

Minutes

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
August 11, 2020 – 5:30 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

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

Beginning: 5:00 PM

Location: Virtual/Electronic

Members Present: Commissioner Stolzenberg, Commissioner Solla-Yates, Chairman Mitchell, Commissioner Lahendro, Commissioner Green, Commissioner Dowell, Commissioner Palmer

Members Absent: Commissioner Heaton

Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Joe Rice, Joey Winter, Lisa Robertson, Missy Creasy, Alex Ikefuna

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order once quorum was reached and asked if there were any questions concerning the agenda. Commissioner Stolzenberg noted a minute's correction needed on page 87 of the on line packet and staff noted that request. Chair Mitchell asked for the deliverable this evening for the Starr Hill item. Ms. Creasy noted that the New Hill consultants would be providing an overview of the plan and the Commission would have the opportunity to provide feedback. It was noted that due to the contract in place for this plan that it would not be considered a small area plan as it does not contain an implementation strategy but that there was agreement for the community vision plan to be brought forward as a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Commissions Dowell provided an overview of MACAA programs including Project Discovery.

Ms. Creasy noted the change for the September Commission meeting. She noted that due to the Labor Day holiday, City Council will meet on Tuesday September 8th and the Planning Commission will meet on Wednesday September 9, 2020.

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

Beginning: 5:30 PM

Location: Virtual/Electronic

A. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Green – There was a TJPDC meeting last Thursday. I didn't get to participate. By the time I got back, everybody had lost power. They are postponing the meeting until next week.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – We did have an MPO Tech meeting where we discussed the new public participation plan draft. That will be coming up for the MPO meeting in September for adoption. That lays out what the procedures are for public participation. We also discussed smart scale updates. Council submitted some applications. We went through the feedback that we received from the public. We discussed the new plan for the Fontaine intersection. I also asked about updates for open street plans

during the pandemic. I didn't get an update at that meeting. We will have a PLACE meeting on Thursday, where we will discuss the Preston/Grady intersection.

Commissioner Dowell – I do have a communication about a school CIP committee meeting. We are going to start meeting more than once a month. We are working on setting up a date now to meet in early to mid-September.

Commissioner Lahendro – The Board of Architectural Review met on July 21st. We had six projects come before us for Certificates of Appropriateness. All six received those certificates. The Tree Commission has yet to meet. We are now allowed to meet in August. We will be meeting at the end of this month on a date yet to be determined.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – The full Housing Advisory Committee has been busy. The full HAC met on July 15th. We discussed the draft affordable housing ordinance, the accessible dwelling unit ordinance, short term rentals, and the loss of the Housing Coordinator. The short term rental analysis found about 200 homes in the city, roughly about one percent of total inventory. Mr. Sales indicated that Council may no longer be interested in moving forward with the Accessible Dwelling Unit and Affordable Housing ordinances. We will check back with Council on the timeline. It has been initiated.

Ms. Creasy – Council did talk about that at their meeting in September. They decided that they wanted to integrate that into the code updates that are underway with the consultants. The materials that we have to date have been forwarded to Code Studio to assist with that process. They didn't want to pursue that outside of the larger code update. It is going to move forward but it is going to move forward a little bit differently.

Chairman Mitchell – What does that mean for the work that has already been done? Do we wait?

Ms. Creasy – Yes, but not long. The code portion of things are going to start bubbling up sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – The Policy Sub-committee met on the 22nd. We talked about detailed COVID relief and housing data standards. Most of the relief money coming down from the federal government is going to renters. Quite a few homeowners have applied. We got a tech demo from the housing hub, which is a new website that will help people find housing assistance, but has no organization who wants to own or maintain it.

B. UNIVERSITY REPORT

Commissioner Palmer – I want to point everybody to the official engagement stuff that is out there. There was a town hall last night that was focused on the community of Charlottesville. You can find a recording of that if you missed it. There is a video on the UVA website of President Ryan giving an overview of the latest planning for reopening. Online courses are going to begin August 25th. In person classes are tentatively delayed until September 8th. If students are living in dorms, they would be able to move in a few days before that. Those dates have not been set yet. The Racial Equity Task Force report was released last night. That is easily available from the UVA website. It sets out their twelve recommendations for improvements that could be made at UVA.

C. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Mitchell – The UVA, Albemarle County, and Charlottesville land use group is going to meet next week or the week after. There are a couple of other groups that are meeting. I will have more to report next month.

Chairman Mitchell and the other commissioners recognized Commissioner Green for all of the years of service as a commissioner and the multiple community projects that she has been involved in with these past years. This Planning Commission meeting was Commissioner Green's last official meeting as a commissioner with the Planning Commission.

D. DEPARTMENT OF NDS

Ms. Creasy – The Planning Commission meeting for September will be on Wednesday, September 9th. The shift is due to the Labor Day holiday. We continue to work remotely. All of the inspectors are in the field. We have a few staff in the office. Most everyone is tele-working and coming in once or twice a month to pick up materials. We are working on information pertaining to family day home. Ms. Robertson has submitted information to our Congressional representatives. We have been working on potential language to address family day homes. Most can have from one to four children which is allowable in all residential areas within the city. It gets a little trickier with five to twelve. We are working on language to get to you for consideration to help clean up the language in the code. The City Hall building will not be open tomorrow, which is August 12th. Staff will be working remotely. There are some services open for appointments. Those will not be available on Wednesday. Everything will be back open on Thursday morning.

E. MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE FORMAL AGENDA

None

F. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes – June 9, 2020 – Pre-meeting and Regular Meeting

Commissioner Stolzenberg moved to approve the consent agenda with one small modification to the June minutes. (Seconded by Commissioner Solla-Yates).

(Items removed from the consent agenda will be considered at the end of the regular agenda)

III. Commission's Action Items

Continuing: until all action items are concluded.

1. **Presentation – Cville Plans Together – Project Update and Housing Discussion**

Jennifer Koch, Consultant RHI – We, as a consultant team, are working with NDS and the Planning Commission, to continue the update to the Comprehensive Plan that was started in 2017 and 2018. That includes a big focus on housing, housing affordability, and the housing plan that will be a part of the housing chapter in the Comprehensive Plan. Once the Comprehensive Plan is

updated and finalized early next year, we will be working on the code revision. Code Studio will be reviewing what comes out of this meeting. We will be working with them as we move forward. If you're not familiar with the project, feel free to visit the website cvilleplanstogether.com and you can find more information there. We have been summarizing all of the input we received in May and June. We're going to go through high level survey results today, which are the demographics of the people we heard from. We are working on cleaning up the survey data and getting that out so people can look at it. We want to make that we fully understood what was in there before it went out. I know there is interest in that from you and others. We have also been meeting with staff in topic specific groups to talk about the different areas of the Comprehensive Plan. We are making sure that we start to work with them as we start to look into the chapters, how to suggest edits to this, how to continue these updates of the 2018 version of the chapters, and continue it forward. We have had some good discussions with staff in the past couple of weeks. We are working on summarizing what we heard in May and June and starting to think how this might influence what is updated in the Comprehensive Plan. When we talk about the next phase of community engagement, the big piece of that is what we are talking about with people and getting input on.

Latoya Thomas, Brick & Story – One thing I want to highlight is that one of our primary goals, when we started this effort, was to really make some good connections in the Charlottesville community across a broad swath of residents, stakeholders, and interest groups. Our goal was also to develop partnerships that must be leveraged going forward in this process. There are very robust and rich networks already in Charlottesville. Our big focus was to tap into those networks, build relationships, and have our engagement process be a catalyst for leveraging the strength of those networks. In the Spring, we had COVID. That impacted much of what we thought we were going to engage the City of Charlottesville in. It has impacted how we do engagement all around the country. We have had to adapt our approach. We adapted our approach to virtual and telephonic methods. Some of the tools that we leveraged were the project website to share and collect information about the community, Zoom based webinars to introduce the whole process to the community, and Zoom based virtual conversations that allowed us to meet with residents in a virtual platform. We also leveraged social media and the community wide survey that was distributed via hard copy and online. We had over 1,100 survey respondents. Of the three webinars we hosted, we had close to 30 to 50 participants in each webinar. We hosted 9 publicly advertised virtual conversations. In addition to those 9 conversations, we also hosted at least 16 specially scheduled conversations that were for targeted interest groups. Some of the groups we had conversations with included JABA, Region Ten, Cadre, residents from the IRC, residents from Friendship Court, Sin Barras, Habitat for Humanity, the Charlottesville Youth Council, and several African American homeowners. We also conducted with other Charlottesville based organizations and agencies. Some include Charlottesville City Schools, CRHA, Home-to-Hope, the office of Delegate Sally Hudson, Community Climate Collaborative, and the Bike and Pedestrian Committee. We had at least 220 participants in the various virtual conversations that we had. The size of those ranged from 3 to 28 participants each time. We also tried to leverage additional tools, understanding not everyone has access to virtual technology and Zoom. We did a large utility mailing that went out with the utility bills. We also partnered with the Housing Authority to do a mailing with the rent statements. We partnered with Cultivate Charlottesville to support survey completion at the UACC Friday markets. We worked with local residents. We worked with a resident at Friendship Court, who works in the community center. She helped us

connect with 75 Friendship Court residents, who completed the survey. We also partnered with media outlets. We managed to connect with a number of seniors. We have tried to use a number of different tools understanding the challenges of COVID and the challenges of not being able to reach people in person. We have also tried to leverage our steering committee.

Chairman Mitchell – You mentioned a number of groups that you worked with. You didn't mention the PHAR residents.

Ms. Thomas – We did speak with PHAR as well. The list was not comprehensive.

Ms. Koch – We do have several PHAR representatives on the steering committee as well.

Commissioner Lahendro – Any churches?

Ms. Thomas – The Baha'i Faith Community was the only religious affiliated group that we were able to get an organized call with. We did reach out through the Charlottesville Clergy Collective and got some responses from 1 or 2 churches, who were distributing the flyers and the PDF of the survey through their networks. We did have a bit of a challenge trying to reach out to more churches. That's one of our priority follow ups in our next phase of engagement.

Ms. Koch – It was harder since churches were not able to meet in person. It is a very important pathway.

Commissioner Green – Churches may be more familiar with Zoom meetings. It may be time to reach back out since congregations are meeting virtually.

