

Planning Commission Work Session

February 26, 2020 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM

NDS Conference Room

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

Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Missy Creasy, Brenda Kelley, Alex Ikefuna, Matt Alfele

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Solla-Yates at 5:00 PM after a quorum was established.

1. Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan

Nick Morrison, TJPDC Planner – I wanted to give you an update where we are with the Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan and do a high level presentation. This project was initiated by the Fifeville Neighborhood Association in 2015 through community engagement and looking to build support around the vision for the Cherry Avenue corridor. We are seeing pressures of displacement of longtime residents and the need for more affordable housing. Increasing stresses on the neighborhood and the commercial corridor of Cherry Avenue are from commuter traffic, particularly employees going to the UVA Medical Center, development anchoring east and west ends of the gateway, the large number of vacant lots with potential for development in the future, and the ability for us to utilize the groundwork that was laid by the FNA. We wanted to come up with a document that provides clear recommendations and a path forward for them to achieve their vision. This is a document representative of what the community has said to us throughout the two year planning process. We initially were looking at the commercial corridor of Cherry Avenue from Ridge to Roosevelt Brown. As we were talking with the community, we came to the realization that we needed to zoom out a little bit and look at Fifeville as a whole and how these small sub-neighborhoods within Fifeville fit in together with one another. With that, we moved forward with our process and we set forth with the intent of the plan to set a clear vision for the Cherry Avenue corridor and the surrounding Fifeville neighborhood: to create a clear vision for this study area, provide recommendations for making that vision happen, and guide the actions of City officials and community stakeholders. To achieve that vision, we did quite a number of different community engagement points throughout the process. We formed the Cherry Avenue Think Tank, which was made up of residents and members of the Fifeville Neighborhood Association. We met monthly. They were really the drivers of this process. We held four open house events. The first one was in March, 2018. It was an oral history event and we invited the neighborhood to come together and share their history so that we could document that. In August, 2018, we held a community open house to create some opportunities for feedback and to see what kind of priority areas rose to the top. In September of 2019, we held a small recommendation review open house at Tonsler Park. We had our initial draft list of recommendations. Community members could cycle through the different topic areas, meet directly with staff, and engage with them. In December of 2019, we held our final public open house at one of the business owner's spaces on Cherry Avenue. The owner was part of the technical committee. We had turnout to share the final plan recommendations and get feedback on those and start building a prioritization matrix. We had to refocus some of our engagement attempts. We had originally scoped two public meetings. We quickly realized that was not going to be sufficient. Through the direction of the Think Tank, we came up with a focus group or a front porch discussion approach. We met over the course of the summer 2018 with six residents, who hosted these front porch discussions. They would invite their neighbors and have more in depth dialogue with staff over their desires to build a vision for the Cherry Avenue corridor and the Fifeville neighborhood as a whole. That was a really successful opportunity to have an honest dialogue as opposed to the larger scale meeting format that we are typically used to. At the same time, we also held focus

groups. We met with transportation and planning officials, teachers and principals at the schools within the study area. We did a business owner outreach. We had staff go and interact and talk with all of the business owners on Cherry Avenue. We were not able to get them all in the same room. We were able to glean from them their priorities. We met with youth in the community through one of the nonprofits in the area. They have a summer youth group. We were able to meet directly with a young men's cohort of 6th thru 9th graders. There was about 30 of them that attended that focus group. We were able to get the youth perspective on certain things. Staff did attend roughly five of the Fifeville Neighborhood Association meetings throughout this project to make sure they were in tune with what we were doing. Through all of that engagement work, we created this neighborhood vision. This is representative of what the community was saying to us. That vision was that Cherry Avenue will be a vibrant mixed-use area that supports a diverse, thriving Fifeville Community. Development on Cherry Avenue will respect and preserve the history and culture of the Fifeville neighborhood. New development and investment on Cherry Avenue and throughout the neighborhood will build a sense of community between long-time and newer residents and be accessible and welcoming to residents at the most vulnerable end of the socio-economic scale. That really captures the spirit of Fifeville. To achieve that vision, we worked with the Think Tank in the community to build a set of ten goals. 1) Rebuild and strengthen the sense of belonging, inclusion, and community in Fifeville. 2) Lift up and preserve Fifeville's legacy of African American leadership, and highlight Fifeville's unique sense of place as a culturally diverse neighborhood. 3) Ensure that local land use laws encourage a vibrant, mixed-use corridor along Cherry Avenue, while respecting the existing lower density historic housing forms. 4) Ensure low-income residents, people of color, and generational residents are able to remain in Fifeville and benefit from neighborhood investments. 5) Invest in empowerment and upward mobility for neighborhood residents at the most vulnerable end of the socio-economic scale. 6) Foster an inclusive and welcoming community through place-keeping, place-making, and beautification. 7) Encourage new development that advances equity, is financially socially accessible to residents and represents Fifeville. 8) Provide a safe and more connected community that creates access and opportunities for residents. 9) Provide a transportation network that prioritizes safety and mobility for residents. 10) Increase health and well-being for all neighborhood residents. We think that covers all of the main points. It starts building an accountability list of how we see things moving forward. To achieve those goals, we had to obtain recommendations through the community engagement. We realized that they fit into six broad categories. 1) Place-Keeping and Community Building 2) Economic Development 3) Housing 4) Land Use 5) Transportation 6) Parks and Recreation. From those topic areas, we were able to create action items or recommendations under those and prioritize each recommendation based on staff and community feedback. What the community was saying in terms of what they wanted to prioritize will come through in the recommendations list. That was vetted through two technical committee meetings. The technical committee for Cherry Avenue was made up of city staff, representation from the Think Tank & Fifeville Neighborhood Association, UVA, and a business owner. We initially presented that draft recommendations list at the September, 2019 open house event. We had a final public meeting in December, 2019 to go through that and allow for a second round of feedback. I do just want to hit the high points of the recommendations. With Place-Keeping & Community Building, this was an opportunity to use tools that could utilize and strengthen community bonds increase inclusion and equity beyond preserving public space and buildings, but strategies that could weave together all of the stories and experiences of Fifeville. These are certain examples of things that came through community engagement: looking at historical markers and signage that could represent some of the history of Fifeville, possibly looking at a mural program. They had cited some of the examples throughout the city. Those were referenced in the executive summary. These are the recommendations. If it was red, it was a high priority. If it was yellow, it was a medium priority. Anything in green was considered a lower priority. We were able to identify easy wins and low hanging fruit. You can see that in the executive summary document. With economic development, we wanted to leverage the expertise of the existing business owners and provide an opportunity to elevate and improve the systems in place for entrepreneurial startup and retention in Fifeville by leveraging some of the Opportunities zone designation, because Fifeville is included within, that could help drive investment, but making sure that investment would be consistent with the community's vision. It also came out through our engagement work, especially talking with the business community, formalizing a

business association on Cherry Avenue could drive equitable investment. With housing, the city's efforts to re-examine affordable housing policy offers great opportunity to look at the neighborhood's specific strategies focused on the creation of preservation of affordable housing within Fifeville. It was expressed to us how important it is that the Fifeville community be involved in that process and build on the work that was laid out in the small area plan. With land use, Fifeville residents want smart growth. They are not an anti-growth community. Density is certainly a topic that came up throughout the conversations with the community. They want to make sure that any new development is scaled appropriately, fosters inclusion, equity, and represents the neighborhood. The vacant parcels along Cherry Avenue have the potential to serve as catalyst projects that could spur investment and foster a collaborative community engagement involvement around building a physical form of Cherry Avenue in Fifeville. With transportation, as redevelopment and investment occurs along the corridor, there are opportunities to create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Increasing access and connectivity is a top priority for the neighborhood. The ongoing trail planning efforts to connect Tonsler Park to Greenstone on Fifth, which the TJPDC, Piedmont Environmental Council, the City of Charlottesville, and Fifeville Neighborhood Association partnered with to pursue some grant funding opportunities. That was not successful. The work that they are doing is continuing and can serve as a model for future projects, especially those identified in the small area plan. With Parks and Recreation, after talking with staff, there are a lot of easy wins exist for adding park amenities, such as bleachers. We know that there are some currently in storage for off seasons. Those can be easily moved to Tonsler Park. Look at increasing park maintenance and upkeep. These easy wins can help to spur the community to build on its successes and focus discussions on those more long term visionary improvements. The next steps for us are to get the comprehensive response from city staff and the Planning Commission tonight. Once we get that response, it will be up to us to go through those comments and address those. You will set the process going forward. There a number of members from the community here tonight that were influential and instrumental in this process.

Commissioner Heaton – I do have a question about the West Main Street five acres. Is that because it's a special designation other than an R-1/R-2? I am not familiar with that.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – It's the same zoning as 612 West Main Street, next to the church we reviewed three months ago.

Ms. Creasy – We have that noted in some of the staff comments that are coming.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – A thing that I noticed in existing conditions is that you have a pie chart of housing types that exist right now. You don't differentiate in this pie chart between single family-detached and single family-attached. In the text, you often write that single family-detached is the dominant housing form by a lot. It looks like it is about a 50-50 split. I think that it will be helpful for you guys in describing those existing conditions break those down. They are separately listed in the city's data.

Commissioner Green – A duplex is attached and a townhome is attached. It's not a separate designation between a single family-attached. That would either be a duplex or townhome?

Commissioner Stolzenberg – A duplex as listed is a duplex on one parcel. If it's a duplex divided down the middle, then it's considered single family-attached in the city dataset you are using.

Commissioner Green – Is that designation true?

Ms. Creasy – Yes. There are separate definitions.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – There is one point on page 82 where you talk about townhomes on Orangedale. Those are actually single family-attached duplexes where the city defines a townhome as a row of three or more attached dwellings.

Commissioner Heaton – It makes a lot of difference on density to understand what is possible.

Commissioner Lahendro – It’s a wonderfully thorough, well organized, thoughtful document. I know that it’s been a long time coming. I am seeing many different categories and recommendations, place keeping, housing, many different recommendations within each of the different categories. Where does one start? If it was the neighborhood’s initiative, where should the neighborhood start? If it was the city’s initiative, where should the city start? I am almost looking for a beginning that is easier to understand.

Mr. Morrison – That’s a great point to bring up. We may need to rethink some of that. I don’t know if I have a clear answer for you. I know the way that we organized the topics within the plan that was the priority from the neighborhood. If you’re city staff or resident, how would you “digest” this?

Commissioner Lahendro – It would be nice to get movement on it and get some traction that invigorates the community, the city, and want to do more. We almost want to have some of the low hanging fruit be served and help with that traction.

Commissioner Green – Are you talking about the built environment?

Commissioner Lahendro – I am talking about all of these recommendations.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I would love to see your report from the various people and staff that each of them belong to, especially for the “easy wins.” How do we get from adopting this plan to them happening?

Commissioner Green – I think that you start on the Cherry Avenue corridor. We have been talking about that Cherry Avenue corridor for the past ten years.

Mr. Morrison – The work that the Neighborhood Association is doing is to work with the landowner between Tonsler Park and Greenstone on Fifth, to connect those two. They have been really successful engaging the community, especially youth within the community to really build support around that project. Unfortunately, when we partnered with them to try to pursue some grant funding opportunities, we weren’t successful in that competitive process. We’re hopeful that those kind of partnerships and the various community organizations in the city can serve as a model. That’s a great place to start building some momentum. Calling that out would be important in our recommendations list.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – It would be helpful if the recommendations were assigned to those who were responsible for it.

Mr. Morrison – The full document has a responsible entity attached to it. We have gotten direction from city staff. There are some changes that will need to occur. That was our first cut trying to assign responsible parties to those recommendations. That does not exist in the Executive Summary document. It’s in the full document.

Commissioner Green – This isn’t in any of those opportunity zones we heard about.

Mr. Morrison – Fifeville is.

Commissioner Green – How can we take advantage of that?

Mr. Morrison – I don't know if I can answer that. We do have a specific recommendation to look at the feasibility of how we would leverage that designation. I don't know if I have an exact answer as to what that would look like.

Commissioner Green – Those funds are available to the individual property developers. That's funds that can be leveraged by individuals.

Alex Ikefuna, Director of Neighborhood Development Services – People, who are interested, should talk to Economic Development.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Can we get a summary of what an opportunity zone does?

Chip Boyles, Executive Director of Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission – Close to two years ago, the new administration in the White House instituted what is called "opportunity zones." They identified a number of distressed census tracts around the country. Every state was allowed a certain number of those. It was finalized by the governor of each state and the governor would submit. It will allow private investment within the boundaries of areas. Most of the Cherry Avenue and Fifeville area is in one of Charlottesville's two "opportunity zones." Private investors, who invest in that area, are able to deduct at a graduated scale the capital gains that they would have received from those investments. A person, who had \$10 million made on capital gains in a year, would owe a substantial tax burden on that. If they took that money, and invested in the old grocery store on Cherry Avenue, they would be exempt at a decreasing scale from their income taxes. A lot of these people earn at a 30% tax bracket. They would be getting 30 cents on the dollar that they wouldn't owe taxes on. That's it in a nutshell. It's not a grant. There is no pot of money. It's just the investment is made and when that person does their taxes for the year, they identify it and they don't pay that portion.

Commissioner Green – I think that this is something we need to advertise.

Mr. Boyles – I will never see the benefit of an "opportunity zone" from investments. This is very wealthy people, who are making tens of millions of dollars in capital assets. It takes economic developers to identify those types of people. Most of those are going to invest. They are going to expand their companies somewhere. You try to attract them to your "opportunity zone," where their profit margin really explodes.

Commissioner Green – That's why we want to get this in place.

Mr. Boyles – This regulation as it stands right now sunsets in a couple of years. Congress, very likely, will extend it. It's not a permanent regulation you can do for housing. Some places are doing public-private partnerships where nonprofit partners work with a for profit developer, who will put their private money into it and see the return.

Commissioner Heaton – I have a question about the community driven development. What that is talking about is not community driven, its developer driven. There isn't any way the community is engaging in attracting developers.

Commissioner Green – The community is putting together this plan and having something in place. There is a guideline as to where we want for things to happen within the community.

Commissioner Heaton – When you talk about community driven development, you can include part of community driven development is attracting for profit development. You have to get the community to realize that.

Commissioner Green – A lot of it is focused on providing housing and jobs. Does this qualify for Go Virginia?

Mr. Boyles – Go Virginia doesn't have any boundaries. This is a state wide initiative. Go Virginia provides assistance to higher level, higher paying jobs. A grocery store and manufacturing may not even qualify.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – There were a couple of concerns that I had. Looking in the housing section, there are a lot of references to housing documents. I am concerned that we are missing out on specific housing issues in Fifeville. More detail would be appreciated. Public comment is diverse. I see a lot of concern about diversity, a lot of concern about affordability, but also a lot of concern about how to provide less housing. How do we get smaller heights, more single family detached homes? How do we do bigger setbacks at all costs?

Mr. Morrison – One of the biggest challenges that we had in this planning process was the dichotomy between wanting affordable housing and how do you balance that with the need to make sure any increased density is consistent with the neighborhood form. I don't think residents are averse to development or density as long as it is contextualized to stepping down to single-family homes. One of the things that we heard a lot was concerning the topography of Fifeville since it sits in a valley. The development that has occurred on West Main has overshadowed a lot of the historic single-family homes that were predominantly owned and lived in by African Americans. The fear is that if that was repeated on the Cherry Avenue corridor, you would create this wall between some of those historic housing forms and developments. It's something that through the city's work through the affordable housing policy, through the zoning review, and a comprehensive plan update that some specific strategies will address how to best approach those kind of intersects. I don't know if the plan, as it is now, gets into that level of detail. That's something that will certainly be a topic of large discussion in the community as a whole. There is the desire for affordable housing and what kind of form that will take. Any sort of 5 or 6 story development on Cherry might be a little too intense, especially for the pedestrian environment. A four story kind of density seemed to be the middle ground. That's not everyone's opinion. We're not glued to one specific idea.

Commissioner Lahendro – In the land use part, you did a wonderful comparison identifying the development scenarios and then going parcel by parcel for those pieces that have the greatest development potential at this time. Looking at what current zoning would allow. Current zoning doesn't match what the neighborhood wants, which is building right up to the property line, at five stories. Would the neighborhood want three stories at the most and off the property line, but also increasing density? What would that do? I want to see that scenario too.

Mr. Morrison – I think that's a great point. In this plan, we just have the existing condition analysis.

Commissioner Lahendro – It would lead into recommendations for changes in zoning. I would be welcome to receive.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I was a little confused about how that whole existing zoning conditions analysis and the recommendations associated with it related to the actual existing zoning regulations. It seemed that the analysis was very negative. It needs to be down zoned to comply with the neighborhood goals.

Mr. Morrison – That may require some more in depth review analysis

Commissioner Solla-Yates recessed the work session for two minutes to get some food.

Commissioner Solla-Yates re-opened the work session and opened the Public Comments part of the Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan.

Public Comments

Willow Gayle – The open houses were a great learning experience for a lot of us. We came in saying that we wanted single family housing and affordable housing. Neighbors are open to 3 or 4 stories. A number of times I

went door to door. There was a lot of reluctance to go to the open houses. They figured that the city never listened to them before. I would suggest that you come up with some low hanging fruit. These little things will mean a lot to those in the neighborhood. A lot of us are terrified that it could turn into West Main Street. We don't want to become a Belmont. We want it to stay a nice neighborhood. The city has an opportunity to honor the history of the neighborhood.

Natasha Sienitsky – I have been involved with the Think Tank. I think that the housing recommendations really need to be more in line with the recommendations coming from HAC and city staff. We might end up with a fragmented neighborhood. I think that we also need to focus on the neighborhood and not just the Cherry Avenue corridor. I think that the transportation part is auto centric. There is a lot of emphasis in walking and biking in the neighborhood. Uniformity of four story buildings along Cherry Avenue is something that we don't want to see. We want that grocery store in the neighborhood. If you want the grocery store, you are going to need more housing. I am looking forward to seeing the process move forward with some zoning changes.

Kathy Galvin – I appreciate all of the hard work that has gone into this. I got involved in this neighborhood in 2015 with the William Taylor Plaza Project and an angry neighborhood in the Fifeville and Cherry Avenue corridor. This community wants affordable housing, a grocery store, and walkable streets. The PUD was something that nobody understood and people were trying to kill it on a technicality. The core problem in 2015 was zoning. They felt there was nothing protecting them. The two components needed for a vision plan are zoning and capital investment. I urge that the Planning Commission to understand it and look for conflicts. It's important to bring back faith in local government. Respect the intention of the scale.

Carmelita Wood – President of the Fifeville Neighborhood Association and also a member of the Think Tank. Changes are going to come over the years. Some of those changes are for the better. Some of the changes that others thought were for the better turned out to be increase in the negativity of neighborhoods and surrounding neighborhoods. We would not like that for Fifeville and Cherry Avenue. When we started this process, we wanted Cherry Avenue not to succumb to the high buildings that contribute to the unnecessary destruction of valuable property. By adopting this small area plan, we will be providing the residents of Fifeville and the surrounding communities with the ability to ensure the safety and Fifeville will become a model community of the city. Extensive work has been done on the small area plan. We are asking that you adopt this small area plan.

Nancy O'Brian – Fifeville is a very special place. It's a new urban neighborhood. We have been a little frightened by West Main Street. It does seem that West Main Street looms over the neighborhood. I do hope that you will adopt the small area plan. I think that it's a valuable place to the city.

Oliver Platz – A small real estate developer and owns property on Roosevelt Brown. The neighborhood has expressed interest in having neighbors. The current zoning doesn't provide for that. People are knocking down houses and rebuilding. Under the Cherry Avenue mixed use zoning, it is almost impossible to build a mixed unit with the amount required parking.

Commissioner Solla-Yates handed control of the meeting back over to Chairman Mitchell.

2. Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Ikefuna – We are excited about the Comprehensive Plan update. It will involve three different projects: the comprehensive plan update, the affordable housing strategy, and the zoning rewrite. This will be their first engagement with the Planning Commission.

Dena Rhodside, Rhodside and Harwell – We know that the Planning Commission has been intimately involved in both the comprehensive plan and the whole community engagement process in defining the needs for the affordable housing strategy. We wanted to start this process by coming to speak with all of you about what your experiences have been with this process in the past, so that we can learn from those and to introduce you to our team, to have us go through the overall schedule to look at the comprehensive plan update scope, to look at the affordable housing process, and to work with you in speaking about the community collaboration process. We welcome your input and would like to introduce the team to you.

Jenny Koch, Rhodside and Harwell – There is another member of the team Code Studio, our zoning experts, who are not here. They will be engaged at a more holistic scale once we have started moving towards concrete visions that they will be looking to implement in the comprehensive plan. They have begun an initial review of the zoning.

The affordable housing strategic plan process is expected to go through the end of this year. These are tentative timeframes. At the same time, we have kicked off the comprehensive plan update and review process mostly looking at what has been done already. Moving into the next phase will be talking with the community and seeing what might need to be updated further in that plan. We are expecting the comprehensive plan process to go along with the affordable housing strategic plan development and moving into early next year is our tentative timeframe for wrapping up those updates. The zoning team is working on some initial analysis now, but they will be more involved later this year into next year. The purple circles at the bottom are showing tentative timeframes for community engagement. The first bulb shows that we had our steering committee kickoff at the end of last month. We will be meeting with them again in mid-March. These community discussions are vague on here because we are working on figuring out what those will look like. That's a big part of what we want to talk about tonight.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – With those initial zoning reviews, is that to get an overview so that they can prepare or are they going to have some immediate actionable recommendations?

Ms. Koch – They are reviewing what has already been identified as needing to be updated. I do not think they are planning to produce initial recommendations because things could change based on what is going to be in the comprehensive plan. They don't want to have two separate sets of conflicting recommendations.

With the comprehensive plan, you have been involved directly with this. We have been reviewing both the draft updates to the plan chapters that we have been provided by the city, as well as the engagement that has been done and what came out of that, mostly reviewing the booklet that was made. It has been helpful for us to get a sense of what was discussed with the community, especially in terms of land use. We have reviewed those items but we know there is more beyond that that was completed, as well as your process to get to that point. We want to take what was done, the edits that were made, we want to know why they were done, and keep incorporating them and other things that we are hearing from the community as we move forward. I know that we sent a lot of questions. We don't need to get through all of these. We wanted to hear about key lessons learned, insights related to the comprehensive planning process that you have been through to date.

Commissioner Dowell – We went through several different areas of the comprehensive plan and we actually looked at physical images of the types of housing that we wanted to see in each area. I wanted to make sure that was adopted or considered for the new plan.

Commissioner Green – That missing middle graph?

Commissioner Dowell – It just wasn't the graph. It was actual images of what the different types of housing looked like.

Ms. Koch – That was a set of images that was crafted with community input and talking among the Planning Commission. What was the process?

Commissioner Dowell – We created that process here. We think that it was also created after we had our public meetings.

Chairman Mitchell – I want to make a superficial but high level statement. Four of the commissioners joined the Planning Commission after the work had been done. The men and women, who led us to that point, did an incredible job to get us there. Coming in the last three months it was apparent to me that we were letting the perfect become the enemy of the good. I would ask you guys, as you are doing this, not to try to create a perfect document. Give us a good document. My point is that this is a living document. It is going to evolve. What you saw earlier today is an example of the old comprehensive plan that is going to evolve. This all happened after the alt right invasion in Charlottesville. We felt an incredible need to make certain that we were reaching out to all of the stakeholders in the community. We felt an incredible need to put together an exceptional comprehensive plan, partly in reaction to that. That will linger. I will ask you guys to give us something good that we can iterate.

Commissioner Green – I don't think any of us, while we had some good public engagement in the beginning, were a part of the public engagement. That's what a comprehensive plan is. It's about the public. It's not about the body sitting here. At all of these public engagement meetings, hearing from the public is very important. I think, just recently, we have learned that the public doesn't trust us. They do want to be involved. We just have to pull them out of the door, not physically. We have to encourage them to come out. South First Street is a model of how the public and a community got together to help create an environment, in which they would like to live. That's what we all want. The fact that we are sitting here. You got to hear from Cherry Avenue. They were extremely disgruntled with some of us with that development that happened that did not take into account the neighborhood. We have some tight neighborhoods. People are afraid of losing that. That doesn't mean you can't have something other than single-family housing. We have some very tight knit neighborhoods. I think that the public engagement piece is huge.

Chairman Mitchell – I hope that the previous commissioners do not sell yourselves short. Your public outreach was herculean. You guys worked very, very hard to get the public out. At the end of the day, we got the same people over and over again. The pieces that were missing were the millennials and the people of color. Hopefully, you guys will do a better job than we did. Frankly, we worked hard.

Commissioner Heaton – One of the things about comprehensive plans is that at the end of the day, it's an up or down and you adopt it. I wonder if in your process, what you are going to lead us through if there are waypoints. We can stick pins in it, not only for us, but for the public to get a reaction before the end. That would be an encouragement that I have. You put out our plan before getting the up or down at the end. Maybe it involves some waypoint decisions that will help the end product be the best that it can be. It's not that we have zero until the end. You have it divided into housing and community. Those could be waypoint decisions.

Ms. Koch – I will add this note about the public engagement process. A lot of how we are handling it is building in those checkpoints as we are moving forward. It's not us doing public engagement for four months on a particular issue. We have not developed an 18 or 24 month engagement plan that shows every single milestone. We are treating this as a process. We are allowing ourselves to hear, listen, and get feedback to report back what we are hearing and ensure what we are hearing is accurate. To have people tell us, challenge us, and say "I don't think you heard that correctly." To the extent that we can do that through the public outreach process, we want to be building in those checkpoints, so that it doesn't become what you are referencing.

John Santoski – I do appreciate your comments. I do feel that those early Friday mornings for months, we tried to engage the community as much as we could. One of the things that was very obvious, was that we had a tough time attracting people, who rented. They just didn't come out that often. Neighborhoods tended to get people, who owned homes, single-family homes. Those people were the most protective of their neighborhoods. They like single-family homes. They like the character. All of our neighborhoods said that Belmont is

important, Fifeville is important, Greenbrier is important, and around the university is important. As we went through the place making part and trying to identify those places, it became very apparent that the city is very important in so many different ways to everyone, who participated. We talked to as many people as we could outside of knocking on doors and doing a door to door canvassing of everybody in the city. We spent a lot of time, as we were looking for that missing middle, of working here on a Friday morning taking another draft back out to the next engagement meeting and then coming back and redoing it again. We went through so many iterations of doing that. Kirk did a great job with tying in transportation. We found that it was easier to walk to places than to take a bus. I often felt that at the end of it, we were trying to get a perfect document. That just wasn't going to happen. Some of us were saying that we just had to have a good document. We just have to have a place where you say, "This is where we stop." We can move on from there. I think that it's going to be an interesting process to watch where this goes through. I don't think you want to start this whole thing over again. There is a lot of good information that has been put into this plan. It's just a matter of how you build on that and fill in those gaps. We could have done a better job. We would have done it differently in light of the events that happened, that skewed what was going on. Everything took on a whole different perspective. There is a lot of good work that has gone on. A lot of the people in the community, who came out, they went through that whole process with it and it just stopped. There was no final document. I think that we have to be careful with that.

Kathy Galvin – One thing that I will say is that councilors are extremely busy. They have lots of other things going on. I would come to a lot of the planning commission engagement sessions. I have seen it too many times where the Council is the last group to know what's been going on and they are the ones, who vote things up or down. It was illogical. The ultimate decision makers were the ones really down river. It has to be very conscious and directed. I am just telling what my experiences have been. I would always try to get my colleagues to come to every small area plan meeting. It's just overwhelmingly busy. That's why a targeted invite for things for them to do to get them to weigh in might be something to try to work in your schedule. At the end of the day, you have a situation that would feel like things are being undermined. It has to be really conscious, intentional engagement with the Council, just like everyone else.

Ms. Koch – One thing that I am consistently saying as we go through this process is that this process is for everyone in Charlottesville. That includes everyone around this table. I will continue to hammer that home as much as needs be to make sure even all of the decision making parties, who are a part of this process don't feel like you are standing on the sidelines watching this process happen. You are part of this process. As we begin to roll out what this engagement process looks like, be it a large meeting or be it a coffee shop conversation. Everyone is part of that process. Everyone has the right, option, and ability to show up. Consider this the formal invitation to the process. That is how we are working. No one in this room or any decision making body in the city should feel that they are bystanders to this process.

Commissioner Lahendro – I am part of the steering committee with Commissioner Solla-Yates. One of the questions that came up in the steering committee was why did the comprehensive plan stop? I couldn't answer it very well. Ms. Galvin was on the Council and she might be able to help with the understanding of why the comprehensive plan was stopped.

Ms. Galvin – When August 12, 2017 hit and there was this mounting intensity to have affordable housing be our number one priority with many members of the community. It became tied up with other agendas. We had been trying to change our zoning with our 2013 comprehensive plan. That all came to screeching halt because the zoning needed to be tied to our affordable housing strategy. I would argue that the affordable housing piece became the main catalyst for all this reset. It was the real intentional desire to be an equitable and inclusive city. What we were seeing was a buildout of the city without any housing affordable to the people that lived here for generations and any new person, who was of a low income category. There was a real concern about that. That's where it did come from. I will have to say that the comprehensive plan update wasn't addressing that. The push to get a discernable affordable housing strategy was a big reason why things stopped. At first, that was

going to be done only by the housing advisory committee. There were some of us on the Council that said “this doesn’t make sense.” There were multiple things going on all over the city. In some sense, the comprehensive plan was being held hostage until the affordable housing strategy was finished.

Commissioner Green – There was a lot of public comment about that. “Do not move forward with the comprehensive plan until the housing strategy is done.”

Ms. Galvin – A Planning Commission meeting was shut down.

Ms. Keller – This process began well before August, 2017. In November and December 2016, we started to get targeted emails from people, who were involved in housing advocacy issues. I reached out to several people, who I knew were on the HAC or who were housing advocates. I asked what they wanted. It was paraphrased as “We know what we want, but we don’t want to tell you. We won’t tell you now. We will tell you when we’re ready.” We had other meetings where we reached out and we particularly targeted the housing community, the low wealth community. Three of their organizers or executive directors came to the meeting. We were hoping for a much better turnout. They said that they came to screen you to see if it was worth our community interacting with you. We were held hostage from the beginning on this. In retrospect, we had completed the state requirement to review the comprehensive plan. In general, people are pretty satisfied with the neighborhoods that they live in. The few people that did engage with us from the low wealth community, everybody liked their neighborhood. They might have wanted better conditions. We could have said that we needed a new housing chapter, small area plans, and a zoning rewrite. It was not an open process. The whole thing working with Council was also to have some key dates. People realized that they could go to Council and bypass this process. It became a political ‘hot potato.’ It was not an open and transparent process. I would hope that people would be open with you and it would be a direct process.

Commissioner Green – We don’t know if that 2013 comprehensive plan works or not. The zoning is not in alignment with it. We don’t know what we would have gotten. We don’t know how it would have worked.

Mr. Santoski – We knew that the zoning had to change for some of the density that we wanted. We also tried to listen to all of the people that we talked to. There were neighborhoods that didn’t want to see those high rises, like they are talking about on Cherry Avenue. There were other places that unless we did away with zoning completely, it was going to be really difficult. I think we spent a lot of time agonizing over how to do it, preserving what people were telling was important about what Charlottesville was, and at the same time trying to expand opportunities for additional housing.

Commissioner Green – At the Burley Middle School meetings, we had the largest amount of public. We talked about three questions. We knew that growth was not going to stop. We knew that we were going to hear that we didn’t want any more growth. We decided consciously to not throw that out there. What do you like about where you live? Would you like to live somewhere else? What would you like to see? I think those were some of the best community engagement days that we had. Growth is going to happen and we said that.

Mr. Santoski – It’s going to happen and there are going to be more people, who want to live in Charlottesville. That’s a given. How do we put those more people in Charlottesville? Where and how?

Commissioner Green – Where would you like to see job centers? That was some of the best that we got.

Kurt Keesecker – In preparing for tonight, there were many different times I felt that we were completely over our heads. We had some community engagement that happened prior to August 12th. There were some meetings that allowed some relatively good ideas. We were able to pull out of those some pretty fundamental principles that seemed to resonate across most neighborhoods. They didn’t want jarring transitions between really tall buildings and really small buildings. There was the idea that some amount of amenity or support within walking distance that they would be open to a transition of density from. There was some idea that people could go to those places and find the things like a grocery store and the support services. There was some way of getting around the city. Those were some of the basic ideas. Where it started to fall apart was where we had these

relative simple concepts that most people could rally around. We struggled with the details and how to translate those into a more complicated version of what needed to happen to be implemented. When we got into the map making, we wanted to get away from the parcel by parcel dictating what should go where. We got pulled into a level of detail that got us away from the basic ideas. If we had a check-in point, we might have had better minds, who were technically oriented and detailed to get through those things and put it together. We stalled out with those donut meetings, drawing lines with magic markers. August 12th happened and the whole table shifted.

Commissioner Green – We got four new commissioners and we were trying to catch everyone up.

Mr. Keesecker – It was a few perfect storms.

Mr. Santoski – One of things that was interesting, was that meeting at the Jefferson School, we had city staff from all of the different departments. It was to look at the comprehensive plan and all of the different chapters. We were trying to look at it every which way. We did get some very good feedback. That new City Council was not sitting at the table with us. If they weren't engaged throughout the whole process, there wasn't any place where we took part of it to Council and sat down with it. We were going to give them the finished document and they could do with it what they needed to at that point. We got through some of the chapters much quicker.

Chairman Mitchell – I think that you guys got through quite a bit. The issue is that the last three pieces that we need to get through are the most difficult pieces: the land use chapter, the housing chapter, and the community outreach chapter. The community outreach chapter could have been done easily. We had just outlined what we had done. You guys did a lot. You just didn't reach a certain segment that you needed to reach, but you made the effort. The housing and land use chapters are all that is left.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – With community engagement, we had outsourced it to the PLACE Design Task Force, who produced nothing. We were thinking of the housing chapter as a placeholder that would be there. There were already plans to hire you guys to do just the housing strategy. When the comprehensive plan is adopted in the next 9 months that will replace the housing chapter. The land use chapter was complicated for obvious reasons. While I wasn't on the Commission during the community engagement sessions, more than half of the work that was done was after the August 11th thru 13th weekend. The kickoff meeting was three years ago in January, 2017. The first round of community engagement was in May and June, 2017. The other 2 rounds of community engagement were afterwards. I would ask that you show your work. Don't just aggregate results. Don't give us compilations of things. Give us what each individual said. Don't aggregate what people, 'who came out today think.' This was something that was really frustrating to me. Nobody I know knows that any of this happens. No one knows that this is happening. People are only vaguely aware that the city government has such fine control over all of these developments around us.

Commissioner Green – Most of our elected officials have no idea about planning and zoning. Most of our boards and commissions have no idea about planning and zoning. We did try, at that time, to simplify it for people. I think back to the outreach that we had at Westhaven at Westhaven days. We wanted some people from public housing to come and talk to us. We would beg people to come and talk to us. It didn't matter. We are not getting that cross section. We tried to make it a simplified model. It was thought out. A lot of people don't understand planning and zoning. In public outreach, you don't write down names and what everyone said. You have to pull together all of the correspondence.

Commissioner Lahendro – When we would go out to public events, we were trying to develop trust and get people to trust what we were doing and open up to us. We were talking to anyone and everyone as much as we could. I see that as being as important.

Mr. Santoski – There was no doubt that people in the development community came to all of those meetings. They were always in attendance at all of those meetings to make sure that their point of view was being heard. I know at times that it was frustrating. Their involvement with what's happening with development in the

community and other people, who own a home in the area were overwhelmed by what they were hearing. That was something that we talked about a lot. How do you engage an entire community? That's not an easy thing to do without telling some group "no you can't participate" in this engagement when it's supposed to be public engagement.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I think that it's really important that community engagement isn't a vote of the people that show up for things. When you can identify who is saying what, as you gather this data.

Ms. Koch – I really appreciate everything that is being said. I do want to ask a couple more questions about the comprehensive plan. We are talking a lot about engagement and collaboration. We have some initial ideas that we want to share with you on that. I do want to make sure that we have time to get to that and some targeted questions about housing. There was a question that was asked about checkpoints. There are checkpoints. Having that housing strategic plan and development as separate but very related to the comprehensive plan update is an important checkpoint. That's why it's listed separately because it is a more focused effort. I wanted to get your input on a couple more things related to the comprehensive plan. Having read through the draft updates to the chapters, there are vision statements at the top of each of the chapters. I want to get some more insight how those were crafted. From what we saw in the booklets, there was a lot of pre-discussion on land use and where development might happen. What sort of conversations influenced those vision statements?

Commissioner Green – In 2013, we changed the comprehensive plan altogether. We tried to go with a more visual map driven comprehensive plan.

Ms. Keller – The goal was a one page comprehensive plan. We didn't get there.

Commissioner Green – We tried to look at look at other localities. We tried to go more map based. We "word smithed" the heck out of things. We re-formatted everything. We went from a comprehensive plan this thick to the one that we have now. I am not sure that is not a good comprehensive plan. We just don't have the zoning in place for it. I don't know if we changed much, except looking at it again and asking if it fits with what we are hearing.

Mr. Santoski – I think that we did try and go back and make sure those other chapters did tie back into land use and housing. We tried to make sure transportation, parks, and recreation tied back in. We were initially relying on staff to help draft some things and bring it to us and spent hours having people looking at it and trying to make those vision statements.

Mr. Keesecker – What we were getting from the previous comprehensive plan, when we were having applications come in for special use permits and rezoning were based on the comprehensive plan in 2008 was before 2013 had 500 goals. Anyone, who wanted to make a strong argument for the reasons that they wanted to do something outside of what was by right could find an excuse. Anybody, who wanted to oppose it, could do the opposite and find the counterpoint. Part of the reason we wanted it to be shorter is to hopefully eliminate some of those places where the chapters themselves inherently created conflict. You had to choose your goal. It wasn't easy to do.

Commissioner Lahendro – We worked on every level on how to incentivize affordable housing. We looked at that very carefully. What were the incentives for each level? We spent a lot of time on that.

Mr. Santoski – We also got good information back from the development community. Every part of the community that was responding to us, was taken seriously. Sometimes, we had to selectively hear. We heard the same thing over and over. We did listen to all of those groups and made sure to take it seriously. We were trying to narrow that scope down so that people could look at that map and see the comprehensive plan. That's what we have and that's what we need to work towards. We didn't quite get there.

Commissioner Green – There are parts of the city where developers own small businesses that are affordable. Without hearing that from the development community, we wouldn't necessarily understand it. We have raised rents. It's not good for those startup businesses. It was good to hear that feedback.

Mr. Santoski – I had a conversation with the school system. We were talking with them because they were involved in all of this as well. Education was a critical piece. They were talking about that around the country. There are different ways to have schools in urban areas, where you can have housing or businesses below a school. You can do a lot of different things. Every part of the community was trying to think of how do we do it differently? But also, how do we do it well? Things are important to those different groups.

Commissioner Green – We talk about place and community. When we talked about things and having some community meetings at the schools and using that school site for something more than just an 8 to 5 business during the day. It was a community center for these neighborhoods. We do have a lot of people who walk. No matter what we did, biking and pedestrian was top of the charts.

Ms. Keller – Our aspiration was for this to be a place based comprehensive plan. That was deriving from the comments that came back in our engagement process. People really appreciated and used the city parks, the trails, and the school grounds. In our desire to accommodate and increase the number of housing units, we were trying to look for locations that were approximate to those community resources and amenities. We weren't entirely successful in doing that. We never went out and looked at the city as a group. We didn't drive it on Google Earth together because we were constrained by 2 hour meetings. My hope is that with your lead firm being a landscape architecture design firm, you will add that place component back in. We are geographically constrained in the city. If you only have ten square miles, you should make best use of it. What do you do about topography? We have had some draconian developments come in that are based on 19th century platting that don't work with today's topography. We had proposals come in that were based on land availability, not necessarily suitability. We were not trying to go to walking sheds, but to try to have a place in each neighborhood where there would be some community services or gathering places. That's where we left off with the transition from the old commission to the new commission. We were trying to come up with something that might be innovative. We were deliberately not having parcel lines on our maps. We were trying to have much less yellow on the map. We didn't quite get there because we couldn't find those right places. We were convinced, as a group, they were there. We weren't pinpointing them exactly to be near the trails, the schools, employment centers, and all of those things that would make sense.

Mr. Keesecker – In contrast to a linear corridor as the organizing theme of the city that generally was the theory. The corridors weren't going to go away. They would always be there. The definition of what made us all recognize Charlottesville as a place we wanted to be and pinpoints that gave it character would fall into these series of places that one could explore. The organizational diagramming is just this spattering of corridors. That's not necessarily place related.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – That comes from the 2003 comprehensive plan that was focused around this corridor idea?

Mr. Keesecker – The corridors were easier to study as an economic development engine than they necessarily were as a place idea.

Mr. Santoski – The people in Greenbrier said that they would have liked a grocery store and coffee shops. They wanted to walk to something. All of that is zoned single family. We were looking at something that was going to happen with Greenbrier School in the future. That could be a place we somehow designate for future commercial development, little plots of land that we could put coffee shops on. We threw this out at some of the engagement meetings. Some people would love it and some people would hate it. I am sure that we all had phone calls and conversations with neighbors. It was very place based.

Commissioner Green – We also tried to work that in with what the county was doing and what economic opportunities they were already doing around the city boundaries.

Mr. Santoski – We spent a lot of time looking at those places. You could have multi-modal ways of getting people around. You could walk to different places. That’s why we were down on the edges. It was because of access to the highways. Jobs were going to be in the county. Not everything was going to be in the city. How do we put people in those places so they can access those things?

Commissioner Lahendro – What we developed were nodes. We organized those nodes on the periphery of the city. We weren’t going to increase the density around the historical downtown area. We did it at the periphery at the major corridors coming into the city. We had areas of high density development and transition zones around it. The idea was that those nodes were going to be places where people would leave their cars, get on public transportation, and go from there to the downtown transit center.

Commissioner Dowell – I find that this happens often. Did your question get answered? I feel like we haven’t answered the question. She asked where we got the vision statements from.

Ms. Koch – What I heard was the during the 2013 update, there was a change in the structure of the plan. Revisions that happened recently were pulled out of discussions you were having. You tried to make sure that those were reflective of the visions.

Commissioner Dowell – I feel like when we go off on these other elements, we can’t get the work done that we need to get done that’s on the task at hand. Conversations are important. If you don’t keep us on task, we are going to be in the same “spinning wheel” situation that we have been in.

Ms. Koch – I am going to ask a couple more questions about the comprehensive plan. You were given these questions ahead of time. I do want to make sure that we talk about housing and engagement. One thing that we have in here is about equity. We have been having some small discussions with 1 or 2 people in the community helping us to build some ideas for engagement. One of the things that we have been hearing about is a greater focus on equity. That was written into the RFP as a big focus of this effort. We want to see if you might think about how that can be best and most effectively incorporated into the plan document. Whether that’s an equity focused chapter.

Chairman Mitchell – What does a greater focus on equity mean?

Ms. Koch – It could be looking at mapping, different types of access to services, and jobs based on neighborhood. It sounds like your last process did look at equity in terms of amenities in the different neighborhoods. Node ideas looked at what might be needed in the different neighborhoods. It might be looking at something like that. The other thought is that might be defining what equity means for the city through conversations and then looking at each of the chapters that are existing and how that might be addressed in these chapters.

Chairman Mitchell – Once we figure out what that means, I don’t think a chapter on equity is necessary. Equity should be the theme throughout the document.

Commissioner Green – I think that’s our biggest stumbling block. Everybody has a different idea of what equity means.

Mr. Santoski – We are going through our strategic planning. Our consultants came and the first thing that they are talking about is equity. I work with people with disabilities. Equity has a slightly different sense than we are talking about. When you ask people to define it, it goes all of the way around. Good luck on narrowing that down.

Ms. Keller – It would be helpful for us as a community if we had measureable objectives to see if we are making progress towards equity. We all have changing definitions of equity as we move along. Right now, race

is first and foremost. At another point in time, it might be something else. We talk about representing people with disabilities. If we had ways to evaluate that and build that in to future comprehensive plans, that would be really useful for us.

LaToya Thomas, Brick & Story – A part of getting to those objectives is really defining what those principles are. That will translate to whatever those objectives end up being. As those objectives change over time, that's probably going to be a big first step in this process. What are the principles that will ultimately stick with those objectives over time? At the end of the day, the entire city should be signed onto the same set of equitable principles that ultimately define those objectives and those outcomes.

Mr. Keesecker – As a starting point, Professor Barbara Brown-Wilson has been working for more than a year on a social-equity protocol, which is striving to become measurable in this arena. I have looked at the document a few times. I will have to admit that I don't understand it all. It's very interesting and well done. Their work is ongoing and they are looking for opportunities to see if they are identifying the right things to measure.

Commissioner Dowell – I definitely like the idea of the measurable objectives. That's how you gain trust in the community. These are the objectives and this is what we have done. This is where we are, this is where we need to continue to go, or we have met the objective. We can now move onto something else.

Ms. Keller – One of the things that we talked about in our previous process was to have an annual check-in to see what progress we are making towards implementing a comprehensive plan and do all of these goals and objectives still make sense this year. Maybe something has changed. It would be very good have to that built in.

Commissioner Green – We were looking at other localities to see how they were doing comprehensive plans. A lot of those localities had an implementation chapter. We do not have an implementation chapter. When we talk about those measurable goals, we can get it in that implementation chapter.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – There should be an automatic status of those goals, like a reporting dashboard. There are specific goals. That comes up when we are talking about a street scape project. Where are we on that goal? Nobody actually knows.

Commissioner Green – We did get some response from staff when we were looking at the other chapters about some goals. There were certain goals that had been met. We brought in the chapter champions in. We met some goals.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – In the city strategic plan, they have these goals. They also have this scorecard. Under each goal, there are intermediate measures. You can track how you are doing with each of these goals. As a concept, it's there and it's updating.

Ms. Koch – We had a question about the structure of the comprehensive plan. I am going to have Sara Kirk do an overview of the process on housing.

Sarah Kirk, HR & A Advisors – I am going to spend time talking about our process for the housing plan. We have provided an initial set of dimensions of housing need. That is a very preliminary way of starting to organize some of the things that we have already heard. Our plan with the housing plan is similar to the work on the comprehensive plan. There has been a lot of work done already. The Housing Advisory Committee is very engaged in the housing space. There has been a housing needs assessment. We have already had a number of conversations about housing with groups like this and with the steering committee. Our first phase of work is about gathering all of that existing work, as well as talking to a lot of people to understand where the community priorities are. Our hope is to start to identify some specific tools and strategies that can be implemented in the near term and in the longer term to address the housing needs in Charlottesville. The provided diagram is fairly linear. The process that we are actually undertaking is very iterative. We have already had some conversations. We are starting to put together our own summary of what the housing needs might be based on the housing needs assessment that was done previously as well as some other work we are

doing. The real themes that have started to emerge are around production (more housing) and affordable housing in particular. Preservation is the existing housing stock that we have and making sure that it remains viable. The existing affordable housing remains affordable. Homeowners are able to stay in their homes. We have heard that is a challenge. Production, preservation, and access have been the main themes. It's not just about how much housing. It's about who is in that housing, what is their tenure, what kind of services and amenities do they have in their neighborhood, do they have access to transportation, and do they have access to jobs. Those have been the dimensions that we have been circling around. What we were hoping to talk about today is whether those are the right dimensions. That's really meant as a preliminary starting point. What are the real barriers that relate to each of those themes? What are the potential partnerships? What does the partnership with the county look like that can develop a broad based approach to housing? What does the partnership with the university look like that can develop a broad based approach to housing?

Mr. Santoski – Affordability is one of those things that is not well defined. Are we talking about very low income? Are we talking about low income? Are we talking about civil servants? When we talk about affordability, what are we talking about? Working with people with disabilities, if they have to pay for rent on SSI, there is very little housing available to them. Public housing is about it. If you're talking about a teacher, who works here and wants to live here, you're talking about a different type of housing. I struggled with that the whole time. What is affordable housing? When we would look at the trends that is what we were trying to figure out. How do we make the city affordable for everybody? People were concerned about existing housing being bought up and mansions being built.

Commissioner Dowell – There is also the stability. You have people, who have worked all of their lives, have gotten mortgages from the banks that they have been approved for based on their income. Twenty years later, you have these new developments, and they are being taxed out of their properties. It feels like the city is doing nothing. Affordability is definitely the hot topic but so is stability. If we don't stabilize the people, who are currently homeowners or landlords who do provide affordable rents, because they can. What do you do with those people who are in the very low income and can't afford to pay at 80% AMI?

Mr. Santoski – We saw people, who may have lived in their homes their whole lives. They are being approached by a developer to sell their property. They are thinking that here is my payday. "I have worked my whole life and I will get five times what my property is worth if I sell to a developer. I could sell it somebody, who wants to keep it as a single family home. I am not going to make as much money." I think that many of us would be hard pressed to make that choice, especially if there is family that no longer lives in the area.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – One of the concerns that we have heard along those lines is that you have these predatory buyers coming in, who will give a low ball estimate. The idea of selling out seems like a good thing. That's building generational wealth and cashing out. Half of it is left on the table because you didn't get the value of the property

Ms. Keller – If you are not moving out of town and if you want to remain in this community, what have you really gained? The threshold for re-entering the market is so high.

Chairman Mitchell – What do people think about public transportation nodes as it relates to our housing strategy? Should that be a dimension?

Commissioner Dowell – Yes, especially if we are talking about our lower income citizens. If you start thinking about people, who are at a lower income or even disabled, they can't afford a car. If they can get a car, if it breaks down, who is fixing it? If we don't have public transportation in place, then what?

Ms. Koch – That falls into the area of access.

Commissioner Green – What we heard a lot of was housing near jobs, housing near schools, and children being able to walk to school. That way we are not talking about transportation.

Mr. Santoski – Charlottesville can tend to be a transient community with the university and people moving in and out. Many of the communities, especially those close to the university, were concerned about landlords, who didn't maintain their properties. They would rent to students. Did they contribute to the fabric of the neighborhood? A concern about having more rental properties in the neighborhood wasn't necessarily a bad thing. The landlords didn't maintain their properties. There were some times resistance against having additional zoning, which would allow you to put more housing. That was something I remember hearing at times, especially for the Venable neighborhood and 10th and Page.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – If you listen to people with that sentiment, you need to keep in mind, that a lot of people in the city do have these anti-student biases. It's important to take a look at what the university is doing. To some extent, we can't totally predict what housing demand is going to be in the city. We do know how big UVA is. We know it grew by 2,000 undergrads over the last ten years. We didn't put up much housing stock, except on West Main. The university has said that they are going to have 5,700 new students and employees in the next ten years. Those people have to go somewhere. A lot of people don't want them to keep spreading out.

Ms. Kirk – Can the university be a good partner in figuring out how to accommodate the growth?

Commissioner Stolzenberg – They can be more transparent about their plans. That 5,700 number came from some random meeting Chairman Mitchell attended.

Commissioner Green – I think the university is a barrier. There is not a lot of transparency.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – A lot of people talk about the university building more on grounds housing as the solution. In terms of what that looks like in practice, the big example is Branden Avenue, where we handed over city property to them. This land was city property and it would have been on the tax rolls. Theoretically, it would have been the same high density housing and we get a bunch of tax revenue from it that we can use for affordable housing. We let the university do it. They are building upper classmen housing, and it's not on the tax rolls. They don't have to listen to our zoning.

Commissioner Green – We just gave them the road.

Commissioner Dowell – I do feel that the four dimensions hit the nail on the head with what we heard from the public. Quantity is definitely an issue. If people don't have somewhere to go, where are they going to go? With affordability, whether it's at 30% AMI or even at 80% AMI, you still need somewhere to live that is based on your income. With stability, we don't want to displace people, who have been here forever. With access, if we are talking about being a walkable city, then access has to be tied into everything that we do.

Mr. Keesecker – In terms of a barrier to access and production, one of the things that came up and continues to come up, is the need for onsite parking as it relates to the way that the parcels are in the city now, and how buildable they are, and the requirement to get any kind of density with the parking onsite, makes it impossible to do. If there was a critical mass that could loosen those parking requirements so that density can be achieved without having to overburden the properties with parking need, it would help with that production. It gets to access and it gets to being able to move around the city in an efficient way without a car.

Commissioner Dowell – The other thing with the parking is that you have to be respectful to the neighborhoods that are surrounding that parcel that you are reducing that parking for. If we are going to reduce parking for a parcel, then cause an issue for the surrounding neighborhood, are we really solving the problem? We are just putting a band aid on one, and having another sore somewhere else. We have to find that thin line and balance between the two. We could loosen up those parking regulations, but we also have to be very mindful where we loosen it somewhere, it going to put a cramp somewhere else.

Commissioner Green – Another barrier we have to some development is our infrastructure. Some of our roads are not up to standard. We don't have sidewalks. We don't have the things in place that we need for access to

some of these parcels that could be developed at a high density. When we talk about the comprehensive plan, we really do need to look comprehensively at our infrastructure as well.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – One conversation we had when we were making that map, if you are going to increase density, you can do it broad based. There are parts of the city that are particularly high with infrastructure. In the downtown mall, there are thousands of places where you can walk. There are places that don't have sidewalks. Do you focus it or spread it out? How do you take advantage of those places that do have those resources?

Ms. Koch – We did provide a document, which provides an overview of the first several months through May of what we are thinking of as a strategy for community engagement. On the back of that are some thoughts of how we talk about this process if we are talking to the community.

LaToya Thomas, Brick & Story – I have heard a lot of the feedback from the beginning of the meeting about what has been previously done. Please know that our team has heard you. We have reviewed a lot of the prior plans. I was very impressed with the engagement strategies from the Cherry Avenue Study. The past work that has been done has been recognized. I am going to walk you through what the next 3 to 4 months will look like. Then ask one or two key questions. This schedule takes us through May of this year. We really want to use these next several weeks to build a really good foundation for how we are bringing people into this process. One of the key things about this process is that we want to make this as inclusive as we possibly can. That means tapping into every single aspect of Charlottesville's community. Not everyone is active in the public process. Sometimes that is by choice and sometimes that is by the nature of the public process. Many people do not feel that the process is for them. When we can be open and honest about that is the moment we can have a very different conversation on the ground with residents, who should be a part of this process, who have historically not been. A big part of our first step is this trust building we have been talking about. A lot of that has started with us having conversations with people in the community, really to find out, not just feedback, but what's happened in the past, and to get connected to other people. We are working under the premise of working through existing networks and building this network. It's not just the four of us that are out here talking to people. At the end of the day, we are trying to create that big Charlottesville family phone tree conversation network about this process, so that everyone knows what is happening. We are taking this period of time to really have those conversations to get to know people, to find out who we need to talk to, to understand the different populations that are in this community. That includes brown and black people, people who are low wealth, people who are non-English speakers, and a variety of people. We want to make sure that we are tapping into every facet of this community. We are spending some time crafting an invitation to this process. It's what we believe will set the foundation for how the next 18 months goes in the community. It's inviting people into this process, so that they understand 1) what we are asking to participate in 2) what we expect from them 3) what they can expect from us. There was earlier conversation about seeing actions happening. We want to make sure people know that this isn't something that is going to be written and then shelved. Moving into March and April, we are going to be starting our community conversation series. We're going to open that process up with an open house launch that we are starting to figure out what the design of that will look like. That will be the gateway to a series of neighborhood based conversations that will happen over the next several weeks. Some of those will be in public settings. That's the first step in this process to invite people into this process and help them understand what this process is going to be about and what they can expect from it. Starting those smaller conversations to get information and for them to ask questions be educated in this process.

Commissioner Dowell – What are your ideas and strategic plan to do things differently than we have already done? As a planning commission, we have done these things. We went to the housing development. We attempted to do a lot of community engagement. That's how we discovered the demographics that were missing from the engagement. I would like to know what is your twist to get these missing demographics, especially the young people and the brown and black people?

Ms. Thomas – There is a mix of tools that we want to try after we start these first rounds of conversations. Part of these earlier conversations is also to understand how particular groups might feel most comfortable engaging. We can't make assumptions that one type of meeting is going to work for all people. Young people are probably not going to come out for a public session. There might be another way to engage them. Some of the social media platforms that are out there can be an amazing opportunity as we are beginning to talk about this process. As we talk about the branding of this process, getting younger people involved in a tool that they spend about 50% of their lives on and looping them in that way. It's something different that might just loop them in a different manner. With some of the door to door conversations, we have heard the challenges of engaging with public housing residents. I do understand a lot of those challenges. A lot of that is very, very repeat ground based work. It is going back out repeatedly. It's going back out and maybe having a conversation in someone's living room. The dialogues that we are going to have with people might take different forms. They might look different. At the end of the day, we want to make sure that we are giving everyone the space to participate in the process in a way that they are comfortable participating.

Mr. Santoski – Do you have any kind of number that you are looking for in terms of saying we think the number of people we are looking to participate in this process is X?

Ms. Thomas – I can't say that we have defined a number right now. I am always overly ambitious. I always want to have as many people as possible, particularly as many unique users. If you are interested in knowing what the number looks like, we can certainly come back to it.

Mr. Santoski – We had done many of those same kind of things. I think we had some online things. I don't think we ever tried to say we need so much from this demographic. I don't know if you are going to define it down to that level and bring it back to the planning commission. If you are looking at that community engagement, how else can you tell that it has been successful?

Chairman Mitchell – If you can just fill in the gaps, and the gaps are the renters, African Americans, and those who are 20 to 32.

Ms. Thomas – The other aspect of this is the beauty of having 18 months. That gives us the opportunity to have "repeat performances" with people. It's not a one time "go out and have a conversation." There are going to be some populations where we are going to have to go back multiple times to have conversations. It could be about one specific element. It might take us five times just to get someone to open the door. That's the nature of this. It's less about quantity. We want to touch as many people as we possibly can. When I do a lot of engagement work, I will have a large number of unique visitors to a process over a long period of time. That number of repeat visitors might be smaller. That's not necessarily a bad thing. In the moment that you have someone, what can you get from that one person where you are letting them know that they are a part of that process, they are understanding that they are a part of that process, and they understand that they have a moment to contribute something that can be incorporated into that process?

Commissioner Dowell – One of the comments that we heard from those missing demographics is that they are tired of people knocking on their doors. That is what people from public housing say. They are tired of people knocking on their doors and asking them the same questions and not getting any results. I am giving you that tidbit to have a strategic plan.

Ms. Thomas – That's the other part of this. We don't want to make it that people are feeling like they are being surveyed to death. That's another part of the intentionality of our design is trying to work with those communities to make sure we are inviting them in an intentional manner to the process, while also being able to understand what they have to share that we can incorporate into that process.

Ms. Koch – There are questions on the back of the agenda for engagement. I would encourage you to reach out to Ms. Thomas with your thoughts on that.

3. Stribling Avenue Site Review

Charlie Armstrong, Southern Development Group – You saw this site before in a different iteration we brought to you for feedback. We actually had made a rezoning application on this site to rezone it from R-1S to R-2. It's a little over eleven acres at the end of Stribling Avenue. The comprehensive plan calls for as many as 15 units per acre on this site, which would equal as much as 170 units. This is a study we did of what the by right zoning R-1S says what can and should be on the site if it is developed. It calls for some R-2 up in the front and zoned R-1S in the rear two thirds of the site. It comes out to a total of 46 homes and it is a very suburban layout. That's what zoning calls for. Previous plan for rezoning is what we brought to you before, when we were contemplating a rezoning to R-2. It looks pretty much the same in layout and concept as the by right zone. It's just a few more units because it's now all duplex units instead of some single family attached and some single family detached. This would be 68 duplex units. This is what we talked about before. None of us were particularly inspired by this. Everyone on the planning commission indicated that they wanted to see something less suburban, more interesting, and denser. There is no getting around the fact that the new design is denser. It is contemplating smaller homes, a mix of duplex, triplex, quadplex, and some small multi-family buildings.

Kevin Riddle – He came to us and wanted us to explore the possibility of something a little less suburban. Something that would be a little more urban, finer grain with more streets and alleyways penetrating and reaching the dwellings. We thought as a part of that exercise, it would be a good idea to explore what are the winning qualities already there on the property and try to leave those intact as much as possible, while concentrating a lot of housing, which the city needs, within the heart of the property. We also sought to create a mingling of public space within the neighborhood, mostly in the form of these cascading greens that would terrace down the property in between the townhomes. In the orange on the map, we have apartments that are laid out somewhat distinct from the townhomes, but allowing for even greater density on the site and even more housing for the city. That was our approach to provide an alternative to some of the development we already see in the adjacent Morgan Court neighborhood.

Mr. Armstrong – A quick note about pedestrian orientation and vehicle service. There is on street parking envisioned on the main roads and all of the other parking would be under buildings. The houses are envisioned to front on those green spaces between them. The alleys are going to be service oriented and not the front and the primary access to a house for visitors. We have had two meetings with the Frys Spring Neighborhood Association that were well attended by different groups each time. The feedback was pretty consistent from the neighborhood. Housing is good. We need affordability and more homes generally in the city was a common and universal theme. Traffic is bad. That was another universal theme from the neighbors. Stribling Avenue badly needs pedestrian improvements and has for decades. That is what we have heard so far. I can't say that I disagree with anything that the neighborhood said. With this plan, we would need to come up with some proffers to mitigate some of that impact. Affordable housing would be a major focus with at least 15% affordable. A proffer of some kind to help actually make the pedestrian improvements on Stribling happen that have been talked about for a while. There are a number of things that stand in the way of that. One of those things is funding. We can help move those things along. I think that's a pretty critical theme for the success of this project and to satisfy the neighborhood need. It's been there for a long time. We are here to hear your feedback. We don't have an application in for this. We have had a goal of a robust listening process before even making an application that decides what way to go with this. Whether it is to be a by right development or if it wants to be something different. This is the second iteration of that. Does it want to be something different process? By right can be thought of as the small option, R-2 as the medium option, and this can be thought of as the large option. We have pretty much eliminated the medium option from contention. We are down to thinking of it as small or large in these plans.

Commissioner Green – It's the direction we talked about. We talked about the location on the county line, the accessibility to jobs. I appreciate you going back and taking a look at this. I like the green space. This is exactly

what we were talking about and what we have been thinking about in this area. It provides housing for the university. I am still concerned about Stribling Avenue traffic and sidewalks.

Commissioner Lahendro – I think that it's well conceived. I like the green space as part of the design. The clustering of the apartments on the outside next to the mature hardwoods, the perimeter, and the trail. I think they are a well-conceived design and it is providing what we have been asking for in the comprehensive plan process.

Commissioner Dowell – I am definitely glad to see that we have dedicated affordable housing. I do want us to be cautious about the definition of affordable or the phrase affordable housing.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I think this is a lot better than the last plan. I think it's a no brainer in my mind to get more affordable housing and more community benefits, while you build more housing. I did have a couple more specific comments or questions. It seems that there is a lot of parking here. It seems like a lot of parking, especially that close to UVA. I don't know that reducing parking would necessarily add more housing, given that you are at the 15 DUA called for by the comprehensive plan. It seems like you are going to have a lot of empty parking spaces sitting there unused. Even though you say that they are townhomes, two of these appear to be single family detached dwellings. Given their location, these two might be a good opportunity to make them a small triplex. I think that it's a good plan. I really like the connection to Morgan Court and creating a connected street layout. I think the trail is good. I would like to hear more from staff about getting that Stribling Avenue sidewalk implemented. It makes a lot of sense for the sidewalk to be built.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – I am very excited to see this. It makes a lot of sense. This is an area where you do not need a car. You can walk to UVA, jobs, and services. It's exciting to see a possibility for housing here. The problem is that people are going to be suspicious of a car free lifestyle if there are no sidewalks or trails. I am excited to see that there are some thoughts about sidewalks in here. I am happy to see the housing. The housing and green space makes sense. I am happy to see buildings around green space.

Chairman Mitchell – I would be very interested in what you are going to do to protect the creek. Unfortunately, there is no money in the CIP that we recommended for sidewalks. Whatever you decide to do, we have a problem there with the sidewalks. We have to work with Council and the people that know best how to help improve the infrastructure. This is a nightmare without the proper infrastructure.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Is it possible to break down that Stribling sidewalk into smaller segments? You have the Morgan Court connection. There is a sidewalk along Morgan and up Huntley. It's plausible that people in your development could walk up that way, hit Stribling near Sunset. If we could get part of the sidewalk project done and if that does significantly reduce the cost and makes it feasible for the city that would get us more than halfway there towards remediating the whole sidewalk situation on Stribling.

Mr. Armstrong – We see that as a possibly, if not vehicular access, it's pedestrian or emergency point type of access.

Chairman Mitchell – What are the rules regarding emergency vehicle access?

Missy Creasy – Typically, a development with this many units, you have to have two points of access. They're going to have to find a way to establish that as part of them moving forward. They'll have to figure out a way to make that connection, which is likely to mean a purchase of property from people here to make that connection.

There was a vague discussion about trails and connectivity

Commissioner Dowell - What effort have you made to contact the owner to buy the easement to get that second contact point?

Mr. Armstrong – Have not contacted. There would be a lot of problems to solve to create that access.

Alex Ikefuna – How do you plan to allocate the 15% affordable housing in the property? Will it be concentrated in one building or dispersed?

Mr. Armstrong – We will try to disperse it whenever possible

Commissioner Green – Sales, rentals, all of the above? How easy will it be to rent without parking?

Mr. Armstrong - All of the above. It would be difficult to rent/sell without parking. There is room for parking under the building.

Mayor Walker – How many bedrooms are in the townhomes?

Mr. Armstrong - 2-3? Could maybe put 4th in garage space underneath if possible.

Commissioner Green - Have you looked at the concentration of jobs in close radius?

Mr. Armstrong – No, but there are plenty of jobs in close radius and more coming to Fontaine.

Commissioner Dowell - Access is a really big issue, but need to have somewhere affordable to have access to. Would prefer having the affordable units (not 80% AMI) near sidewalks. Would prefer to have affordable units near trail. Do not sacrifice safety.

4. Public Comment

Margo Buchara, Huntley Ave – has dog, walks a lot, walks through this property, along creek. Stribling is a death trap and it is a miracle that something hasn't happened there. It is just awful. Is there a requirement that there are sidewalks prior to this project going through regardless of who is pays for it?

Paul Josey – 80% of the properties on Stribling Avenue are rental properties and low income. Stribling is a prime area of affordable housing. I see runners, residents walking along street and it is a highly pedestrian street, very friendly. When Huntley came in, contractors didn't care about speed. Blind curves, blind hills, are truly unsafe for kids and walkers. Street is not safe, not for all residents. There is concern with taking a street and doubling the units. Doubling the amount of units on Stribling could compromise the low and middle income units families living there. Compliments Southern Development for coming to community. There is a need for wide sidewalks, speed humps. It's unsafe. Moved off street last year because terrified for safety of kids in his front yard.

Margo Buchara – unsafe intersection, blinking lights like on OLR would be needed. Maybe even traffic light.

Julie Ponfacer – supportive of urban development, affordable housing, but wanted to point out problems. Daughter walks Stribling to get to high school. Dark, dangerous, jumping into people's yards, if two cars trying to pass – forget it for pedestrians. It's unsafe, a mess. Concern about impact to Moores' Creek. Lives on unnamed tributary to Moores' Creek, sees degradation. Want to make sure not having negative impact to creek. Cut through to Morgan Ct will utterly change existing Huntly neighborhood without permission from Huntley residents. Will change face of neighborhood to a through street rather than an in and out neighborhood. Highly dense, highly pedestrian neighborhood with lots of people outside. Cars would be changing the entire nature of Huntley Neighborhood. Maybe have second access off Stribling. Responsibility not to degrade an entire other neighborhood.

Cynthia Gibson – if make through street at Morgan Ct will have major intersection at its intersection with Huntley. Have visibility problems there already at sidewalks. Concerned that if people are using it as a cut through, people won't respect the neighborhood for speed or safety. People who bought on Morgan Ct won't appreciate it being turned into a through street. Huntley doesn't support it. Had to make parking on one side of

the street to allow emergency vehicle access to the houses but don't have any enforcement of parking. Already stressed by having a limited amount of parking on one side of the street.

Greg Schmit – affirm desperate need for affordable housing, need for density. Pedestrian, cyclist, driver. Affirm need for Stribling improvements. Curious about where vehicles will go if Morgan Ct connection is made. Will people go to Sunset. Also not safe for pedestrians or vehicles. Curvy, blind hills.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM