

Minutes
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR DOCKET
Wednesday, November 9, 2016 – 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Commission Work Session (Agenda discussion(s))

Beginning: 4:30 p.m.

Location: City Hall, 2nd Floor, NDS Conference

Members Present: Chairman Kurt Keesecker, Vice-Chair; Lisa Green, Commissioners Genevieve Keller, Jody Lahendro, John Santoski, Tanea Dowell and Corey Clayborne; UVA representative: Brian Hogg

Chairperson Keesecker called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Creasy to outline our procedures for this evening. There was a brief discussion on the time allowed for public hearing speakers. No changes from current procedure will take place at this meeting.

Commissioner Keller noted that she would like to initiate a review of the Planning Commission Bylaws. It was noted that she can do this during commissioner reports and review can occur in a work session setting. She also noted that the Commission may want to review the operating guidelines that past commissioners have signed off on.

It was communicated that joint meetings with City Council and the County Planning Commission should be included in scheduling. Ms. Creasy noted that she is currently working with the County Commission for a date for the next joint session.

II. Commission Regular Meeting

Beginning: 5:30 p.m.

Location: City Hall, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers

Members Present: Chairman Kurt Keesecker Vice-Chair; Lisa Green, Commissioners Genevieve Keller, Jody Lahendro, John Santoski, Tanea Dowell and Corey Clayborne; UVA representative: Brian Hogg

City Council Members: Councilors Bob Fenwick, Kathy Galvin, Kristin Szakos, and Mayor Mike Signor, Wes Bellamy, Vice Mayor

Staff: Missy Creasy, Heather Newmyer, Matt Alfele, Carrie Rainey, Mary Joy Scala, Brian Haluska, Carolyn McCray

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Keesecker at 5:30

MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE FORMAL AGENDA FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Marilyn Philippi, of Barboursville, VA, said she believes that by voting to allow biking at Ragged Mountain, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board failed to take into account the great imbalance between recreational activities available for families and young adults and those for older adults aged 50-plus.

Kaye Slaughter, Former Charlottesville Mayor, pointed out that the land may be owned by the city but is entirely within Albemarle County. Joint city-county planning, which has not occurred in this case, should have been triggered. Ms. Slaughter said cycling trails should instead be built at the adjacent Hedgerow property, which was donated to Albemarle last year for future use as a park. She said Ragged Mountain is one of the only parks or natural areas dedicated to passive recreation and there are other places for cyclists to go. Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain are places for solitude and quiet and for the experience of nature.

Gene Phillippi said he prefers to keep Ragged Mountain as the pristine natural area it is today but he also appreciates the importance of biking and supports additional biking trails. Biking transforms the experience significantly.

Sam Freelick said he referred to a map behind the commission and stated it could be mis-leading, saying those trails are permit cycling and he said clarifying that now; there is no biking permitted in the area at this time. He said look at the sign in the lower parking area that was put up by Parks and Recreation and it simply says no bicycles, take pictures, and leave only footprints and he hopes that's the way it continues.

David White said he appreciates the time and energies put into this and has worked with volunteers and appreciates the resources. He strongly urges you to make your recommendations to Council to maintain the Ragged Mountain natural area. 60-70 trails of mountain trails in the county do have bicycles allowed. The Hedgerow property is 300 acres, adjacent to Ragged Mountain and may be appropriate for biking.

Dan Beeker North Garden, VA, stated he would like to preserve Ragged Mountain. Bikes create another level of disturbance, and prohibit closeness to wilderness. Do we value wild habitat or want to sacrifice it to active use.

Lee Politis said I'm not advocating that cyclists and dog lovers should not enjoy Ragged Mountain, but I'm just asking that they leave their bikes and their dogs at home when they visit.

Dede Smith said some of us in this room were there when this was designated as a natural area and it was a cooperative arrangement between the County and the City to say we will have another quiet place. She said she doesn't think we will get another natural area because it wasn't easy. It has been protected for so long that we were adding another layer of protection to it at that time. It is really important that in all of our parks (50), biking is allowed in all but two natural areas but there are at least 10 public places where there are dedicated mountain biking trails. The balance illustrates the disruption to our options. This land was bought in 1885 and at that time the human activity was for a water supply and you have to protect it. The same thing happened in Sugar Hollow in 1925 and it was the last time that we actually created a Reservoir with watershed protection and ever since then there's been protection. Let's protect this last clean water source that we have.

Lyn Willowick Albemarle County, said he is tailgating on what Dede Smith had to say. He said what this comes down to is adding 6 more miles of biking trails in the area. We have all said how pristine all of this is for 6 more miles of biking trails. The Hedgerow property is owned by the county and the former owners opened it to bikers and dogs. Keep Ragged Mountain the way it is.

Bill Shinker 420 Brickwood Drive, Albemarle County, and President of the Board of Directors of the Edmond Forest Homeowners Association said there are 133 homeowners many of whom are cyclist as he is and would like to have trails nearby. He said we took a position to unanimously support the current usage of Ragged Mountain which is for hiking and fishing. He strongly urges you in your comments to City Council to delay changing the current usage of Ragged Mountain Natural area until such time as the City and County staffs can engage in a coordinated plan for the use of Ragged Mountain Natural area and the adjoining Hedgerow property. Once you allow bikes in Ragged Mountain Natural area, it will be difficult to take them away.

Chris Gist said Ragged Mountain's close proximity to the urban area would help encourage the number of people who ride. He said if we're really concerned about environmental issues in Charlottesville, what we need to do is get people out of their cars. The way we're going to get more people bicycling is to provide destinations for them from town. He said the mission of the Parks and Recreation department is to enhance the quality of life for all through the stewardship of public land.

A. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Lahendro reported he attended the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting and that meeting was focused on the vote on the Ragged Mountain Natural area. Also at that meeting it was reported that the City received an \$82,000 grant from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to plan for a land division next to Jordan Park and to convert it to a public park. The City has also received a \$100,000 grant from Bama Works for the proposed skate park. The city's Urban Forester position has been filled and he will begin work on Nov. 7th. The Planning and Coordination Council Technical Committee met on October 20th. The city provided updates on the HB2 Smart Scale Transportation Projects. It was pointed out that the Lexington High Street project has the highest priority right now even though they all have to be done in five years. The University recently reviewed master plans for Brandon Avenue and Ivy corridor. The University and the City expressed a desire to coordinate overlapping projects in the Ivy Corridor and Emmett HB2 projects. The Tree Commission met last week and he did not attend and there was no Housing Advisory Committee meeting.

Commissioner Keller reported that the TJPDC has done a lot of housekeeping items: revised the employee handbook, completed the annual audit, and they are in the process of reviewing the bylaws which is one of the things that made her think of the Planning Commission bylaws in conjunction with the mood of last night meeting which coincided with election day. She made a formal request to the Chair that we schedule a review of our bylaws because I don't think we have reviewed them since 2007 as a Commission. PLACE task force met today and she was not able to attend but understands they were deciding some guiding principles on Form Based Code that would inform the work session on November 30th.

Commissioner Green reported she has been deep into the CIP meetings. On November 2nd we had our Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting. We discussed the Smart Scale applications that went in at the end of September. The projects are in the screening and evaluation process and are waiting to be scored. She said before the election we knew how much money we were going to have but it remains to be seen as to how much money will actually be there. The Emmet and Barracks intersection pedestrian crossing makes it more pedestrian friendly. We need 29 million dollars for West Main and the City will fund 11 million and they have asked for 18 million from Smart Scale. It's time to begin the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Commissioner Santoski reported he has a MPO Tech meeting next week and will be taking over for Mr. Lahendro on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Commissioner Clayborne reported the BAR met Oct. 18th and had a productive meeting. He highlighted one project: exterior steeple lighting at the First Presbyterian Church which is just a few blocks off of the Mall. He felt it to be a unique project since it was a lighting project and it will have nice imaging.

B. UNIVERSITY REPORT –Brian Hogg no report

C. CHAIR'S REPORT – Kurt Keesecker no report

DEPARTMENT OF NDS – Missy Creasy reported that November 30th is our joint session with Council and PLACE. We will be providing information on the resolution approved by Council on September 6th to outline 4-5 projects that need to be done within a limited timeframe. We will be providing data and background posing a number of questions. There will be a number of assignments to a variety of groups.

Commissioner Green said when Albemarle County has a large public hearing, they reserve the right for public comment to lessen the time from three minutes to two minutes to accommodate the massive amount of public comment. She said how can we say and advertise that if we have a massive amount of public comment on the same topic we may move it from 3 minutes to 2 minutes in the essence of getting through all of the public comments.

Lisa Robertson asked is that decided mid-meeting.

Commissioner Green said yes, she is an advocate for people getting a chance to speak, when they get there they say in the interest of time so we can get everyone heard from three minutes to two minutes.

F. CONSENT AGENDA (Items removed from the consent agenda will be considered at the end of the regular agenda)

G. JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSION/ COUNCIL

Beginning: 6:00 p.m.

Continuing: until all public hearings are completed

Format: (i) Staff Report, (ii) Applicant, (iii) Hearing

SP16-00008 - Cedars Court Apartments - Management Services Corporation (MSC), owner's agent for the property owned by 1228 Cedars Court, LLC has submitted an application seeking approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow residential density up to 55 dwelling units per acre (DUA) at property identified on City Real Property Tax Map 40B Parcel 4.5 ("Subject Property"). The zoning classification of the Subject Property is URB (Urban Corridor). Residential units are allowed by-right, including multi-family dwellings, at a density up to 21 DUA, and up to 64 DUA is allowed by SUP. The property has frontage on Cedars Court and contains approximately 0.348 acres or 15,159 square feet. The application proposes nineteen (19) units on-site (19 DUA / 0.348 acre = 55 DUA/ 1 acre). The general usage specified in the Comprehensive Plan for the Subject Property is Mixed Use.

Ms. Newmyer provided her report.

Council called their meeting to order

Open the Public Hearing. No Speakers.

Closed the Public hearing

Commissioner Keller said she spoke with Ms. Newmyer about adding 7th condition to add some visible directional signage to the trail that is referenced in attachment F.

Commissioner Lahendro asked do you know how many existing vegetation and trees along the creek are planned to be replaced.

Ms. Newmyer said she didn't think there were any being removed but the portion that they are cutting into is one. As part of their stream restoration they are going to have to fill in quite a bit more to meet the requirements. There are other things they are going to have to do to fully be a stream restoration versus a stream mitigation plan. There is going to be more vegetation provided to meet those requirements.

Commissioner Keller move to recommend approval of this application for a Special Use Permit to authorize residential development with additional density at TM 40B P 4.5, subject to the six (6) conditions presented in the staff report:

1. A vegetated curbside buffer having a width of at least three (3) feet but can be up to four (4) feet shall be established along the length of the Subject Property's frontage on Cedars Court not including the length of the driveway entrance.
2. Streets trees shall be planted in accordance with Sec. 34-870, the final number and type of tree will be reviewed and approved by Neighborhood Development Services Staff and the Utilities Engineer and the location, type and additional measures if warranted (e.g. root barriers) shall be depicted on the final site plan for the development prior to final site plan approval.
3. A sidewalk having a width of at least five (5) feet shall be established between the curbside buffer and the property line and run the length of the Subject Property's frontage on Cedars Court.
4. A portion of the northeast corner of the building will include a primary building entrance separate from the vehicular entrance that is transparent. The building entrance shall be visible from Cedars Court, where:
 - a. a continuous separated pedestrian connection is provided from the public right of-way to the building entrance facing Cedars Court
 - b. A dedicated space that is visible from Cedars Court is provided in the interior of the northeast corner of the building for bicycle storage facilities required per Sec. 34-881
 - c. The primary building entrance, pedestrian connection and number and location of bicycle storage shall be depicted on the final site plan for the development.
5. A stream restoration plan, consistent with natural channel design principles and practices, that will concurrently fulfill requirements of Sec. 10-75 shall be completed and included with submission of the proposed final site plan, at a level of detail satisfactory to the City Engineering Department, Public Utilities Division and Environmental Division.
6. No demolition of existing building(s) or improvements shall be commenced prior to approval of a final site plan and approval of a permit authorizing land-disturbing activities pursuant to Sec. 10-9. For purposes of Chapter 10 of the City Code, demolition activities shall be planned and built into the E&S and stormwater management plan (if required), as part of the overall development plan for the subject property, and no such demolition activity shall be undertaken as a stand-alone activity.

and an additional 7th condition referencing visible trail access as shown in attachment F at with signage
Seconded **Commissioner Clayborne**, motion passes 6-0

2. SP16-00009 - 1713 JPA -Piedmont Development Group, agent for Property Owner Alpha Kappa Housing Corporation, has submitted an application seeking approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a fraternity house at 1713 Jefferson Park Avenue ("Subject Property"). The Subject Property is also identified on City Real Property Tax Map 16 as Parcel 10. The zoning district classification of the Subject Property is R-3 (Multifamily) with Entrance Corridor overlay. A fraternity house was established on the Subject Property in 1978, and has never been discontinued; however, the fraternity house is a "nonconforming use" because

current zoning regulations allow this use only with a Special Use Permit, per City Code 34-420. If an SUP is approved, the fraternity house will become a conforming use, as allowed by City Code 34- 1144(b)(1). Mr. Alfele provided his report.

Open the Public Hearing. No Speakers.
Closed the Public hearing

Commissioner Lahendro move to recommend to City Council that it should approve SP16-00009 to grant Special Use Permit to allow an expansion of an existing boarding (fraternity or sorority) house at 1713 Jefferson Park Avenue, subject to the conditions and modifications recommended within the Staff Report dated November 9, 2016 Seconded by **Commissioner Green.** motion passes 6-0

3. ZT16-00003 - (Woolen Mills Village Historic Conservation District) – Proposed amendment to the text of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Section 34-337 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville, 1990, as amended (Conservation Districts), to establish a new zoning overlay district to be named the “Woolen Mills Village Historic Conservation District.” The purpose of the proposed zoning overlay district is to promote the conservation of buildings and structures having an important historic, architectural, or cultural interest. Upon a property’s inclusion within this proposed overlay district, certain alterations and demolitions of existing structures on the property, and any proposed new construction on the property, will be subject to board of architectural review (BAR) as set forth within City Code Section 34-340.

ZM16-0000A - (Woolen Mills Village Historic Conservation District) – A proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map adopted and incorporated as part of the City’s Zoning Ordinance pursuant to Section 34-1 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville, 1990, as amended, to identify individual parcels of land for inclusion within a new overlay zoning overlay district named the “Woolen Mills Village Historic Conservation District,” referenced within the zoning text amendment ZT-16-00003.

The Woolen Mills Neighborhood Association has followed the path taken by groups in the Martha Jefferson and Venable neighborhoods to officially ask for a historic district.

Ms. Scala said the Woolen Mills Village has been central to the City of Charlottesville’s history since the opening of a milling operation there in 1829. As a company mill town, the brick and frame dwellings in a range of styles built during the mid-19th century through the early 20th century have come to define the village. She said for much of that time the village was within Albemarle County until being annexed by the city in 1963.

Properties within conservation districts are subject to consideration by the Board of Architectural Review for new construction or renovations to existing structures. That body also must give approval for any demolition of structures considered to contribute to neighborhood character. She said the intent of the historic conservation district is to identify and preserve buildings, structures and areas. Secondly, it is to protect a neighborhood’s scale and character, and third, to document and promote understanding of the neighborhood’s social history. The BAR recommended in September that the district be created.

Open the Public Hearing

Bill Emory said he was on the Planning Commission for a while and the 283 page text book that you all have this evening prepared by staff is really amazing. His favorite chapter in there is the one that was done by Ms. Scala and a whole bunch of Woolen Mills people. This represents a tremendous amount of community

engagement. There is a lot of history in there and a lot of resources for people in the future. He hopes you will find the proposed historic conservation district is in line with the purposes and intent of this ordinance. It is sited in the current Comprehensive Plan as Ms. Scala pointed out in her report. He hopes you will find it easy to recommend this to City Council.

Kaye Slaughter said she lives in the Woolen Mills neighborhood and she supports the Village Historic Conservation District overlay district to conserve our neighborhood for all of the reasons that Bill Emory mentioned. She said Bill Emory needs to be commended for single handedly educating people over the years and that has been very helpful. She hopes you will move forward with this designation.

Jean Hiatt President of Preservation Piedmont, and an architect in Charlottesville, said our group has assisted the city and neighborhoods designated for architectural design control districts in Charlottesville and the two existing conservation districts. We enthusiastically support this designation. We feel this will help the character; it is a very historic neighborhood and it also will work toward a very important goal in achieving neighborhood stability.

Mr. John Frazee, the president of the Woolen Mills Neighborhood Association, said only three property owners in the area opposed creation of the district. The owners have the additional zoning protection and design guideline benefits from the conservation overlay with very minimal restriction of their use of private property. This respects the history and integrity of the neighborhood while at the same time not necessarily becoming an onerous restriction for property owners. He said the overlay district will offer a starting point for any conversation about a small area plan that the neighborhood would like to conduct to guide its land use future. With so much to remember and so much to look forward to, the conservation overlay district will help preserve the Woolen Mills and help position it for the kind of growth and the kind of future that will benefit all residents of the city who use the natural resources and appreciate the history.

Closed the Public hearing

Commissioner Keller said ever since I've been on the Planning Commission, the Woolen Mills has been coming to us to try to get a higher level of protection and interest in their neighborhood and I think this is long overdue.

Commissioner Keesecker said the purpose of the proposed zoning overlay district is to promote the conservation of buildings and structures having an important historic, architectural, or cultural interest. A total of 86 parcels will be in the district if City Council goes with the Planning Commission's recommendation.

Commissioner Keller said the district would allow property owners to apply for federal tax credits for historic preservation. Sometimes, people say that designating an area may make it less affordable but there are national and state statistics that show that sometimes the reverse can be true.

Motion by **Commissioner Lahendro**, to recommend that City Council approve this petition including ZT16-00003 and ZM16-0000A to rezone the properties included on the attached list of parcels and as shown on the attached map, by adding an Historic Conservation Overlay District designation as requested on the basis that the rezoning would serve the interest of public necessity, convenience, general welfare or good zoning practice and would meet the historic criteria section 34-336C further I recommend and that the contributing properties are the same as described in the attached map, seconded **Commissioner Green** to approved Woolen Mills as historic district, motion passes 6-0.

4. ZT16-00004 – West Main Street Density – A proposed amendment to the text of the City's Zoning

Ordinance, Sections 34-621 and 34-641 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville (1990), as amended. West Main Street Corridor Districts – these proposed text amendments to Sections 34-621 and 34-641 of the City Code would modify the residential density of development allowed by right in the West Main East (WME) Corridor and West Main West Corridor (WMW). Currently WME and WMW allow residential density of up to 43 DUA by right, and permit up to 200 DUA with a special use permit. The proposed amendments would allow up to 64 DUA by right, and up to 180 DUA by special use permit in the WMW, and would allow 120 DUA by special use in the WME Corridor, but no additional density by right. The general usage specified by the Comprehensive Plan for WME and WMW is Mixed Use. The West Main Street Corridor is within the City’s Urban Development Area (UDA), and the City’s Comprehensive Plan contemplates a minimum density of four (4) DUA within the UDA.

Open the Public Hearing

Jean Hiatt, President of Preservation Piedmont, and an architect in Charlottesville, She is not sure what changes have been made but basically but she is asking that the density be kept at a minimum, as low as we can keep and definitely not 200 DUA.

Closed the Public Hearing

Commissioner Keller said she expressed her appreciation to Councilor Galvin and Lisa Robertson, Deputy City Attorney for taking additional looks at this proposed amendment after it was before us last time. She said we all looked at it and knew it wasn’t quite right and by Councilor Galvin looking at the map; this is much more achievable. With the kinds of parcels we have on West Main Street this will help illuminate some of the problems we have had in the past.

Councilor Galvin said more development would be a good thing for the city's economy. She analyzed the economic impact of seven major properties along West Main Street and found that they only generated \$380,000 before development compared to \$3.3 million after development.

She said this is a way to get revenue without raising taxes and we were doing so well that it gave us the flexibility to step back and say maybe we can ratchet this down so we can preserve areas that we want to preserve.

People had a chance to voice their opinions during Wednesday night’s joint Charlottesville City Council and Charlottesville Planning Commission meeting. Councilors and city planners caution that development must be balanced and maintain the character of the city.

Motion made by **Commissioner Santoski**, to recommend to City Council to amend section 34-621 and 34-641 of the zoning ordinance to revised the maximum residential density regulations in the West Main Street corridors as presented in the text amendment advertised in the November 9th 2016 hearing because I find this amendment is required by the public necessity, convenience, general welfare or good zoning practice, seconded by **Commissioner Clayborne**, motion passes 6-0.

5. ZT16-00005 – Water Street Corridor – A proposed amendment to the text of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Section 34-743 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville (1990), as amended. Water Street District Corridor – this proposed text amendment would require a 25-foot setback for all building facades fronting on Ridge Street and would require a minimum stepback of 15 feet after a maximum 45 of streetwall height along all lot lines adjacent to the South Street District.

Open the Public Hearing

Kaye Slaughter said she lives in the Woolen Mills and noted when you were having the earlier meeting about West Main Street, her concerns are about that site and how it does look. There is a wonderful row of trees, green space, and this is low income housing now, but it is a beautiful place for people to live. She said thinking about it being more developed, maybe they will be doing that, but there ought to be other ways to do it to preserve the amenities that this excellent low income affordable housing project has and people who live there are able to enjoy nature right outside their door with some buffering from all that goes on along Ridge Street with the emergency vehicles. She said she hopes you will consider that and she appreciates the efforts that the Planning Commission has made to look at these issues.

Jean Hiatt, President of Preservation Piedmont, and an architect in Charlottesville, said it is 100 Ridge Street and it does effect the historic district which is a locally architecturally controlled district and she believes there is a 25 foot setback on Ridge Street, so she thinks that is appropriate. Also, remember the Planning Commission was gracious enough to move the Midway Manor property into a different district after they had requested that and many people wished that they hadn't though it is at a point where it is very high and so any building that is on it, a taller building would be quite massive and over-powering if it is built to its maximum. It is really nicely hidden away by a buffer of trees and there is a parking lot between the building and the streetscape. There are 7 historic homes on Water Street and she has spoken with four of the owners and they would all appreciate not having a new building there overpowering an important historic area of the city and so it should as much as possible have a nice setback in the area adjacent to South Street. She said 45 feet is pretty high and is pretty much a huge cliff and she would hope there would be a setback before 45 feet, but there should be a setback and she thinks they agree with that. Consider what it is going to feel like for the people that live in those buildings and what it looks like for the rest of the downtown neighborhood.

Closed the Public Hearing

Council closed their meeting.

Motion by **Commissioner Lahendro** to recommend to Council that it should amend section 34-743 of the zoning ordinance to provide the setback and setback regulations in the Waters Street corridor as presented in the draft ordinance provided by staff because I find that this amendment is required by the public necessity, convenience, general welfare or good zoning practice particularly the setback on Ridge Street to be 25 foot and Stepback on Waters Street to be 15 feet at 45 foot height, Seconded by **Commissioner Keller** ,(**Commissioner Santoski** voted no), motion passes 5-1.

Presentation – Ragged Mountain - Planning Commission could comment on a plan to allow cycling and running at the Ragged Mountain Natural Area.

Brian Daily, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said a consensus is not required as part of the process, what we wanted to hear is your comments and thoughts and ideas about this project. The city recently took over management of the natural area from the Ivy Creek Foundation following the construction of a new dam at the Ragged Mountain Reservoir. After several months of study, the Charlottesville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommended, 6-2, in October that some trails in the natural area should be opened to cyclists. This recommendation was presented even though the city code does not require that the panel make a recommendation before the City Council makes a decision.

Mr. Daly said there would be no biking in the southwest corner of the property, where the most significant and sensitive plant communities have been discovered, adding that the commission's comments would be included with the advisory board's recommendation. He said the board recommended keeping dogs out.

Commissioner Lahendro is the Planning Commission representative on the Parks and Recreation Board and was one of the two votes against expanding uses at Ragged Mountain. He believes that the natural area is rare and very special as being one of only two surviving in the Charlottesville region. He defended those who want to keep Ragged Mountain for walking only. He said there is so much that is unknown by man about how ecosystems operate, to jeopardize a preserved natural area for human recreation because it 'belongs to all the people' is the worst kind of human arrogance and hubris. Our natural area belongs to all living things.

Commissioner Santoski agreed. He said the intent originally was that Ragged Mountain and Ivy Creek were to be natural areas, and while I think there could be some rationale for expanding mountain biking there, there are also a lot of other opportunities for mountain biking. Why do we want to rush into mountain biking at Ragged Mountain at this time?

Commissioner Green said opening the trails to cyclists would provide a destination for them to ride to. She said if this was an opportunity, I would use it and I would ride from my home and would not get in my car.

Commissioner Green said the Charlottesville Area Mountain Bike Club and the Charlottesville Area Trail Runners are two organizations that would exercise stewardship of the trails and surrounding land.

Commissioner Keller said the group should send a message to City Council that nature can help relieve stress and that the city should recognize that value for the community's psychological health. She said what we might differ on is how it's used and how intensely it should be used and leave no trace should be a guiding principle whether you're walking or biking or jogging. If there are too many traces, they should be closed down and allowed to rest for a while.

Commissioner Keller motioned to adjourn until the 2nd Tuesday in December.