purpose of the amendment, and the suggested motions for the Planning Commission.

Next Slide – Scope of Comprehensive Plan Amendment
In November 2021, City Council formally adopted the city's Comprehensive Plan. Since then, there have been several amendments, including adopting both The Climate Action Plan and The Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Comprehensive Plan amendments require public hearings with both the Planning Commission and City Council. This amendment is for Chapter 9-Community Facilities and Services and associated public utility maps in the Comprehensive Plan Appendix. This chapter and these maps have not been updated since the 2021 Comprehensive Plan adoption. Since then, there have been updates to city and partner agency public utility and facility planning maps and projects. It is best practice to periodically update these maps and plans and include them in the Comprehensive Plan. The scope of this amendment includes adding two new strategies. One to adopt relevant Rivanna River and Sewer Authority and Albemarle County Service Authority plans be reference within the Comprehensive Plan and one to add the future Shenks Branch sewer interceptor upgrade project. The updated Appendix would replace the previous water and sanitary system maps with updated maps and would add two new maps, one for the city's storm system and another for the RWSA central waterline project.

Next Slide
This slide shows the full wording of those two new strategies for 8.7. Many of these are RWSA and ACSA plans were adopted by reference in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Those are being carried forward again adopted by reference. Strategy 9.4 is like 9.3, which calls out a specific project that is known to be included in the text of the Comprehensive Plan.

Next Slide – Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Virginia State Code requires each locality to have a comprehensive plan. Each plan needs to include the general or approximate location, character, and extent of public facilities and the designation of a system of community service facilities to be considered part of the Comprehensive Plan. Public utilities and facilities can be included in the text of the plan, such as a plan strategy or as a reference document. They can also be included as separate attachments such as maps in the comprehensive plan appendix. The current Comprehensive Plan has strategies for several specific projects and studies in the community facilities and services chapter along with water and sanitary system maps in the appendix. Per Virginia state code, most public utilities and facilities must either be a feature shown in the Comprehensive Plan, such as a project shown in a map or specified in a strategy or they need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission to find that the general or approximate location, character, and extent of public facilities are in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan. There are some exceptions to that, including normal service extensions of public utilities and regular repair work.

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The overall purpose of this amendment is since that chapter of the Comprehensive Plan has not been updated since 2021, updates were needed to incorporate the most up-to-date information for public water, sewer, and stormwater management facilities and utilities. This Comprehensive Plan Amendment does not change the city's overall goals or approach.

Next Slide – Suggested Motions
These are the suggested motions for the Planning Commission. The next step would be forwarding the Commission's recommendation to Council and for Council to hold a public hearing.

Commissioner Harness – This is good. I understand the need to update these maps periodically. Five years is a long time. There has been a lot of work that has been done on some of these. I am curious to know what is the impetus or what is driving adding the Shenks Branch project specifically to the Comprehensive Plan?

Ms. Kanellopoulos – When we have a known specific project that could be included, it is best practice to add that in. As we identify those periodically beyond just a typical replacement or upgrade.

ii. Public Hearing

No Public Comments

iii. Commission Discussion and Motion

Motion – Commissioner Mitchell - I make a Motion to adopt Resolution #R-CP-26-0001, recommending City Council approve the updates to Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan ("CP") and updates to the CP Appendix documents as an amendment to the City's CP." Second by Commissioner Harness. Motion passes 5-0.

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Beginning: Following any public hearings

1. Special Exception Request - 323 2nd Street SE [PL-26-0084]

i. Staff Report

Ben Koby, City Planner – We are here to discuss project item PL-26-0084, which is a special exception permit for roof mounted mechanical equipment screening at 323 2nd Street Southeast.

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323 2nd Street Southeast is zoned NX-10. The future land use designation is Urban Mixed-Use Node. Ultimately, it is a special exception for a proposal as a part of two tenant upfit permits. There is a proposal to install mechanical equipment, which will be 64 inches in height. Any rooftop mounts and mechanical equipment must be screened to 6 inches above the highest point of any mechanical equipment on the rooftop. They are requesting a special exception to reduce that to what would ultimately be a 70-foot-tall mechanical equipment screening down to their 48-inch screen that they have as a part of their existing parapet wall up there.

Next Slide

There is that code section 4.7.42 that shows that requirement.

Next Slide

Here is their roof equipment configuration highlighted.

Next Slide

You can see what their mechanical equipment will be. Just some exhaust fans.

Next Slide

While considering what is in the area, this photo from the top of the Water Street Garage, you can see what would be that corner where the mechanical equipment will be. I went there and looked. I don't think, with the height of that building, and all the buildings and the proximity, I don't think that mechanical equipment will be seen from anywhere given the existing parapet wall, the relative height of the mechanical equipment not exceeding that angle too greatly. I think it will be seen. Given the buildings in the area, it will not be visible. I recommend approving the special exception with no extra conditions.

Commissioner Yoder – The special exception is tied to the specific permit request for these exhaust fans. If they were to come back 2 years from now and say they want to build more stuff above the parapet wall that is utilities, this special exception permit only applies to this request, not to any future request to do more stuff with utilities up there.

Mr. Koby – Right. Any new mechanical equipment that is outside of the scope of what is being requested as a part of this special exception would have to come back.

Commissioner Roettger – Eventually Kindlewood will have something in that corner. We must picture that there will be some higher buildings that might be able to see it at some point. Even those windows would probably be looking up. It probably would still block most of it. That height is probably going to be changing around that building at some point. Right now, it seems like it is the tallest building.

Mr. Koby – It will change it a little bit out there. Given the existing parapet wall, the relative height of the proposed equipment, I did not see any concern.

ii. Commission Discussion and Motion

Chairman Schwarz – I was two blocks to the east of this building. You can see this equipment or at least the existing equipment from that parking lot. I imagine you can probably see it from the Belmont Bridge. There have been buildings on West Main Street that have argued to the BAR that you cannot see the equipment from the street. You can see it clearly from other spots on West Main Street. It is just the way the topography works in the city. This is an important code requirement that we should not trivialize and dismiss easily. It does not sound like we are doing that. I am Ok with approving this one specifically. It is an existing building. There is already stuff up on that roof. I want to make sure that we as a commission recognize that just because you cannot see it from next door, move a couple of blocks away, you can usually see this stuff more easily.

Commissioner Harness – This is the second special exception request we have had for this. This is not necessarily maintenance issues. Somebody could consider a retrofit for a tenant usage to be maintenance for a building. I would hate to just have maintenance issues continue to come before us as a special exception. This is a screening issue. The other one on the Health Department on Rose Hill was a screening issue. It seems like small things that we can maybe find a way around the Planning Commission.

Chairman Schwarz – If this was something bigger or messier, I would have more concerns over it. I would not want to just be automatically rubber stamped.

It is specifically for this equipment. If they have other equipment, they need to come back to us. The plan seemed to show that there are five new pieces of new equipment and a new exhaust fan. There are two future pieces of equipment that require separate permit drawings for the ninth floor. Are those part of this application?

Mr. Koby – They are. These are part of two separate building permit applications that I combined. The future referenced equipment was for the sequential building permits for the separate eighth floor and ninth floor building permit application.

Motion – Commissioner Harness – I move to recommend approval of application PL-26-0084 to allow the installation of rooftop-mounted mechanical equipment by granting a modification to City Code Section 34-4.7.4.C.2, reducing the required screening height from six (6) inches above the tallest point of the equipment to the height of the existing 48-inch parapet wall, subject to the following condition(s):

a. **The size and location of the equipment will be consistent with the materials submitted in application BC-26-0035 and BC-26-0037 dated March 4th, 2026, and March 5th, 2026, respectively.**

Second by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion passes 5-0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.