Ms. Koch – I am going to go over the survey findings. I wanted to take a look through. I may not be able to answer all of your questions right away. I am happy to follow up in the coming days with information as needed. This is a preliminary summary. We are creating a more detailed summary that gets into some of the details behind these which looks at how the priorities were different based on these different demographics groups. That level of analysis is not in here, but it is forthcoming. We had 1,170 responses. Every chart that you see is a breakdown of all those responses. Surveys were largely submitted online. We did have some paper surveys submitted, largely through Cultivate and Friendship Court. We did have 8 surveys submitted in Spanish. There were some that were partial responses. Some were blank. We will make that clear in the final summary. Most of the surveys had a partial response. This is an overview of where people live. There is some inconsistency whether people identified themselves as being a Charlottesville resident when they might live in the county. We wanted to show this, especially when there were more than a few people. Most of the respondents were from the City of Charlottesville. We did have a lot of Albemarle County residents, which is really important. A lot of these things are regional conversations that need to happen. Most of the respondents said that they lived in Charlottesville for more than 20 plus years. We asked if people were current students at UVA. Most of the respondents said they were not students. Had we not been in the COVID situation, we probably would have had more student responses. When looking at the neighborhoods, we realize some of these are in the county. They are outside the city line. We included them here. We are going to use this information and demographic information to see where there were specific

concerns in certain neighborhoods and certain income levels. This neighborhood piece is important. Where do we need to be reaching out more to get input? For people to tell us their neighborhood is a good way to know about that. We did have quite a few blank responses on this one. This is the race/ethnicity breakdown. We know that this is not reflective of the diversity of the City of Charlottesville. It does help us realize who we need to reach out to more specifically in a targeted way. The way that we asked this question was a combined race/ethnicity question, which is different than the census. When compared to the latest census results, it is hard to directly compare how well the proportions match up with the city. More than half of the respondents identified as female. The age distribution is a fairly good even distribution based on the census data. I am really interested in getting more input from the 18 to 24 year old demographic and the later teen years. There is a lot of interesting things happening there. Looking at income, we heard from people at various income levels. This is one of those demographics that would be good to look at comparing responses from different demographics and what that might mean for priority areas. In looking at those who rent or own their homes, this breakdown does not match the city's demographics. We know that renters make up more than 50 percent of the city. We do need to work harder to reach renters in the future. We asked if people owned property in the city. Most respondents do not own property. We did have some people, who do own property. We asked people how they like to hear from the city. Email alerts and social media were the top choice. There were several people who said mailing was really important. We had two main questions. The first question was: Please tell us how important you believe it is to address the following items in order to achieve a fair, equitable, and positive future for all Charlottesville residents. For each of those, people indicated whether it was very important to address in the short term, less important to address now, a priority in the future, or not important right now. This is the overall Comprehensive Plan. Housing was the top priority. Community health and education were up there. Looking at education, that certainly plays into COVID and uncertainty about how education was going to continue. We are looking at what all of these mean. The real important part of this is digging into what people said with regards to priorities and specific outcomes for each of these. Beneath each of these parts, there was a text box for people to write what they wanted to see as an outcome. That piece of the analysis has taken a longer time. That's an open ended box. We are working on coding those to make it easier to analyze them. We got a lot of comments on the survey. It's hard to comment on the different priority areas because they are connected. As we get into the overarching values of the Comprehensive Plan, that's really the place where we can start to pull some things together and create that narrative about how we tie them together.

Chairman Mitchell – About a year ago, the Parks and Recreation Department surveyed something like this. You may want to take a look at the results of their survey as well. One of the main things the respondents wanted were more open spaces and more attention to the parks. This contradicts that.

Ms. Koch – I spoke with the Parks and Recreation staff in that series of conversations. I think they mentioned that. We will make sure to look at that. Looking at this, there are these different issues. The prioritization of things pushes some things to the bottom that come out in some of these other areas.

The other question we asked was a similar format related to housing. The question was: Please tell us how important you believe it is to address the items below in order to describe the housing

needs to Charlottesville. Racial equity was at the top of the line. Rental affordability was close to the top. Location of affordable units was near the top. Housing supply came out a lot.

Chairman Mitchell – What does housing stability mean?

Sarah Kirk, HR&A – It is basically whether households are able to stay in their homes or whether they are facing eviction or displacement.

Ms. Koch – There are some areas of overlap on some of these. We wanted to ask in different categories.

Commissioner Dowell – As a planning commissioner reviewing this information, I am having a hard time seeing where any of the data you collected has changed from the first round of collections. It seems that we have the same people responding. We're still not hitting that mark of the younger generation and people of color responding to our survey. This is the reason why the Comprehensive Plan update was stopped in the first place. I would like some insight on how you see this survey has given you different results than we have already gathered.

Ms. Koch – What we felt our call to action was to certainly build on what you gathered. A lot of what we heard is similar to what we saw and the results that you got. One thing we were really focused on was having these conversations with people focused on equity. That may have been slightly different from the focus of things. Having that as the central piece of the questions we were asking in the survey. When we were having these small conversations, we had some interesting conversations focused on that thought. When we looked at what might need to be updated in the Comprehensive Plan, it will be filling in anything that is missing in that arena. We will be talking more in the next piece about how we need to change some things and engagement in the next phase.

We have some preliminary thoughts about the August thru October engagement and how we plan to engage with people starting in the next couple of weeks going into October. We have the August activities on this slide and the mid-September to October activities on the next slide. As we get into mid-September and October, having another larger public engagement push.

Ms. Thomas – We want to continue leveraging the relationships that we have made to date. We have connected with a number of organizations and agencies in Charlottesville. We want to try to leverage those partnerships that we have made to date as we continue our effort through this Comp Plan process. We also want to make sure we are targeting specific neighborhoods and groups that were not as represented or participatory in the process. That includes neighborhoods such as Westhaven. We didn't hear much from Westhaven. When we think what our additional outreach efforts look like, that's one of those target neighborhoods that we are going to figure out how to do something a little bit differently. The Commissioners also point around youth involvement as well. We certainly didn't have as much youth participation as what we would have liked. We had a call with a few of the Charlottesville Youth Council representatives as well as with Charlottesville City Schools. The schools were navigating their own challenges in the time of COVID and staying in touch with their population. Our hope is that, now that we have been in the state for a while, and people have started to develop some systems to move forward with how they are maintaining their

own connections with their existing networks of people, that we will be able to tap into those more efficiently as we move forward. The last goal that I want to share is doing what we promised what we said we would do at the end of the first phase, which was sharing what we learned and making sure that we heard correctly. When we started this process, we told people that it wasn't going to be asking questions and going back into a black hole and making decisions. It was going to be a collaborative and integral process. We are still very committed to that approach. Some of our focus areas are understanding who we are missing. The survey has really helped us to understand some of those groups that we are missing and figure out how to tailor our approach to get to those groups. We are also focused on education, particularly around the comp plan process. What the comp plan can and can't do as a document and what the visions and goals for the comp plan will be going forward. That's what we will work collaboratively with residents to determine. Most of the virtual tools that we talked about are going to stay in place. COVID doesn't seem to be going anywhere. We're going to have to operate with some of those same tools as we move forward. We are going to be looking at trying to do some socially distant popup activities in Charlottesville. Those will be very targeted for neighborhoods and communities where we have not been able to connect with people as easily. They will be socially distance and set up in as a safe way as possible for us to be able to connect with people and get information and share information, but also not putting anyone's health and safety at risk. We also want to try to leverage the peer engagers that we have talked about earlier on in the project process. We put the peer engagers on pause. We have not really firmly committed to anyone yet, largely because we didn't want to move forward in the time of COVID with having people go out, when it was really not safe to do so. We're going to revisit the peer engager strategy and figure out how to safely identify and implement peer engagers on the ground so that they can support this effort, but remain safe while doing so. I do want reiterate that these peer engagers will be paid for their time. The last thing I want to mention in terms of a tool that actually came out of some of our later conversations in the process is trying to work with community based businesses, including barbershops, hair salons, laundry mats, local markets, and other places where the people who are using those services using hard copy materials to get information out. Trying to use as many different, existing resources in Charlottesville as we possibly can to move through this process. Going through the remainder of the fall, the things that we are going to be focused on include understanding what is going to go into the comp plan and helping people understand what the comp plan document is, what its components are, and helping us define what the visions and goals are for those sections. This will also be the time the housing tool recommendations get discussed. For the fall engagement effort, all of our public activities are going to be revolving around how we start getting some shape to this comp plan document. How do we start building the framework and the content for this document that is going to be developing over the next several weeks?

Ms. Koch – All of that is starting from the 2018 chapters and making it clear to people how this becomes a document like the 2013, the current comp plan. What else do we need to add in there? How do we continue those edits? We know that a lot of people are familiar with that process.

Commissioner Dowell – One thing that I would like recommend is that I know that they are doing back to school supplies through the Charlottesville City School system. Even if you're not at every give away, if you could give them the literature that is one way we can get the information out and maybe cut out some of the leg work on your end. We can reach our targeted demographics.

Ms. Koch – Reaching people where they already are will be really important.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – The survey results, as presented, were helpful. I am curious about how you're going to present the more qualitative information. Are you going to be summarizing that and passing onto us? Are you going to give us the raw data?

Ms. Koch – We're cleaning up the raw data to make sure there is no identifying information. Once that is cleaned up, we're going to give the raw information out. We are going through and we have a specific way of looking at those details. We have a list of codes that we have broken out for the comments. We're coding each of the comments. We're reading all of them. We're getting a lot of good feedback from that. That is why it has taken us a bit longer than anticipated to read through them. We will be giving a summary of that as well as the raw data.

Ms. Thomas – In addition to the survey overview comments, we also have been going through the comments of the small group discussions that we have been having as well. We took very detailed notes throughout each one of those. That's a lot of the additional qualitative data that is going to be summarized, some that is not reflected in the community survey.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Given the deficiencies in reaching certain groups of people, what happens if we're still coming up short? Do we push out the schedules more? Do we redouble efforts more? What is the plan?

Ms. Koch – We would want to partially work with you and with the steering committee to figure out what the path forward would be on that. I think there is certainly openness to adjusting the schedule a bit, especially since there are difficulties. We recognize having the next phase of engagement in the first weeks after school started was going to be difficult. We're open to adjusting there. We will address that situation when we get to it. There is openness to adjusting the schedule.

Chairman Mitchell – Whatever you do, don't make the mistake we made.

Ms. Koch – If we did anticipate there was a need for adjustment in the schedule, we would want to speak with you about that before that was made final.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I would be interested in seeing the data presented as weighted to give appropriate representations to groups.

Ms. Koch – That is why we asked so many demographic questions. That is something we are in the middle of doing.

Commissioner Green – Myself and Mr. Lahendro were at the last Westhaven Days. You said that you had not had a lot of response from Westhaven. What I heard the most at that time, was that there was a lack of trust. How are you framing this? Who are you outreaching? Have you outreached to some of the community leaders in Westhaven to have some understanding that this is not about coming in and redeveloping Westhaven. This is not information to redevelop

Westhaven and kick people out of their homes. I know that there was some fear around that. We were talking to people. Are you using some of the leaders of that community?

Ms. Koch – We worked to try to reach different leaders of different communities we knew that had not been as representative in previous processes. We had some difficulties reaching people because everyone was struggling to get people information that they needed. That is something we are going to keep on doing. Cultivate Charlottesville was great. They helped us hand out surveys. That type of partnership will be useful for us as we keep moving forward. The peer engager program is a way to build trust. We want people to know and understand what is going on. If they give input, that will be considered in the process.

Commissioner Dowell – One event that is coming up this weekend is the Community Cares event.

Ms. Koch – As we get into September, those are the types of events that we would look to partner with.

Sarah Kirk, Project Manager – We are part of the overall comp plan update effort.

Phillip Kash, HR & A – We are a planning, economic development, and public policy consulting firm. We work on a broad range of issues. We are primarily the bridge between the public sector and the private sector action. In this case, it is housing. When a public sector takes on housing issues, part of that involves the private sector. I lead our housing practice. In our housing work, we work in three areas. We do housing plans and strategies, which is what we are working on with you. We are trying to understand what the drivers are in the market and the issues and priorities are for that community. We also do policies and programs in designing inclusionary zoning policies, land and public land decisions, and all of the potential policies. We do projects and provide advice on projects. We do public housing, redevelopment, tax credit deals, mixed income housing, and all of those different types of efforts. We are better at what we do because we work on it at all the different levels. We know how easy it is to recommend something. Recommending inclusionary housing policies, we know how difficult it is to design it. We know how difficult it is to interact with some of these policies at the project level. That, generally, makes us better in making plans that are implementation focused. That's been a consistent theme across all of our conversations with everyone. They want the plan to make things happen. They want things that happen. That has come up in every conversation we have had.

Ms. Kirk – We have been working on a process that we spoke with Planning Commission back in January. We have spoken with several of you throughout. We started out working to identify the housing issues that were the most relevant in Charlottesville and the highest priority for the housing plan to address. We have been working to research the housing tools that exist in Charlottesville, the housing tools that may be don't exist or had challenges in the past, and start to understand how policy changes and tools might be able to address those priority housing issues. We are continuing to work on that. We are starting to think about establishing some goals and a real strategic framework for the housing plan. The slides that we will present here really think about bridging where we are in thinking about tools and possible solutions with overarching goals for the housing plan. Moving forward we will be working with the steering committee to finalize

those and draft the plan. What we are going to talk about today is a preliminary strategic framework for the housing plan. We have some guiding principles that really underpin the housing plan and we start talking about how we are thinking about some potential tools and implementation needs for the housing plan. There are three guiding principles that really underpin all of the recommendations in the plan. These are not necessarily living in any particular tool. They're rather lenses that we are bringing into how to shape housing policy and how to implement the various tools and recommendations across the plans. The first one is racial equity. That's been a pretty clear focus of the project since before we were hired to work on the plan. We understand that is a lens that is really important to thinking about all of the housing tools and recommendations in the plan to understand other ways which enhance racial equity for the city. The second is regional collaboration. Housing is a regional issue. Regional collaboration is going to be important in order to make meaningful change and progress on addressing those priority housing issues. The third is a comprehensive approach. You can't solve housing problems by just focusing in just one area. You just can't work on land use, subsidy, and rental affordability. You have to think across a range of housing issues and a range of housing interventions to make meaningful progress on affordable housing. Racial equity relates to all of the other types of housing issues that we talked about. It really informs how we think about implementation. When we talk about the potential tools for housing, we have three main categories. We talk about land use tools, which is about zoning and development approval processes. We talk about subsidy, which includes the ways the public is able to provide financing, land, or other resources to make it more feasible to develop low income, affordable housing. We talk about tenant rights, which is about helping to maintain a better balance between the rights of landlords and the rights of tenants. Currently, the state skews heavily towards the rights of landlords. The city is a little bit limited in terms of what it can do there. It is really an important part of a comprehensive approach to affordable housing. Land use is the primary goal that we want to be talking about and would like input, if you have any. Land use is really about revising the city regulations and development approval processes. The goal of that is to allow for an increased supply of housing production in proportion to the amount of demand, particularly increasing the supply of housing in high opportunity areas. When we say high opportunity areas, we talk about areas that are either served by transit, have access to good schools, and high income neighborhoods. We are talking about making sure that where people live have access to opportunity to get employment, education, and all of those other things that help with economic mobility over time. The tools we are talking about within land use are multi-family, soft density, or single family by right zoning. We are working with Code Studio, who are going to be doing the specific zoning updates. We want to talk with the Planning Commission about how zoning changes can advance the development of housing and support the development of more housing, particularly in those high opportunity areas. We are also talking about accessory dwelling units, inclusionary zoning, and how to use those as ways to increase the development of affordable housing units.

Mr. Kash – The next piece that we are going to be doing is that we are going to be going through this in much greater detail with each tool with the steering committee at the end of August and getting into a detailed conversation about each to get their feedback on it. We have been having similar conversations with Council members and other community stakeholders. We have been laying out the general direction that we are heading in, based on what we have heard so far. On the land use piece, we start with that one because we believe that it is fundamental. We can't address affordability if you don't have appropriate land use. We see land use as the hardest piece. Subsidy

is really about allocating resources. Land use is the most difficult because it is both about getting a concrete change to the policies and regulations and sticking with that change in a project by project basis. We know that there have been efforts in Charlottesville on reforming land use and making changes here that have gotten stymied. We're going to go into these tools, particularly the multi-family, by right we are talking about identifying additional areas where multi-family can be allowed by right and areas that allow multi-family by right now, making sure that Special Use Permits are less necessary. There is actually more by right in practice. That's easy to say. At a high level, push back or thoughts on whether these are the right tools. The other piece that will have push back and thoughts are how to have that conversation, both for the housing planning process and code rewrite. It's not that hard to get a plan through that says allow by right, multi-family. To actually get the zoning and approval process changed is extremely difficult. The city set us up in a better position than most places because they have tried to tie the two together. I want to make sure that we do our part to actually set this process up to be able to move on. Do these feel like the right tools? I know that there are much more specific versions of them. Do these feel like the right tools? On the process, what do you see as the key obstacles in the process to get something to move forward and make it happen?

Chairman Mitchell – We need to factor into whatever we do, we are built out. There isn't a lot of space to build. We're going to have to take stuff down to build up stuff. The places where there is space to build, there are incredible slopes that require very creative development to support. We need to factor that into your thinking. We are built out. The spaces available for building are in areas that are very difficult to build on. We will have to take down existing infrastructure or housing to do some of the stuff we want.

Mr. Kash – We talked about having racial equity lens centering around race in a lot of these tools. With multi-family by right or single family soft density, there is going to be some development that has to happen. Do that and not consider how you might end up driving more displacement would be to miss the point on that. It is both the cost and difficulty of slope and the reality that you may put pressure on your affordable housing.

Commissioner Dowell – I know we definitely need more housing. We need more affordable housing and not these ridiculously priced high end units that the average worker cannot afford. We need housing that does not require you to be someone, who works 40+ hours a week with one or two jobs. We also need to keep in mind that we don't want to be built to the max either. That was one of the other things the earlier Commission, when working on this comp plan, discussed. We know that we need housing. We do not want to have these enormous skyscrapers that get us this housing nor do we want to be built to the max. Please keep that in mind. Some of that is the uniqueness and character of Charlottesville. I would hope that is not the direction we are going.

Mr. Kash – Let me talk about that directly. New development is going to happen at the top of the market. That means it is going to be the most expensive stuff. Maybe we can have an inclusionary policy that gets some affordable units. New development is going to be the most expensive stuff that comes on the market. It is going to be for households making well over \$100,000, which does not solve our affordability problem. The thinking behind allowing more supply takes pressure off the units that are more affordable, your existing stock, so they don't get displaced. Charlottesville is a desirable place. We live in a free market economy, which means that people can bid on

properties and those with more money win that bidding. The idea is if you're building more housing, it takes some of that pressure off neighborhoods, which means less displacement. That doesn't solve land use alone. It does not solve the need to serve households making \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year or less than that. That is a significant part of Charlottesville. Charlottesville may decide it does not want to go that route. It doesn't want to add supply to keep up with demand. It wants to preserve character. The ability to protect affordability requires a very strong tenant's rights and enormous amounts of subsidy. We're trying to lay that out and talk about the tension there. There is no easy answer to it. We do see this tension.

Ms. Kirk – We are not advocating for allowing soft density in every single family neighborhood in Charlottesville. We want to think about doing it in places where it is going to increase access to opportunity but not without putting displacement pressures in existing neighborhoods.

Commissioner Green – This is one of the things that was some of the most complex discussions that we have had. Chairman Mitchell was correct. We are landlocked. I am not sure if we are built out yet. Something has to be torn down to rebuild. We know that nobody is going to come in and build an entire neighborhood of just affordable housing. Everything we see, even in some of our redevelopment, says we need some market rate here. That's what makes the projects work. There is that part of it. The other part I keep preaching is that when we start looking at the density, we also have to look at the infrastructure that is in place. We have water, sewer, and roads. Commissioner Dowell was talking about where we are building. We have to make sure all of those things are in place. Building a lot of low income housing for people is not going to do any good if the infrastructure is not in place and there is not much water for the sewers failing. That's not a great situation either. That's the struggle I have had throughout this whole entire process. What is the answer? We do know when you tear down and somebody builds up. They're going to build it at a market rate. It is desirable. That's why people want to come in and pay \$1.3 million for townhomes. That's a perfect place for affordable housing. It's near downtown, jobs, and on the bus line. I don't see where those have taken any pressure off of the surrounding neighborhood to provide affordable housing.

Mr. Kash – There is a real limitation there with how much housing it takes to do it with Charlottesville having limited growth opportunities. One of the things that we have looked at is the area around Charlottesville that allows for more development. As we have looked at affordable housing, that is an area that is going to be important. There are not a lot of sites that are going to do well to get tax credit development. It could also be true for more market rate development taking pressure off. I am curious how you have thought about it. Where to concentrate growth in the immediate proximity outside of Charlottesville proper.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – The vast majority of the growth in the region has been in Albemarle County lately and now in the outer counties surrounding that. In Ruckersville, they are putting in townhomes and apartments. From a climate perspective, that is obviously very bad. We are sprawling further and further out and destroying more of the natural environment. People are commuting further and further to come in. People are forced to move that far away just to find a home that they can afford to live in. It is really important to start to grow within the Albemarle urban ring like they want in their development area but also in the city. One thing we have seen is that when we have had growth in the city, it has been very concentrated in areas that aren't those

high income, high opportunity areas because they have zoned it out of existence. We see a lot of pressure on West Main, Fifeville, and 10th & Page. Both, in terms of the new apartment buildings going up, but also in terms of single family homes that get torn down and rebuilt as much more expensive single family homes or renovated into much more expensive single family homes. It is really important to direct some of that growth. The tallest building in the city is 500 Court Square is 9 stories tall and has 50+ apartments in it. It is in North Downtown and in an area zoned for a 35 foot tall building. Just clamping down on it over the decades in places like North Downtown, which is near where the jobs are and high income area. I am also talking Altamont Circle and a bunch of other apartment buildings in the area are non-conforming and couldn't be built today even though there would be a lot of desire to live in apartments there, which would be a lot cheaper than the million plus dollar house that you can get.

Commissioner Green – After the start of this pandemic, there has been a rush to leave these high rise apartments to go to the suburbs. People don't want to be stuck in a high rise during a pandemic. Has there been thought with this? This is something that I have been thinking about. We had density and high rise as we were having these conversations three years ago. Everybody wants to build up and squeeze in. I just wonder about some of these micro units that we talked about. I am wondering how this is being looked at now and potential change with the state of our world at this point.

Mr. Kash – It all appears to be up in the air still. What isn't changing is the desire for density on the developer's side to keep costs down. They are looking at: Can I do the higher density development with multiple entry points? That isn't changing. The people's desire for walkability isn't changing. Their frustration that they are not able to walk anywhere. I don't know how that is going to end up. This is not the only time we are going to have this conversation. On the inclusionary zoning piece, the first thing is that I am hearing healthy skepticism on whether you are going to build enough to take pressure off and make a difference on affordability. The second thing is how we make sure that we are not displacing people. The third thing is where. It is one thing to say within the city, but it is really important about where it ends up, particularly on the soft density single family neighborhoods. You now have the inclusionary tool. We think that it is a useful tool. We think that it only produces a very modest number of units. It will only produce those affordable units if we have an actual pipeline of multi-family development. That's not a reason to have more multi-family development if we are against it. As we look to reform the multi-family, inclusionary zoning and multi-family by right should be nested together if you are redesigning your multi-family by right. You should be thinking what the inclusionary zoning policy you want to go with as opposed to tacking it on afterwards, which most communities do. They give away their negotiating power before they ask for the affordability piece, which we would not recommend.

Commissioner Dowell – Can you give us a quick synopsis of what you mean by inclusionary zoning?

Mr. Kash – Inclusionary zoning is a requirement in new housing that is developed or existing housing that is redeveloped, a portion of the units are affordable. It generally targets 60% of area median income or 80% AMI. It is normally in a range of 8% to 12% of the new units. There is some variability there. If you want to build new housing, a portion of that housing has to be

affordable. There is a lot of variation about whether there are any incentives, like allowing for additional density or waiving parking requirements that go with it. Historically, Charlottesville has not been able to do it. Charlottesville now has the ability to move forward on this. It's an exciting new tool. Counties and cities that have it produce dozens if not hundreds of units a year.

Commissioner Dowell – I know we need more units. I know we are talking about multi-family and trying to get those. If we are truly going to make change in this city, especially for those that are below the 80% AMI, you still have to figure out some type of single family affordable home. An affordable single family home not only makes a difference today, it creates generational wealth. It makes a difference years from now. I know we need more density and more housing. We also cannot talk about apartments as in a cluster. We need to talk about the unit as if it is a single family home with a yard. Not everybody is that fortunate. We need to level the playing field so that all people have those options. That's a health issue for me as well.

Mr. Kash – Point well taken.

Land use can increase the supply of housing, but there's a level of income where households don't earn the income. Or the wages are sufficient to cover the costs to build and maintain a property. Outside of changing the wage structures, that leaves you with the option of subsidizing housing. If you're serving households in your market at \$40,000 or less, there is generally some kind of subsidy that has to go on to create new stock that is affordable at that level. The first area is really about affordable rental stock. There is a low income tax credit, which is a subsidy source that comes from the federal government that is distributed by the state. It lets you build up apartment buildings that are affordable but you still have to be making a decent income to afford them. There is also public housing redevelopment that is going on in Charlottesville. There are preservation funds or funds that go out there and acquire existing housing that is affordable and take the market pressure off. They take it. They buy up the property. Any rent increase that occurs in that property is just about what it takes to maintain that property. What rent is it going to take to put a new roof or new a HVAC system in that property. There is no profit motive in those properties. Those are all tools. Normally, we spent a lot of time looking at tools and putting them together for a city. Charlottesville has a strong ecosystem of affordable housing advocates and practitioners. You are all looked at as a city where almost every tool that is out there, it is a conversation of which tools to prioritize as opposed to introducing new concepts. Those are on the rental side. On the home ownership side, there are a number of different tools we can use to promote home ownership ranging from new development to single family that is affordable to down payment assistance that helps households actually access home ownership. Home ownership is about more than just the affordability of the unit. It's about wealth building. It's about addressing both historic obstacles to access to home ownership and much more recent obstacles in the foreclosure crisis that wiped out equity for Black Americans across the country. One of the things we found with the steering committee is that home ownership polls the lowest when we actually count numbers. When we talk to black stakeholders and black steering committee members, it shows up much higher. That's not unique to Charlottesville. That's neighborhood improvement, anti-displacement, and home ownership shows up much stronger. That's really an understanding of the historic obstacles and current obstacles accessing that. We have ownership in here as a tool. We have a lot of conversations that we are going to be having with the steering committee about the appropriate mechanisms. Is it the community land trust? How can this be blended with some of the tax relief

programs? How do we take current homeowners and help them stay in their homes? There are efforts to rehab people's homes and put a lien on the current value of that improvement. Not to prevent them from getting appreciation, but to make sure that lien becomes a down payment for the next homeowner so that it's more affordable. This is about helping households supplement their income. This is tenant based vouchers and emergency rental assistance. This needs to be a more systemized and sustained effort because households experience income crises all of the time. Outside of your faith based community, there is not a standardized set of tools to support them. We're looking at all of these subsidy tools. We're going to be going through the steering committee to get a more detailed set dialed in. We will have another round of comments. With regards to tenant's rights, you always have market pressure or landlords, who want to push up the rent to maximize profit. The tenant's rights we are looking at are trying to balance that and defray some of that market pressure. There are two pieces to them. One is just making sure tenants have the support to exercise the rights that they do have right now. Those rights include right to counsel and landlord registration. The second one is creating and pushing for additional rights. These are rights present in other parts of the country but are not present in Charlottesville or Virginia. Most extreme is rent regulation and rent control. You can only raise rent in a fixed amount as related to investment in the property. You cannot raise rent just because the market went up. That's not currently legal in Virginia. It is still something that we want to talk about and figure out how Charlottesville would want to approach something like this. Concepts like just cause eviction and tenant's opportunity to purchase their property if their property is being sold. These are rights that exist in other places and can be well designed. When poorly designed, they do harm. Well-designed can be real beneficial and take some of the market pressure off of lower income residents. We're going to look at those focused on what we can do to increase the rights right now and make those rights actionable and what we could be advocating for. There is a piece in here that we don't talk in this version, but we are evolving on. Anywhere Charlottesville is putting money into a property, it has a lot more ability to push tenant's rights. We're going to look at how Charlottesville is making requirements in any property they do right now. Charlottesville is putting support into creating low income tax credits. The state of Virginia, when it gives credits, doesn't require any additional significant tenant's rights. Charlottesville could decide it wants different rights on those properties. These are all of the tools that we are looking at the highest level. The other two pieces that we are looking at are **funding** – The City has a housing trust fund. We are going to be talking with the steering committee on how much funding is appropriate for that. How does that get dedicated? What requirements are with that? Does it have to serve certain income levels? Does it have to serve home ownership and rental? Does an organization receiving funding from the housing trust fund have to meet certain standards of behavior in terms of addressing racial equity and supporting affordable housing overall? The other piece is **governance**. – Charlottesville has a couple of boards, commissions, and planning groups. We are going to make recommendations on who is the champion and owner outside of local government of Charlottesville's housing plan. If you have a housing trust fund, who is making recommendations on how that funding is allocated and how we address conflicts of interest? We want expertise from those who are practitioners on this. We don't want them to control the funding alone. Where are the recipients of those who are actually participating in the programs involved in guiding the implementation of the overall plan and the funding? Households that are participating in programs aren't in a position to make recommendations on how the programs are designed. This is partial to the racial equity issue and partially a better program design issue. Not involving your customer in the design process is not how the private sector does it. It's really a

legacy of how we view those who need this assistance and trying to move past that in the way our governance structure is so that households who are participating and have the most direct experience are given a standardized and an institutionalized voice in how the programs are designed.

Ms. Koch – We don't necessarily need to cover the next steps. That was originally on the agenda. I think that we have talked about that. We are working towards the steering committee meeting at the end of the month. That information with the steering committee will be public on the website.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – In terms of affordable home ownership, a couple more options that I have in mind include home ownership housing choice vouchers. They are a thing that can be used for federal. We haven't really talked about them here. Thinking about not just home ownership of single family attached homes but also of condos and townhomes. Condos are the most affordable homes in the city. It seems to me you get a lot of the benefits of home ownership if you go that route.

Mr. Kash – We will not make ownership exclusive to single family but we will certainly call out the key piece to multi-family ownership of affordable housing is how condo fees are structured and how the governance structure inside of those condo associations works. The small geographic scale you get to governance structure the meaner people get sometimes and the less thoughtful they are at times. I agree 100%. We will try to lay out some safeguards in there too.

Commissioner Lahendro – I am constantly struck as I drive and walk around the city at how many modest homes there are in Charlottesville with 900 to 1500 square feet. We have a large number of those kinds of homes and very little low income homes and very little high income homes. When those two ends are competing for those houses in the center, I know who is going to win and who is going to outbid the other. I do believe that it's an issue of we need more housing at all levels to take some of the pressure off of those more modest homes that are within reach hopefully with these other tools that have been discussed. I go back to the first comprehensive plan and the intra comprehensive plan that was done. Those transit nodes that we talked about of high density at the entry places or corridors coming into the city and having transfers from those as a place where you can have high density affordable housing as well as condos where you can have that transit connection to downtown, instead of having all of that density go around your downtown area and damage the integrity and the character of the downtown.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – The sense that people have around here of more homes is West Main. That's good and bad because West Main is not perfect. Some people say it is too tall and there is no transition. It is new. Responding to the good and the bad would be helpful.

Mr. Kash – That is helpful to understand. One of the things that we will be coming back to you, as we work with Code Studio, is more specifics on what design change would look like and how that would actually work. It is hard to get people on board with density. It is even harder when it is actual density. It is hardest when it is a real project. The closer it gets to reality, the more opposition there is.

Chairman Mitchell – I am going to invite you to stick around for the work session and participate. The current vision is to include the vision plan in the comp plan. You will be working through that.

The chairman recessed the meeting for five minutes.

2. Work Session – Starr Hill Community Vision Plan

Alex Ikefuna, Director of NDS – Tonight, we are presenting the Starr Hill Vision Plan to you. On November 18, 2019, the City Council passed a resolution to transmit the plan to the Planning Commission for consideration. On December 20, 2019, staff reviewed the Starr Hill Vision Plan. It was determined that the Planning Commission consider the plan due to the scope of work. Tonight, the work session by the Planning Commission is for you to hear the Starr Hill Plan presentation by the New Hill Corporation. Their staff will prepare the Plan for a public hearing.

Yolunda Harrell, New Hill Development Corporation – I want to start out by giving a little background so that everybody understands how we came to be and how we got to this point. New Hill was brought together by two former councilors. They brought together black business owners, entrepreneurs, and business leaders to talk about what it would be like to see more development led by the black community in Charlottesville and why does that not currently exist. It morphed into what a black business district would look like. The idea that they had initially was around the City Yard opportunity that existed in a ten acre slot right in the heart of the city that's adjacent to a community that was raised in the 60s that was predominantly an African American community where business life and home ownership was a thriving part of that community. The initial thought was how we could do something to have a better use for this property than what we currently have that could give back and have some intention behind it, especially as it relates to equity in our city. We see the donation from the city in 2018 to begin this process. They passed the agreement. We started the process in 2019. As we approach this work, it was really about the focus of the top three things: Community Engagement, Market Analysis: Identifying trends, really understanding what is our market doing, who does it serve, how do we fit into that particular market, the market trends, and what are the future opportunities of our particular market, and what is the community's vision around you would like to see for itself as development continues to happen in Charlottesville and how do we articulate the aspirations that we have. The land use recommendations and the resource available to make those things happen is really in service to the top three things in this plan, which is who we are serving, what the current market looks like, and what is the vision our community would like to see. When we took this approach, we wanted to make sure that we were very focused on how we went about doing our work. We wanted to make sure that we first heard from the Starr Hill community. Those that are right there in the community that would be most affected by anything that happens in the community. Starr Hill has a small residential piece to it. The majority of the community is commercial. We not only spoke with the residents but also to the commercial residents in that community as well. We started there. Then we expanded out. We wanted to talk to the neighboring communities. They, too, would be effected by anything that happens in the Starr Hill area. We wanted to make sure. We reached out to the neighboring communities to talk with them, to hear their concerns, to hear their visions on what they would like to see happen as far as the community is concerned. We reached out a little bit further. We had some focus groups. We wanted to speak with people from the city. We wanted to

speaking with other stakeholders, other nonprofits that are working actively within this area, or within our community in general. We want to speak with business institutions. We wanted to make sure that we had a very good understanding of who is here and what they are doing. What are the future opportunities? What are the plans? Based on what the community would like to see for itself, how can all of this work together? We wanted to take a look at a regional perspective. We wanted to make sure that we understand what the goals are for the region. What are the economic goals? What are the housing goals? What are all of these things that are happening, so that we can take those things into consideration? We didn't just want to think about the current lived in environment and those that were here, but also the future. Who was going to be served and making sure that the current residents, the current community, with an emphasis on equity in the current black community, how do you see yourself fitting into the future of Charlottesville? How do you see yourself fitting into the current state of Charlottesville? What could that potentially look like if there were other opportunities within our community? When we started the process, what we wanted to do is we wanted to look at planning, implementation, and we wanted to make sure that community engagement happens. One of the first things that we did is we set out to hire a community ambassador team. These were people, who could go out and talk with the neighbors in the community that were not going to be able to make a meeting. We could have those front porch conversations with, not only the residents, but the business owners. There are a number of businesses. Those businesses are active. We needed to make sure that we engaged them. Even if they couldn't make a public meeting, their voice could still be heard during this process. We wanted to create that team. We had a great group of individuals that were able to work through that process. The first thing that we wanted to do was we wanted to look at our data collection. When we talk about the data collection piece of it, there were things that we wanted to understand. We worked in tandem with RW Ventures to look at the market analysis but also to get local data on the ground in Starr Hill but was also happening in and around the area. We also wanted to be able to talk to, not only the individuals in the community, but also the broader community to talk what are some of the possibilities that could happen in this particular area. From that, we moved to the next phase, where we got our vision and our strategies in place. That's where the vision and the guiding principles come about. They come from the community, the community engagement, and everything that we heard from the community. We put these together. We presented it back to the community. Is this exactly what you said? Is this what we heard so that we can understand how we develop strategies as we move forward. The guiding principles for this work are a more equitable community, promote black prosperity, belonging and inclusion, continuous learning, strong connectivity, and respect existing residential fabric. Those guiding principles are the overarching guidance for this plan. The next thing that we also wanted to look at: What are the strategies based on what we heard that could be put in place to achieve what we heard? Who could be our partners to potentially do this? How could we possibly pay for it if we were going to do some of these things? The PDF gets into the various strategies and who would own those strategies. You will see New Hill repeated in there often. We are a community development corporation with the purpose of making sure that we understand what the work should be. We will take ownership of a lot of this. We have already taken ownership and started to work on this. I wanted to make sure you understood where those things are and how they are laid out. They are very important to understand, not only if we have a strategy, but who could be our partners and how it could possibly be done. We also looked at the land use. We made some recommendations around density. We did some analysis there. When it comes to the implementation piece of it, we are thinking more of once you are ready to develop something, that's going to be the next phase.

That's where the modeling is going to happen. That's where development plans are going to be put in place. The implementation that we put forward speaks specifically to partnerships, what are some of the things that should be done, and how do we go about paying for some of those things in the process. In our work, we completed a market analysis. We wanted to make sure that we had a great understanding of what was happening and who was doing what? Based on the strategies and the comments we heard from the community during our engagement piece, is this being done somewhere, is it a matter that we don't know about it, or is this not being addressed? Some of the key things we found is that the current state and dynamics of our local area is that we have a lot of great assets, but those assets just aren't equally shared. How do we fundamentally change that? We looked in the Starr Hill area and the assets that are there. It is strong and it is growing. We have a great regional economy and rapid growth in our population and employment. We are well resourced in terms of anchor institutions. We have a strong neighborhood residential piece. It's a very strong, financially solid, and financially stable neighborhood. There are assets throughout the broader community that aren't equally shared. The things that came from our conversations, our research, and the things that blatantly exist that there are significant racial disparities in income and education attainment. We looked at things like the gaps in supports for entrepreneurs, workers, and the various financing options that either don't exist or are not made available to entrepreneurs, especially entrepreneurs of color in the black community. We looked at high property values and the limited supply of affordable retail, commercial, and parking spaces. That's one of the things that really came out strong in our community engagement pieces. When you are talking to the African American community, ownership is very important. The ability, to not only physically and financially own something, where do we gather? Where do we go to? What is ours? What do we own in terms of the space in Charlottesville? That came up a lot. We talk about co-working spaces here. Co-working spaces exist in Charlottesville. Who are co-working spaces designed for? That is something that really came over and over. The tight housing market with affordability, the burdens, and the AMI. How do we address that? Some key things that we pulled out that are strategies that could really help is small business and entrepreneurship supports. We wanted to look at the work force for the next generation jobs. Those are some things that can be done. How do we utilize the city yard to provide affordable live/work space? How do we leverage the area's anchor institutions to expand opportunities for small businesses? That was very key. When we see a lot of the work that has been done across the country, one of the great things about partnering with LISC to do this work, is that LISC works all across this nation. They do a lot of wonderful work in helping cities transform in creating funds and working with people to bring money and resources to the table. We're able to leverage that information. It's the same thing with RW Ventures. They work across the country as well. They're able to apply some of the information that they have learned about other things that other cities are doing that we were able to look at as we talked about some of these initiatives here.

Chairman Mitchell – You're talking about area anchor institutions. What exactly are anchor institutions? Are you talking some that are more local?

Ms. Harrell – UVA is an anchor institution. You have the hospital system. You also have Sentara Martha Jefferson. We looked beyond, not only the connections locally, but what are their connections beyond this community that can be leveraged.

Shelli Grady, New Hill Development Corporation – We started out with the voice of those immediately impacted, instead of letting the big voice of the anchor institutions and the other entities overpower it. There was a very deliberate engagement path. Everybody that affected in the immediate vicinity and the neighbor vicinity kept getting included with each iteration of community engagement. They became very invested and powerful. They, in the course of the process, thanked us. Normally, it's the other way. Normally, the big people are talked to and they just get the memo. That was a very intentional path. I think it helps create some of the scenarios Ms. Harrell is going to go over.

Ms. Harrell – When we started talking about the community strategy and the community vision, the first opportunity area that we focused on was economic & entrepreneurship. We started talking about creating a visible hub for black businesses and creating incubators and accelerators. I know that this has come up in other plans. I know it was in the SIA. This is something that we heard over and over again from the community. How do we get more black businesses developed and how do we get those black businesses to scale and to the next level? What are the opportunities? Financial gaps are a big contributor. How do we support and how do we fill that? We talked with a number of organizations within the community and a got a good understanding where those gaps exist. It was not surprising. What is the work being done to change that significantly? We also looked at support for firm startups and growth from black entrepreneurs and targeted industry. We looked at the Region Ten plan. What are we trying to grow in terms of jobs? Are we doing enough to make sure that the community members who want to have a business can directly tie into those industries? They understand what those industries are and how to connect. Deep in the engagement and the coordination with the anchor institutions, there are so many communities beyond our community where you have your anchor institutions where they are really working and being very intentional about the amount of business they do with the local community. The money flows back into the community so that more jobs are created. That is definitely something that came out loud and strong of what could possibly be done. Scale and expand industry focused work force development. That's the first category of Economics & Entrepreneurship. That was a big piece that came out loud and strong in the engagement process. The second one was the Housing & Connectivity. How do we sustain and grow Starr Hill's residential core? Starr Hill has a strong neighborhood. It has a very vibrant participating neighborhood. It's a small neighborhood. There is opportunity to be able to add. One of the things that we suggested in this plan was along Brown Street. Why not utilize that land there to put some new homes in. One of the things the community members said is that they would like it to go to first time homeowners. We can make sure that we are helping in that home ownership opportunity. We also talk about, under the housing & connectivity, ways that you can use your taxes to support the anti-displacement tax fund. Not only are we going to build this, there is going to be taxes and revenue that is going to be generated for the city. There is also going to be a cause and effect. We're going to raise the property values. That is going to raise taxes. What happens to individuals who are on a fixed income and they can no longer afford those taxes? The city put together an anti-displacement tax fund and has expanded that fund. Any development that happens in the future will generate revenue to feed that fund. We can make sure that it stays sustainable for all of the individuals that are going to be continuously effected by the development. Those are some of the things that we looked at when it comes to housing and activity. How do we get the neighborhoods back flowing together again? You have tunnels there that are closed off. Part of it because of the city yard. Opening that space up can connect the neighborhoods again. When we talk about place making,

we talk about that sense of place. Do you see yourself represented in this community? The Jefferson School is a wonderful institution around which the community is anchored. What we are suggesting is that it needs to be amplified and highlighted even more. We need to really pull the culture out of that building out into that community even more. How do we strengthen the park that exists there? How do we bring more art and more vibrancy to that area?

Ms. Grady – In the front of the PDF that you have, we laid out some guiding principles from all of our engagement. We discerned these six guiding principles that would inform whatever we do. You heard the same kind of strategy in the previous presentation. Some of the big things that we heard helped us create mapped out character zones. Instead of looking at the land as in land use, how would it function and let that drive what did for zoning. On the left side, there are some dotted lines. That is the CSX rail line. That creates one edge of the Starr Hill community. Three major roads really create the other three edges. You have Preston on the north. You have Ridge-McIntire on the east. You have both Main Street and the railroad again on the southern edge. Most people of think of Main Street being the southernmost edge. All of the boundary of Starr Hill goes all of the way to the other railroad on the bottom. All three of those roadways belong to higher systems in this community. None of those three roads belong to the Starr Hill area. They are all a segment of a larger system of connectivity through the city. One of the things that we wanted to do was think about, with the high level of activity there and each of them actually have their own plan inside your larger system of your masterplan. We honor those because those had particular studies done. Given the parameters of that, what else can we do? We are really trying to honor the small community that does exist. That light blue area is the city yard. Just to the south of that is the small residential community of Starr Hill. It's about 45 houses, around 250 people. They are petrified about the development on Main Street. The community really spoke to that. Part of the strategy was to hold onto that and build out from there in scale, mass, and density so that the larger, heavier uses were along those heavily trafficked roads. In the center of the Starr Hill is the smallest, shortest, most sensitive footprint. It's where the people are there 24/7. From there, we can build out and scale up and get away from the home. The second concept was to create an interior system. Since those outer edges all belong to a greater system, how could we create and navigate something inside this community that felt more communal. Think of those circles as the vertex and Commerce and 4th Street come out from that. They wrap around something that is much more communal, community oriented. Inside there is the residential community, some churches, the Jefferson School, and the city yard, which could become something much more collective. Right now it's a commercial, industrial site. It has no relationship to anything else in this particular community. One final thing is connectivity: to try to create a connection between the Jefferson School and going across 4th Street and Ridge, which that light green area is the little bit of property that remains a part of the Vinegar Hill footprint. It goes into the east towards the Mall and creates some connectivity that way. Those were some of the big planning concepts that were distilled out of the community engagement.

Once we had our guiding principles, we also had these “buckets of opportunity.” There was the economic, the housing, the cultural, and place making. One of the things in the economic & entrepreneurial part was what was going to happen in the future and could we get ahead of it? If we could identify it and get ahead of it, we could start the education now. We could see the places now that we could grow into. Could we actually forecast and allow ourselves something that would really blossom? That was a big part of that study. We actually challenged the anchor

institutions. Instead of saying, “Do you have jobs for people who need jobs?” or “Can you give business to small businesses and entrepreneurs?” We said “Your system is so big. Is there a way you can change some of your systems to actually allow better points to entry for these people?” We didn’t find that happening anywhere else in the city and in the region. It really became part of the focus as we began to look at creating hubs and entrepreneurial centers. In looking at what could be done, one of the things was the concept of the city yard. What could be done in the city that would really maximize it for all of the different needs and agendas and interests that the community had? This is just conceptual. It gives you an idea of what could be done. It looks at some mass, some density, some square footages, and some uses. It would be mixed use. There would be a lot of public spaces. The stairway on the side is another way of creating connectivity. Up in the right hand corner is a map of the city yard. You will see three greyed areas. Those three greyed areas are how we would think about and plan a space. It takes into account the easements that already exist and some of the environmental issues that have already been uncovered. This is conceptual. How could this mass out if taking all of those things into consideration? We are trying to do something that is doable. The sketch on the bottom shows the railroad that we have referenced and we might be able to connect to other spaces. Open up those tunnels and we can now connect to the next neighborhoods. Those people can connect into this one and walk to grocery stores or other retail uses. Without this connectivity, they have to get in their car or they have to take dangerous routes. We began to amass to that idea of something smaller and scale it out and where we would put residential, retail, and office. This concept actually considered having the mixed use in every structure. Ground level retail and office use with residential above. If you only put up one building at a time, you would actually have that mixed use. It depends on what you want to do for a development. The other thing that we looked at was how much of that form would translate into if we kept true to the concepts that we are proposing about scale. Some of the things that we heard in our interviews were maybe the city wants to use this for its new office complex. There is over 400,000 square feet of office space. Some of the take that we got from a city program might be to have 250,000. You could easily be part of this development in addition to some of the other things that we’re proposing with the vision standpoint. If you look at the cross section, the city yard site is a bowl. It’s very low in the middle and goes up on the sides. Some of the area is very steep. We played to that. That cross section shows how you could actually build a building nestled in the north side of the city yard that would be accessible from both the city yard site but also on the Preston site. You have this ability to really to create some connectivity that currently does not exist. If you go back up to the image on the right, you will notice two parcels at the bottom. You’re going to see those shaded in the next slides. Those are the parts of city yard that flank right up to Brown Street. If you drop to the bottom image, you will see what looks like a bunch of rectangles. That begins the housing transition. In the ten acres of city yard, what you have is an old gasoline plant facility, which is closer to 4th Street. You have a prison site that is on the western side closer to the railroad. Those are more towards 4th Street. Some of the things that we were looking at for use here were actually viable. The section on the southern edge of the site could be lopped off and used in a lower scale residential. What we’re talking about now is how you create a mixed product. This is that middle stage where this is a little bit denser, a little bit taller, but it’s not something really high. It gives us some housing variety. The sketch in the corner shows how you might create some of that connectivity in the neighborhood that doesn’t currently exist. You’re seeing some opening up of intersections. The greyed out areas in the upper right hand corner could be subdivided off and used towards this lower scale. The little blue sketch is how that might look. You could open up a road that already exists there. You could put some of

that higher density in the north. On the southern side, it butts right up onto Brown. If you have been on Brown Street, there are many lots that don't have houses. That makes a very awkward street to be on if you live there or walk there. If you were to pull the chain linked fence back and dedicate that land back into the edge, you could build several houses along there and fill out the street and give a proper edge of integrity to the community. The community would love that. Right now they are feeling very vulnerable. There is the big development coming from West Main, the University, and everything happening along the Mall. The idea that anybody could come in and build a massive development on the city yard. It's very intimidating to them. The small gesture of completing homes on Brown Street really felt like it gave them an edge to the community. That was really important for them to feel like their homes would be overtaken. The other concept with doing this is to change some of the zoning. It would allow for some sufficient sized lots. If we were to change the zoning and create a different one, it would allow for a smaller lot and a smaller home, which would give an entry point for first time home buyers. These ideas were conceived out of the community. The community loved it. The study goes into different kinds of ways that we are attempting to create a different product for different markets, affordable and market rate, and very inclusive there. A third concept that came is the other bits that glue everything together. I talked about connectivity in the character zone. The C shaped building on the left is the Jefferson School. The green rectangle is the parking deck. The oval encapsulates a swath of parking lot in front of the Vinegar Hill Shopping Center. If we were to reclaim a portion of the parking lot in front of Staples and redesign it to some creative parking and greenspace, you could begin to create a public square and a more public space than what you currently have and create the connectivity from the Jefferson School front door all the way over to the Mall. That would be without building a single building. These are things that you could do with the landscape alone. Another part of this concept is actually using some of the built environments and spaces between buildings to green them and make them more neighborly and user friendly and bring some more of the environment in. Just to take all of the surfaces that we have and green them, you can use these surfaces. The Jefferson School Foundation was really excited about this. They actually own that deck. The idea that they could allow that to become something better and more part of a city beautification thing. Structurally, it's capable of taking more parking. We had some preliminary conversations with the Board, their engineers, and looked at that parking deck and saw it as very viable. Do some greening on it. Those can become portraits or floral things. We looked into how cities can do these rooftop gardens and wall gardens and actually create a food source for themselves that feed either school systems or whole cities. We were trying to look at things that were small and immediate (quick wins) where people would feel like something was going to be done with their ideas all the way to something longer. We were trying to create something where it didn't have to be an "all or nothing" and it didn't have to be "forever." Taking a surface like plain brick wall and painting it with murals. Taking a space in front of the school that is not historic and maybe turning it into an amphitheater, where we could have outdoor performances. One of the things that the museum thought was important was to have more places of engagement instead of being dependent on the stage inside the school. That began to prompt this amphitheater in the corner. Going back to creating the crosshairs concept of reclaiming commerce on 4th Street for the community and putting these other public gathering spaces there. One last concept with this is to resurface these two streets with brick. It would create a visual that they were different in those cart ways that surrounded the other 3 edges. It becomes more about the community. It becomes more about the pedestrian trying to complete the sidewalks so that people could want to walk in these

spaces and reclaim at least commerce on 4th Street for the pedestrian, where a car can use it instead of it being about the vehicle where people didn't want to use it.

Ms. Harrell – The entrance to the African American Heritage Center is on this street as well. It highlights it as well and magnifies the entry way into that portion of the original school. It's a great way to encourage foot traffic to come down there and go into that space as well. It really is all about how we promote that connectivity and to enhance that space and highlight it as the entry.

Ms. Grady – It is off the entrance of Commerce. That brick building is right across from the entrance. The idea of walking out and starring at this building, wouldn't it be great if this could be a mural in and of itself. You want to speak to the new development going in there that we are taking into account

Ms. Harrell – One of the things that we talked about with Quirk Hotel. One of the key points about them is they love their art. Is there a possibility to bring on art out of the African American Heritage Center as well as the Quirk Hotel and make that part of the community? It adds to the overall beauty and encourages that to be more of a community effort as well and to be able to have different ways of demonstrating the culture in that particular area.

One of the things that we look at here is that we are thinking about what can be done. What are the next steps? What should we do? One of the great things about having the study done, especially with the emphasis on looking at it from a perspective of the black community and its place within Charlottesville, was to understand what are some things that we can focus on now? This is the main focus of the New Hill Development Corporation. We are focused on the advancement for the black community of Charlottesville. From that, there are things that we knew right away that we could start to focus on and we could start to partner with individuals. Things like securing commitments and identifying what initiatives can be moved upon. Looking at things like the business incubator as well as the financing gaps that currently exist. Those are some things we have already started to work on with partners throughout the community. Some shorter term things include having met with the Jefferson Foundation to talk about some of the things and concepts. We have talked with the tenants in that building as well. With some of the ideas, that has been abbreviated. We intend to continue those conversations. There are a lot of wonderful things that can happen in the interim with some of the bigger ideas and concepts moving forward. One of the things that I wanted to point out to you is the community benefits. That's one of the things that is really important. It really gets into what the community gets out of this and how some of those things can be done in implementing a particular plan. They can think about equity and who benefits. They can think about how we ensure that procurement and construction and who is doing the work. The local black community can benefit from that. Those are some of the things that we speak to in the community vision/community benefits section. We also talk about the housing mixture. This is a mixed development. We want to think about ownership, rental, condos, and business ownership. We want to incubate black businesses. There is so much that can be done here. How do we make sure that it is affordable? How do we make sure a spectrum of individuals can participate in this process? Some other things that we look at are housing vouchers and how can we have a large scale development that has a ton of affordability in it. It's going to take a number of things. We are going to have to look at it from a number of different ways. One of the things that we did at the very onset is we convened a meeting of a number of foundations and

institutions that could potentially provide philanthropic money as well as institutions that could invest that could allow affordability to be built into development. Those are some of the things that we thought through on the onset of this. We really wanted to make sure, we were thinking about this, when we worked with LISC and their housing team. We said this is what we want. We want to make sure that it's between 50% and 80% AMI. How do we do that? How can we ensure that huge number and the majority of that area median income can be served through this? They have done that in other places that also create ownership opportunity as well as opportunity for rental. Wealth creation is a huge part of what we want to do. We know we are not going to be able to do that completely through rental. We're going to have to look at ownership opportunities, not only for homes, but for businesses and how do we do that in our community? Considering the history of our community, how do we ensure that the next things that we do that we are demonstrating that we have learned from our history? We are recognizing that we have opportunity to right some of the wrongs in our history and make sure every member of our community, especially the black community, is really benefitting from the lived experience of Charlottesville.

Commissioner Dowell – As a young African American in Charlottesville, it is so refreshing to me to know that there is going to be a dedicated space for me. There are many things going on in the city. It is inclusive but it is not designed for me or for people who look like me. Even during this pandemic, I and my daughter go take a ride to get out of the house. If you go downtown, through Main Street, you see people out and they are having a good time. They do not look like me. To be able to have a space, I really appreciate that and look forward to watching this project come into fruition.

Commissioner Green – I have been a proponent for this particular project for a long time. I am going to let you know why. When we were doing community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan, one of the things that kept coming up was the city yard and that area. What I heard during those community engagement sessions was place making, using the city yard, housing, and jobs. I heard all of those things again tonight in this presentation. Out of all of the things that we were working on in our Comprehensive Plan and what we kept hearing over and over in these community meetings, and if you look at that heat map, that city yard area is the brightest of the purple. That's where all of the things overlap. I want to know how you're addressing what I have heard about it being a brown field and how you're addressing that contamination? I am concerned about that. You mentioned working with Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital. You touched on how you're working with the topography of the land instead of clear cutting. If you saw the first iteration of the Martha Jefferson Hospital, they cut the top of the mountain off and built the hospital. Another designer came in and worked with the land. It's a gorgeous project. It works with the land. I heard that you are utilizing the topography and there is so much opportunity there. I love opening the tunnels and opening those areas. Place making, transition areas, home ownership, and the missing middle are what we are hearing and we are starting. Are you looking at extending 5th Street Northwest to connect to that development so that there is a thoroughfare through there? I love that public space.

Ms. Grady – I do reiterate that this is trying to give a vision and guiding principles to this land. If you are buying into that, that's what we are asking you to attach to the masterplan. We took a lot of variables into account. When we started this, you had three governing documents that

contradicted each other. We are talking about starting a conversation about what if that started in 2017. Here we are three years later. We started with those variables on the table. We also heard that most development was pick one of the three documents and hold the others against us. We didn't do that. What we did was keep all three of those documents in mind and try to give you guardrails. If you change the zoning to do this, consider framing your zoning. For some of it, you're going to have to come up with some new tools. Anyone, who has done masterplans, you know that is available. I am not saying that you don't have the zoning to create that smaller footprint right now on Brown Street, you can certainly create that. We wanted to put enough of those recommendations out there for when you did work with your consultant. On the topography, we're recommending that there is a lot that can be done working with the topography. They're rough sketches just to give you mass and footprint. That's Timmons plan underneath there. I sat down with the planning staff. We really looked at what it would mean. Some of that stuff runs so deep, so wide, it's not cost effective to try to relocate it. What would it look like if you just worked with it? That's what it would like if you worked with it. If you open up the tunnels, you have to put in another right of way. All of those things were taken into account. The vision holds those and I think any development can hold those too. One thing that people hate more than demolition and that is clearing land to get it so that you have the topography right. The topography is beautiful. We met with Piedmont Environmental. They have been a part of this as well. It's an urban connectivity environment. We were trying to create the experience. It's going to be about the person in the environment, not about the brick and the dirt. We really tried to bring the pedestrian back. We're really talking about a walkable community. The other thing that residents said that they can walk to their jobs, the grocery store, and entertainment. The other thing that they said was that they have to pay money for the things around them. All of those spaces between buildings are forms for art, plantings, and places to pause. Allow them to become parking days. It has been out there for decades. There are so many things. If you gave a community an opportunity to have a footprint, what would they do with it? You have a lot of community that wants to help you do this. The vision is about creating a lot of outdoor spaces. They don't have to be whole parks that Parks and Rec operates: just little places to pause. They are huge community builders and they're inexpensive. You also have the University with an A school and you have a lot of really talented landscape designers. If you gave them that parking lot in front of the Vinegar Hill Shopping Center, you could have some incredible designs there. You could implement something like that. On the backside, there is an opportunity for connectivity and the topography can handle it. I will leave the brown field to staff to get those studies for you. I put something back in the appendix about what we were doing as a summary and synopsis. More needs to be done with the findings before it is ready for public release. There weren't things in there that would prohibit putting housing or anything on there. Having worked with the Reynolds sites in Richmond, that there are certain environmental conditions that could prohibit putting certain development on there. The findings that were relayed to us in the summary don't have those kinds of restrictions. You have a lot of opportunities. I know that some remediation has already been done. The most impacting structure would be right there along 4th Street. That is away from any of the residential. There are a lot of opportunities with that.

Mr. Ikefuna – Funding is going to be critical. Funding is going to be a major element of consideration in terms of the city. The location, alone, is going to cost millions of dollars. The funding source is going to be one of the big items to be considered, besides the environmental issues.

Ms. Grady – One of the things that can be income producing is that swath of land along Brown Street and moving that chain fence back. Those are some things that can begin to generate some stuff. It's hoping that you can buy into the vision of all of those things. When someone comes in and the space becomes more desirable, someone doesn't come in and built their monolith. That was the other reason to build that public square. If we created that kind of connectivity to the other community, no one big entity could come in and take that last strip of Vinegar Hill and build some monolithic structure on it. Somebody could still come in and build and build some good density along that edge, which we were proposing would be on that edge. It would automatically break up the larger footprint into smaller ones. Nobody was anti-development. It was just anti-elimination. We really tried to do that with some of the displacement funds. How could anything done there lead to a greater something?

Ms. Harrell – The question of funding is absolutely important. There are precedents in other communities where city yards have been relocated. We did look at some of that. Before we ever got started, it was important to us to have the right partners from the beginning. That's why we partnered with LISC. LISC does this transformative type of work. Part of their goal and part of what they do, is that they help you figure it all out. They help bring all of the capital needed to the table. With the fund that they have put together in Hampton Roads, they worked with Sentara to put together a fund that can go towards housing or a number of things anywhere in the Commonwealth, where there is a Sentara. Expanding our thoughts around how things could get done in that initial meeting, we brought banks and foundations. We wanted to start the conversation there. We knew it can have a hefty price tag. If we're going to get the affordability that we desire to have, we're going to have to have a different type of capital into the mix. We knew that the city would have to figure out, if we were to relocate, how do we do that effectively and how can we mitigate passing all of that expense onto the citizens? That is why a partnership with an organization like LISC is important because that is what they do. They help us as a city to figure it out. They are a nonprofit as well. They are about the local initiative and how they support that. How do we make sure that we can bring all of these CNA dollars and the people who want to do this? How can we help them? More than any other time, there is such a movement in the country to take a look at how we help address the wrongs that have been done? There are so many organizations that are looking to put their money into something really good. All we have to do is seize the moment. If we say that we are going to wait, then the moment will have passed and we would have missed the opportunity. The time is now. It should have been done before now. That doesn't mean that we can't go ahead and do it. Let's seize this opportunity. That's the wonderful thing about working with other organizations. We can't do it by ourselves. We should do it by ourselves. In that meeting, we actually asked the president of UVA to co-convene the meeting with us. We wanted them at the table because they certainly have a great role to play and how our community, especially the black community, benefits more greatly than it has in our past and in the future of Charlottesville. We believe there are a number of ways that can happen, especially with a variety of capital partners that can participate.

Commissioner Lahendro – I am really disturbed by what I read and what is not in there. I've had a special interest in this neighborhood for many years. I was very interested and looking forward to the plan. What I see is that you have talked about anchor institutions. You have two churches: First Baptist Church and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Those are the two historic ones. They're the

reason why The Jefferson School is there now. They were the center of African American life, along with four others. They have historically and traditionally been the center of African American life. They're the drivers of the improvements and keeping the community together. I see that they're barely mentioned in the plan. They're not acknowledged and much less embedded in the vision for what you have planned for this neighborhood. These are still vital institutions. They provide incredible community services. They are the core of the spiritual life of the neighborhood, for their parishioners, for their membership. They need help because of the displaced population that they serve. There is no place for these people to park when they come to Church on Sundays. They're struggling. There is no acknowledgement of that. There is no reaching out to help them as heritage anchor institutions. To not include them in the place making and the legacy part of the plan and vision is just unbelievable to me. I do care so much about the people of these churches and the churches themselves for what they have done for the community historically and today. Why were they ignored?

Ms. Harrell – They were not ignored. They were very much a part of the process. We held some of our meetings at First Baptist. Some of the things that were taken into consideration were some of the items that were suggested by both entities. One of the reasons we looked at an additional tray of parking at the Jefferson School is the fact that the parking for those neighborhoods are being greatly encroached upon by all of the development that is happening on West Main Street. The West Main Street plan is going to take away about 34 parking spaces along that street. That is going to further cause it to be very difficult for parking to happen, not only along that street, but it's going to encroach into the neighborhood. One of the things that First Baptist used to do was to take the children over to the Starr Hill Park in their program there. There is nothing in the park. There is nothing that encourages youth programming to be able to happen in the area. That's one of the reasons why we suggest to not take away the park. Let's enhance the park. The Starr Hill community doesn't have a lot of children in it. We wanted to think beyond just the local residents, but who else is being served by the neighborhood or the existing features of the neighborhood. When we heard that, what if we added some features that were kid friendly that really encouraged the use of that park that could allow and enhance their abilities to be able to have those after school programs or weekday programming for children that is part of their church. We met with Minister Bates at Ebenezer to talk with him and ask him if there were questions or concerns that he might have had. He gave me his well wishes. The churches are very important to me, and especially to that community. As that community grows, one of the things that is happening, the population of the church is aging. The attendance at the church is diminishing. If we are able to add to the local community, they now have community members within walking distance. Those are some of the things that we looked at. This potentially could help the churches as well. The opening picture of the plan features Ebenezer Church. Did we call out anything specifically? We did call anything specifically. In the conversations that we had, we took into consideration their suggestions about things that are not currently working well for them. First Baptist Church has a huge concern about parking for their church, especially as you think about the Amtrak site may have. There have been conversations around that Amtrak parking lot. Things like parking are being considered in other works that are being done. One of the things that we did is what we wanted to find out who is doing what so that we weren't necessarily duplicating things that were already being done, considered, or worked on. We wanted to focus on the things that were not. Those are some of the things that were not being focused on.

Commissioner Lahendro – I am just looking for something in here that says that the churches are part of this vision plan.

Ms. Harrell – What we can look at doing as we move forward is we can specifically ask people from those churches to meet with us. We certainly wanted to meet with them. Our goal would be whether there was anything in here that is missing that they would like to see that can amplify their church. We're certainly open to adding those things.

Ms. Grady – Those interior arterial streets that go around the neighborhood put the church in the neighborhood. Protecting those and making sure that those don't get consumed by parking that is overflowing from other higher density development, particularly with the decisions that you have already made about West Main. Those were some strong points that came out from both the churches and the residents. The park is the only child space. There is a lot of ways with small gestures that you can reclaim those things that are hugely supportive to the church. We had several members of the churches on our ambassador group, who helped go out and about. We attended all of the services too in addition to giving engagement fliers to the congregations. If there is something particular that needs to be stated and expressed, we are certainly willing to look at that.

Ms. Koch – We did have a conversation with Ms. Harrell and Ms. Grady months ago. We talked about the engagement process and the concepts that are in the plan. We learned a lot about your process that is helpful for us. It's good to hear what you are saying. As far as the church aspect, that is something that we want to build on. Churches are community hubs and community anchors, especially when it comes to engagement. We are going to continue to look at this as we move forward and try to work with city staff, New Hill, and others to figure out how we can incorporate some of these concepts and visions into the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – My problem with this project is that I love it too hard. I fear that I will crush it. What you are doing is important. It is the key to what we were doing with our draft comprehensive plan. That's why we were talking about it all of the time. I fear, due to structural reasons, you were constrained by those three documents that are out of date and disagree with each other. It clouded your vision. This site and community deserves the best. It deserves elevation. This is really important. I compare this to our 1920s Jim Crow "history land" effort: the Ten Story Monticello Hotel saying "Here we are!" I want this to be as dignified, as "hooray" as that hotel at the top of Vinegar Hill. I get pieces of that here. That's so important to me. It really matters. Anything we can do to elevate, strengthen, and empower is what we need to do.

Ms. Grady – You bring up a point that I want to make sure gets communicated here. One is the participation list in the back. It speaks to who we did talk with. We didn't put those names down just to be a list of names. We literally talked to them. I conducted over 61 one-on-one interviews. We had a number of focus groups at three different periods of time. We had large public engagements. Sometimes they were invitation-only. That was intentional. Other times they were open to the public. Those people on the back were invited and engaged. It might have been for a department in the city or the county. It might have been one or two representatives. They were there in an official capacity speaking for the group. That's a place to tap into. You would be building on a base of a conversation that we started. They want to keep going. One of the things that we recommended, particularly with the massing around those cart way roads is that Preston is

not designed for people to walk on. We have the overpass that happens there. That's why we wanted to turn to pedestrian those inner arterials like Converse and Fourth. I would suggest that when you guys look at this is that you be bold. It's a suburban kind of layout. It's the typical development. You take a massive site and carve it up. Everybody does their little thing. They are all required to have their own circulation and parking. Your zoning says that you have to. There are developers out there, who have their perfect perform. They find their perfect land of dirt with all of those rigid systems. You can say 'no.' We want you to bring the urban model. You are landlocked. You don't have to go in and destroy something and build a tower. That's the old way of developing. Current way is how do we use what we have smarter? This plan does that. We challenge you to take that intersection with McDonalds and Wendy's and what Economic Development can offer them as an incentive. Better to do it at the intersection of Preston and Ridge instead of right over the top of those beautiful 54 homes. We weren't constricted. It was hard to play within the system. You have that ability to ease up and make those areas where you take a look at those kinds of things.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I think that it is a super important project and a super important location. I love to see the vision of change. This is probably the area in the city that I walk in the most. It's amazing that as soon as you get onto Old Preston, everything changes. Everything around you gets so much more hostile. I want to focus on connectivity here. I like what I see about connectivity. It seems focused on connectivity to the west, which is important. All of those pathways were closed off historically. I want to focus more on the activity to the east. You have this huge barrier of Ridge-McIntire, which is hard to deal with as a planner and a pedestrian. I did note the one recommendation to upgrade the crosswalk at Ridge-McIntire and the Omni. I would like to see a little bit more detail on what that would look like. I certainly have ideas. I would love to see it be a raised crosswalk that would actually calm traffic and made it a lot easier to a pedestrian. I would also like to draw attention to how that area east of Fourth Street has a ton of demand paths, where people walked because that was where to go. On the east side of Ridge-McIntire, you have that path through the hill. Over by the northwest corner of McDonalds, from the parking lot up to Fourth Street, and in between, there's no way to walk. There are no sidewalks anywhere. A really important part of the connectivity overall is creating that pedestrian infrastructure so that you can get from here to there. I really love the idea of this grand plaza, pedestrian corridor from the Jefferson School over to downtown. I worry it falls apart on the east side of Ridge-McIntire. It goes right into The Omni driveway, which is good. The problem is The Omni driveway has no sidewalk. I know it's technically slightly outside of the boundary. I would love to see some consideration in how we can work with The Omni to create that last bit of pedestrian link, even if it has to go around the outside. I think that it's really important work. I think you guys have made a great start. I love the idea of the parks adding programming there. I love the idea of adding housing on Brown Street as that "easy win." On the Economic Development side, I think you guys are missing one of the biggest growth industry and largest industry in town in renewable energy, both in solar and wind. We have some of the biggest renewable energy companies in the country. It's in this interesting part on the skill spectrum where you have everything from entry level jobs up to the highest of high tech. There is a progression within the industry where you can move from one to the other. I hope that you guys can engage with the Renewable Energy Alliance and all of the companies doing the work in that area. It's probably a bigger industry and faster growing than the software tech industry.

Chairman Mitchell – We have given you a lot to think about. I thought your presentation was wonderful. Thank you very much for walking us through that. Commissioner Solla-Yates is right on target. There is much to worry about as well. The reason why I asked about anchor institutions is because the anchor institutions are right there. I was thinking about First Baptist and Ebenezer. Your answer was right on target. You may just want to elevate that as you present that. I worried about that.

Ms. Harrell – When we were thinking from the economic standpoint of anchor institutions, and not necessarily from the historical, cultural, and connectivity to person anchor institutions. Thank you for pointing that out.

Commissioner Green – We weren't worried about parking for these churches when we approved all of these high-rise condos on West Main Street. You guys have some great work ahead of you.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM