

Minutes

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR DOCKET
February 11, 2020 – 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
NDS Conference Room

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

Beginning: 4:30 pm

Location: NDS Conference Room

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

Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Missy Creasy, Lisa Robertson, Kyle Kling, Alex Ikefuna, Brennan Duncan

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and began review of the agenda. It was noted there were three corrections needed to the December 10, 2019 minutes: change “lie tech” to “LI TCH”, in the Fontaine discussion note that students did not participate (though they were invited) and revise the motion on page 14 to provide clarity. It was noted that the minutes would move forward with those revisions. The PC operational guidelines would be removed from the consent agenda for review at the end of the meeting.

Barracks/Emmet Intersection Project

Commissioner Dowell asked for clarification on the retaining wall height and that information was provided. Chair Mitchell asked for information on the tree canopy. Brian Coleman from Timmons provided an explanation on the limit of impact to trees in relation to the retaining wall and detailed the anticipated tree loss on site. Kyle Kling noted that up to 23 trees are predicted for removal. Lisa Robertson reminded the Planning Commission of the standard of review for the item this evening including the criteria for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Dowell asked for information on the recommendation for the steering committee. It was noted but clarification was provided on what the Planning Commission would be voting on this evening.

Harris Street Application

Commissioner Dowell asked for details on the affordable housing commitment for this project. Mr. Haluska noted that we do not have that information yet and explained the scheduling provided per the code requirements. It was noted that this would be a good question to ask the applicant. There were concerns raised for affordable housing and a review of the SUP process was provided. Commissioner Lahendro asked if the materials provided were based on the STW, site plan and setback requirements. Mr. Haluska noted that the application shows the correct setbacks and he outlined the requirements provided for the Industrial Corridor. Commissioner Stolzenberg asked about the City sidewalk project for Harris Street. It was noted that this project is coordinating with that effort.

II. COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING – Meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM

A. COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioner Heaton – No Report

Commissioner Green – There was a TJPDC meeting last Thursday. I was unable to attend due to an illness. I do hope to be back with a lot of new members at the beginning of March.

Commissioner Dowell – On Tuesday at 4:00 PM, the CDBG Task Force will be reviewing grant applications and be preparing a proposal for City Council.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – We had an MPO Tech meeting, where we approved re-allocation of funds for CAT for automated passenger counters. That will help get more accurate information on boardings onto the bus, particularly on the trolley, where there have been some issues with data accuracy in the past. People have been missed, which reduces the total funding. We also discussed our targets for injuries and fatalities in the area. Our target is now 15 non-motorists serious injuries and fatalities. We are calling it Vision 15. We set targets for what the goal is. We obviously would love it to be zero. That's something that is not practical. We set metrics so that we can measure ourselves against it. If we get less than 15, we will consider it a success. It has been an upward trend in recent years.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – On January 30th, the Housing Advisory Committee policy sub-committee met to discuss the kick off of the housing strategy with the consultant team with some new information. They had some new statistical information. Looking at African American homes in the area, there was a 26% shift adjusted for inflation for African American households, including a 17% income loss and a 9% rent cost growth. It was the worst of any group that they looked at. It was really startling.

Commissioner Lahendro – I attended a Tree Commission meeting on February 4th. Our new chair, Brian Menard, chaired the meeting. The new vice-chair Peggy Van Yahres, was there as well. Both of those are new officers. Brian reviewed the commission structure and goals for the coming year. We are going to have 3 sub-committees: education and advocacy, arbor (tree planting projects), and codes and practices (coordination with city planning). Arbor Day is on April 24th. We discussed the upcoming canopy study by the consultant and the evaluation criteria. This is done every five years. It will be done this upcoming August and early fall. The tree planting committee has started to reach out to those in the low canopy neighborhoods for targeting next fall's tree planting project. The Board of Architectural Review met on January 22nd. We had three certificate of appropriateness applications. Two were approved and one was deferred. We had a preliminary discussion over the conceptual design for 612 West Main Street. Our comments were to break down the monumentality of what we saw and diversify the façade to mimic the existing building pattern and to open up the streetscape floor to activate the pedestrian and street more.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Commissioner Lahendro - I and Commissioner Solla-Yates are representing the Planning Commission on the steering committee for the new comprehensive plan. We attended the first steering committee meeting with the consultants hired to finish the comprehensive plan. It was a

night of being introduced to the three consultants that are doing the project and understanding their roles and expectations. The different members of the steering committee spoke about their expectations. We were asked why the comprehensive plan stopped. I couldn't tell them. No one from City Council was there for this part of the meeting. There is no one from City Council on the steering committee. I have not seen anything from City Council concerning why it was stopped.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – The steering committee will be meeting every two to three months. We will have notice. We can bring questions and issues.

Commissioner Lahendro – I did ask if it would be OK to invite past planning commissioners, who were a part of the planning commission, to be there as well. That has been approved. All of the material that we generated, has been shared with the consultants. Staff did a wonderful job compiling that information for them.

Commissioner Green – Would you like some information on why it stopped? There was a lot of concern that the housing strategy had not been done in December 2018. There was a new long range planner that had been funded by Council at that point. They were supposed to come on board. The land use plan, the comprehensive plan, and the housing strategy would go in parallel timing. We got a new city manager, and he stopped that long range plan. We went in for an RFP for a consultant.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – A quick update from the last PLACE meeting. The long range planner is back. That job listing is open. I believe that they are still accepting applications.

B. UNIVERSITY REPORT

Commissioner Palmer – One project coming up is the new softball stadium at the corner of Copeley and Massie. It should be open for opening day in early March. That will be exciting for the softball program.

C. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Mitchell – There is a meeting tomorrow that I have been invited to attend by the NDS Director. I believe that this is going to be a joint meeting between the University of Virginia, Albemarle County, and the City of Charlottesville. It is going to be focused on urban and environmental planning issues.

D. DEPARTMENT OF NDS

Ms. Creasy – We have a work session on February 26th. This is an extended work session from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. We are going to start with the Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan with the next steps. We are going to meet with the consultants that are working on the three plans that are underway and finish the work session with a preliminary discussion on the latest version of the

Stribling Avenue project. They have a new proposal to share with the group. It's going to be a very packed agenda.

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

None

F. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Minutes – November 26, 2019 – Work Session
2. Minutes – December 10, 2019 – Pre-meeting and Regular meeting

Motion to approve by Commissioner Stolzenberg with three modifications to be made to the minutes. (Seconded by Commissioner Solla-Yates). Motion is passed 7-0.

The Chairman recessed the meeting until 6:00 PM for the start of the public hearings and the arrival of three city councilors.

III. JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSION AND COUNCIL

Beginning: 6:00 PM

Continuing: Until all public hearings are complete

Format: (i) Staff Report, (ii) Applicant, (iii) Hearing, (iv) Commissioner Discussion and Motion

1. **CP20-0001 -Barracks/Emmet Intersection Improvements** – Review of Project for Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to Virginia Code section 15.2-2232 and City Code sec. 34-28, the Planning Commission will review the conceptual plan for the proposed Barracks Road & Emmet Street Intersection Improvement Smart Scale Project. The project proposes improvements to Barracks Road within the City of Charlottesville, between Emmet Street and Buckingham Road, in order to accommodate a new shared bicycle and pedestrian path. The project also includes operational and safety upgrades at the Barracks Road and Emmet intersection. The purpose of the review is to determine if the general character, approximate location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof. Persons interested in the conceptual design may contact Project Manager Kyle Kling via e-mail (klingk@charlottesville.org) or by telephone (434-970-3994).

i. Staff Report

Kyle Kling, Project Manager – We are here for the Barracks and Emmet Street smartscale project compliance with the comprehensive plan. In 2018, the city was awarded an \$8.6 million VDOT smartscale grant for improvements along the corridor. The scope includes improvements to all phases and functionality of operations at the intersection of Barracks and Emmet. There is a second component, which takes into account, bicycle and pedestrian upgrades from the intersection eastbound up to Hilltop Road. Last summer, the city began working with The Timmons Group on preliminary engineering and design work for the project. Since last summer, we have been entrenched

in detailed public involvement. We have held multiple open houses and community meetings to solicit feedback. We have developed a conceptual design for the project, which we will be presenting tonight for compliance with the comprehensive plan.

ii. Applicant

Brian Copeland, The Timmons Group – I would like to go over the details of the project scope and schedule, some of the public engagement we have been through at this point, share some of the details of the conceptual design of the preferred concept we have developed to this point, as well as highlight the components of alignment with the comprehensive plan. I would like to start with the purpose of the project. The purpose of the project is to improve the operational performance of the Barracks and Emmet intersection, while also enhancing bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities for the neighborhood. The project limits are along Barracks Road between Emmet Street and Buckingham Road. There are some intersection improvements, specifically aimed at the Emmet Street intersection. In 2018, \$8.6 million was awarded to the city to fully fund a project that would include some significant improvements to the corridor including an additional northbound turn lane on Emmet Street, the addition of an additional left turn lane to allow concurrent left turn lanes onto Barracks Road, traffic signal improvements, including pedestrian controls through the intersection, increasing the width of the refuge islands in the intersection to provide acceptable refuge for pedestrians crossing the intersection, providing upgraded bike and pedestrian facilities along Barracks Road up to Hilltop and/or Buckingham Road, and a new CAT bus shelter on Barracks Road. Over the last 6 months, we have been working on collecting survey data, performing traffic analysis, and meeting with committee members, engaging with the public, meeting now with the Planning Commission, and entering the preliminary design of the project. Moving forward from this, we intend to move into the detailed engineering design that will finish up with a design public hearing so that when more of the design details are worked out, we are able to present those details to the public, and get VDOT design approval. Heading into the summer of 2021, we plan to finalize most of the design detail and start the acquisition of right of way and relocation of private utilities that may be necessary. This is all leading up to VDOT's authorization of construction in 2023. With regards to the public engagement process, residents that live within the project limits were contacted and offered the opportunity to meet with city staff and myself on July 23rd. We came up and met with as many that were available for that date. I know that staff has met with several others afterwards. At those meetings, we went over the scope of that project, the scale of the project, and then we listened. A couple of the primary concerns that we came away with hearing, were impacts to their properties, specifically the tree canopy and the front yards, and safety. Safety with pulling out of their driveways and increased speeds on Barracks Road were the two primary concerns. Those were the two overarching things that we heard. Two days later, we had our first steering committee meeting. At that meeting, we highlighted the known concerns along the corridor, concerns at the intersection, and bike and pedestrian safety concerns. We reviewed the smart scale scope and results of the traffic study that we did. A lot of the meeting was focused on trying to structure questions that we would like to include in a project survey that would go live after our first public workshop. After that discussion, we were able to structure some good questions. We opened it up for discussion with the group. A lot of the takeaway, was

making sure that we are protecting the neighborhood character, improving congestion at the intersection, reducing speeds along Barracks Road, and doing what we can to make biking and walking safer along Barracks Road. We also started the project website. After that meeting, we had our first public workshop. At that workshop, we presented three intersection improvement options. The first option was an approach that stayed within the confines of the existing roadway, worked within the limits of the curb lines and the edges of the pavement, and to get as much out of that pavement as we could. Option 3 was the other extreme, where we added pavement and pavement widening, particularly on the north side of Barracks Road to extend the amount of pavement available for queuing. We then demonstrated that by introducing a very tall retaining wall on the property on the north side. We presented four options for bicycle and pedestrian improvements running along Barracks Road. The first option was a dedicated climbing lane in road, with a curb, a buffer strip, and 5 foot sidewalk. The second option included a protected climbing lane. By providing the protection, it was offset by removing the buffer strip and moving the sidewalk all of the way in. It was focusing on trying to limit the height of the retaining wall that's proposed and limiting the impact of the trees. Option 3 incorporates a full width buffer strip, a 10 foot shared use path, and moving the curb line into the road. Option 4 is the same as option 3 with the elimination of the buffer strip. Following the presentation of those options, the survey went live to the public. These are the results. The infographic shows that there were 90 respondents. Ninety percent of those respondents live in the project area or commute along Barracks Road. The feedback that we got about the intersection options shows that 60% of the respondents preferred option 1, which is to eliminate any retaining walls. Our preferred approach recognizes that and incorporates that. There was an opportunity to rank eight different components of the project and list their importance. Increasing pedestrian safety was the number one ranked priority. We think that we have done that. Of the four bike/pedestrian options, 66% preferred the shared use path option over the inroad bike facility options. We have recognized that, and that is what our preferred concept is incorporating. Of the shared use path options, nearly 50% preferred the landscape buffer versus not having the landscape buffer. The respondents preferred to restrict access at Meadowbrook Road, restricting that to ride in and ride out access for safety and traffic flow reasons. We have listened and incorporated that. As part of the steering committee meeting, we structured the question, since there seemed to be a question of whether people would use Barracks Road for biking. If the corridor was improved, would you bike on it? 53% of the respondents said that they would bike on it if it was made safe. The west bound/right turn lane at the intersection was to be a thru right from the operational standpoint. What we heard many times through the feedback we got is that they prefer that to be a right turn lane only. We have incorporated that into the design. Following the receipt of that, we met the second time with the steering committee. We reviewed these results with them, then followed up with a presentation of our preferred alternative with them. We highlighted some of the areas we have incorporated. Generally, but not totally, there was agreement with some of the findings here and the incorporation of the feedback into that, with lone exception being option 3 vs option 4. It was debated vigorously. After the meeting, we took a vote as to how many people wanted it. The majority of the members voted not to have the buffer strip. In terms of the concept design that we presented, this was presented at the next open house. We believe that this concept improves the operational performance of the

intersection, provides a much safer bicycle/pedestrian environment, relocated the curb line to reduce speeds, and adds the shared use path and 3 foot buffer strip. We also heard concerns with wall heights and tree impacts. We have looked at the differences between what the wall heights would become in option 3 versus option 4. What are some ways we can create the results of option 4 that didn't have a buffer strip but still maintain some semblance of a buffer strip to provide some of those important functions? We also looked at tree impacts. The red trees would be the trees directly impacted by the shared use path. Orange trees are trees within a 5 foot area. The green trees are the trees within 5 to 10 feet of the retaining wall. There are some concerns on what that wall will look like. This is a picture today of Barracks Road, looking west bound. This is what the preferred option could look like implemented. There are concerns for what that wall might look like. There are options with using slip forms in front of the structural components of the retaining wall to provide different architectural treatments. We can use stone, brick, or printed form liners in front of the structural components. These are just options. They haven't been decided upon. We looked at opportunities incorporating things we felt reasonably could with preservation of the neighborhood character. We looked at ways to minimize impacts to utility infrastructure. With incorporation of multi-modal access to businesses looking at consistency with economic sustainability. We are re-purposing asphalt by moving the curb line in. That's part of our environmental approach. We incorporating several components of complete streets goals of the comprehensive plan. We are looking at context sensitive design treatments for the retaining wall. The bicycle master plan designates this corridor as a bicycle arterial route. Based on that and the grades, we feel that it's appropriate to have separated bike facilities in the plan. The streets that work plan designates this as a mixed use B and a neighborhood A typology. This is a comparison between the two. Noting the consistency between the two that it recommends a 3 foot to 6 foot curbside buffer zone. I do just want to emphasize some of the benefits that can be provided by providing a 3 foot buffer. It's consistent with city's bike pedestrian master plan. It provides additional physical and visual separation from cars. It provides space for utilities and lighting, It also leaves the shared use path unimpeded from all of those roadside obstacles. It provides a traffic calming effect along with other benefits that we feel are appropriate and consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – I am concerned about induced demand and cut through traffic. Can you discuss that?

Mr. Kling – That's a concern that we have heard a couple of times. A couple members of the public have voiced it as well. We are exploring options of putting signage along different routes in the neighborhood. It is something that is on our radar.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – We have heard a number of concerns about ADA access on this path. Will it be fully ADA compliant?

Mr. Kling – Yes. It's our intent to make it fully ADA compliant. It is a shared use path. Those do have some different regulations than sidewalks or trails. It will be 100% ADA fully compliant. As you follow the grade of the roadway on a sidewalk and a shared use path and you don't deviate from that, then it's considered to be ADA compliant. We

haven't dug into details. We received a comment looking for level landing areas along the path as well. That's something that we will explore. We will have some natural landing areas as you cross driveways.

Mr. Copeland – I would also like to point out that another benefit of having a 3 foot buffer space is at driveways. To get up 6 inches to the elevation of the shared use path, that 3 foot buffer strip provides for that ramping up that first 3 feet to get up the 6 inches so that you have a fully accessible cross slope of the shared use path all of the way through. If you push the shared use path all the way to the curb, that ramping extends into the traversable and accessible portion of the shared use path.

Commissioner Lahendro – I am guessing that the 3 foot buffer strip is not for trees. There are not going to be any trees. How many trees have we lost by moving the retaining wall 3 feet more into the embankment?

Mr. Copeland – We have not done that evaluation. We can do it and provide those numbers.

Commissioner Heaton – I had a similar question on the section where you have a large number of trees in pink and yellow. Is it anticipated that those trees will die eventually because they are so close?

Mr. Copeland – It depends on the size of the tree. The root zone is based on the size of the tree. There are a lot of variables that will go into that. It's something that we will look at more closely through the design.

Commissioner Lahendro – Can we pull back a map of the street and be shown where the 7 foot tall retaining wall would be? Or what section of that street?

Commissioner Green – That retaining wall varies in size along that corridor.

Mr. Kling – There are some little boxes underneath the trees that are different colors. This is available on the project website. The tallest section of the wall is going to be up there on the east end of the project at Hilltop Road. That section is about 250 feet from that driveway to Hilltop Road. In that section, you are looking at a maximum height of 7 feet and average height of 5 feet along that stretch and a minimum of 3 feet. For the rest of the corridor, you're looking at an average of 3 feet in the wall height from that first driveway down to the end of the map there.

iii. Public Hearing

Tim Heaphy – I am here on behalf of the Venable Neighborhood Association. I am not opposed to the improvements to the corridor. It is a question of whether the plan does improve the corridor in a way that is consistent with the comprehensive plan. We believe that it does not in 3 specific ways. The first is the tree canopy. The comprehensive plan says that the city should expand and protect the canopy. The preferred plan would decrease the tree canopy. There is a proposal to replant trees. The proposal would move the

bus stop up. This kills trees for a 3 foot buffer strip. We don't think that this proposal is respectful of characteristics of the neighborhood. We are against option 3 and the Neighborhood Association and Tree Commission could support option 4.

Greg Manke – We have tenure on Barracks Road. We have been there longer than any other residents. There must be a discussion of the project parameters, including widths and heights. Our greatest concern is what impact the chosen option will impact the canopy of the trees. Where does the ten feet start from? Nobody adheres to the 25 speed limit going up Barracks Road. There is 24 feet at the narrowest and goes all of the way up 28 feet. There will be a profound negative impact on that tree canopy.

Tom Gallagher – Important to maintain the walls as low as possible. The reasons are to maintain the character of the neighborhood and the welcoming entrance corridor into the city. If the preferred option is put in place, the walls will be higher than suggested by that. The visual image presented is the best case. Wall height is determined by how deep you dig horizontally and the slope of the bank. The wall never gets lower than this, except at the very top. Most of this wall is going to be 6 feet tall and not 3 feet tall. This is more appropriate at an industrial intersection. I suggest this proposal be rejected in the present form.

Brian Menard – I am chair of the Tree Commission. I would like for us to think of the tree canopy as green infrastructure. We have a unique urban corridor. We should carefully think about the options and select the one that will have the least amount of impact on the canopy. The Tree Commission voted overwhelmingly against this option. We still have a series of questions that impact the trees. Those questions include clear mapping. There has also been tree replenishment. We would like to know what tree replenishment looks like in this corridor. The last slide had no mention of trees.

Marty Bass – I have been vocal about the issues along Barracks Road. There are two issues that are incompatible with the comprehensive plan. Bikes going up the shared use path is dangerous. There are no traffic calming measures. There are no measures to help pedestrians crossing from one side of the road to the other side of the road. The second issue is aesthetics. A 7 foot wall is not aesthetically pleasing. The only thing compatible with the comprehensive plan is bikes. Barracks Road is dangerous for bikes going up and down the road.

Joe Ket – There are serious flaws in the preferred option. The before and after pictures show no change in the tree canopy. The pictures passed out at the public workshop show no canopy on the south side. The mixed use path shows a path going from nowhere to nowhere. You will not see bikes going uphill on Barracks Road. The mixed use path will not change this. Avid cyclists will continue to bike in the Meadowbrook Road area. That area has a low stress connection.

John Ket – I am a landscape architect. This area is defined by the canopy and the ivy clad slopes. It is a quiet and calming corridor. There has not been enough details provided. There is a question of when a tree canopy is lost and how it is replaced. There has not been

enough details on the wall. This is probably 1250 feet long wall along the entire length. You can't think about the safety without thinking about cars. I think that this should be sent back.

Jay Hightman – I do have personal experience in riding my bike up and down Barracks Road. This project would allow for better transit from the downtown area to the Barracks Road area. As this area grows, the intensity of the traffic is going to increase. There can be adjustments in the plan, such as the width of the shared use path. I hope that the Planning Commission allows this project to move forward.

Mary Mason – We live in a historic neighborhood. The City of Charlottesville has prioritized the urban environment and urban forest. The project effects both of these. This tree line serves as a corridor entrance into the city. It is a historic university neighborhood. The landscape sacrifice is simply too high. The preferred option is not in accord with the comprehensive plan.

Mac Mason – I believe that the tree canopy is one of the defining features for Barracks Road. We are thrilled that the city is going to make pedestrian and bike safety a priority for this area. The cost of trees at the top of Barracks Road is not worth the cost for the safety proposals. The Rugby and Meadowbrook area is lovely. Great care should be taken to maintain the character and charm of the area.

Nina Ratrie – I am an avid cyclist. As this project exists now, it ends at Buckingham Road. The cars not going 25. They are going 35 to 45 coming up Barracks Road. People are going to try to enter the ramp onto the sidewalk. I think that you have a situation where you are endangering lives. I challenge everyone to examine the traffic flow. When you widen a road, people get more confident and will go faster. I am concerned about the speeding.

Jake Mooney – I bike a lot and I am comfortable biking in the road. This is a spot that I would not bike in. It's a corridor that's inhospitable to anyone that does not live there. Without a bike path, nobody can traverse without a car. Drivers do go too fast on the road. A way to protect bikers is through buffers.

Josh Carp – I used to bike. I don't bike much in town. I wouldn't bike on Barracks or Preston. If you bike there, people are going to get hit and die. I would much rather preserve lives than the neighborhood character. The comp plan calls for the implementation of the bike/pedestrian plan. I would feel safe with biking and walking there. Let's preserve the trees and build a bike path and protection for bikers.

Holly Mason – This is a difficult issue. I have three teenagers, who live on this street. There are big problems on the road. The challenge is to keep everybody safe. This location is very difficult. The option on the table needs more detail. Traffic has to be addressed. You have to slow down the traffic. I would encourage traffic calming.

Nancy Summers – I was pleased to hear everyone contribute about Barracks Road. I think Barracks Road is a beautiful and dangerous road. Everything that everyone said is true. We have to have a minimalist approach. When people enter Charlottesville, they know that they are entering a special place. The historical character does matter. We don't need to funnel all of the traffic down Barracks Road.

iv. **Commissioner Discussion and Motion**

Commissioner Green – We have all of this information. The question before the planning commission is whether “improvements to be made here” is consistent with the comprehensive plan? I don't think any of these designs have been flushed out. That's our question. We have money for that going in a direction to slow traffic. I don't think that the hills are difficult to traverse if they are safe. We have traffic-speed problems all over this city. I am hoping Council or whomever is listening to the pleas of the public here for the traffic. It's a problem in a lot of different places. We can't look at land use planning because we have an issue on a lack of enforcement in another area. I want to focus on the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Palmer – I agree with what Commissioner Green said. I think it's really commendable that the city got this smart scale grant. It's the fourth one that we have seen. These have a 5 or 6 year time limit to get to the end of construction. We will be back here in 5 years seeing this great transformation in our city on these different areas. It's an area close to the university. In general, I agree with a lot of what I heard. This is a worthy project. It would be great if it could extend further up the hill. We have a budget constraint with that on this particular project. It doesn't mean that there can't be more projects in the future. I think it goes towards putting another piece in that bike/pedestrian network we are trying to establish in the city. I understand the worry of losing some of the nicer trees along the corridor. It sounds like we are at an early stage and there may be further design considerations that can get those heights of the retaining walls down and still maintain adequate safety. One of the things with the 10 foot shared use path is how you mark it, so that it is safe for bike and pedestrian traffic. Other municipalities do it all of the time. I think we can work through those things.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I heard a lot of important comments. I think that it is important to point out the bike/pedestrian master plan, which is a component to the comprehensive plan, ranks this as the eighth most important bike improvement route in the city out of twenty. The comprehensive plan does really see us doing work in this area. I walked all of the way up to Barracks Road Shopping Center after the PLACE meeting we had on this. The thing that struck me is how narrow and dangerous it is to walk down there. I was especially surprised how incredibly loud it is for cars going much faster than the speed limit a mere 18 inches from you. It feels hostile and threatening. The plan, as proposed, would make a pretty significant difference in that. One person mentioned how if you make the view of the road wider, people will go faster. I want to call out something that they went over with us in PLACE. That's true. If you have the option without the buffer, that ends up with perceived wide road. If you have a buffer, then you can put light poles in there and other signage. Those vertical elements reduce the perceived width of the road. It's important to point out that it's not just shrinking the lanes, they're taking the

whole north shoulder off. The center line of the road itself is moving up. When you talk about measuring the distance across the road, the thing that is the road now, will be moved up to squeeze in that buffer without taking as much of that slope. I think that it is a good plan. I think that it is in accordance with the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Heaton – As I look at the proposal and the comprehensive plan, I believe that it would be grossly irresponsible to not move forward on the grounds of safety for all of our citizens. Acknowledging the beautiful urban forest and what that neighborhood and that road 40 years ago, when I first drove on it. There are a lot more people living in the city now. We are up here representing all of the people. The only thing that I don't like about the plan is that I don't see a lot of creativity in traffic calming methods. In other communities that are trying to preserve trees, there are some really creative ways to preserve old trees that are very expensive but it's doable. As you move forward on this, it is consistent with the comprehensive plan. Even if it's a public/private/city tree commission, throw in a couple of expensive traffic calming, tree preserving on this stretch, you might come up with something remarkable.

Commissioner Dowell – I do think that it is definitely in line with our comprehensive plan, the Streets That Work plan and making our city multi-modal. My only personal thought with this is that we look a little more at the option that we use. I think that we need to separate pedestrians and bicycles. They need a buffer from cars. I look forward to moving forward with the plan.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – I spent a quite bit of time on this corridor. Generally, I am a bicyclist, but not on this corridor. I walked the entire length of the corridor. My daughter couldn't hear me because it was too noisy. If I did this regularly, her hearing would be damaged for her entire life. This corridor has serious problems, and we should improve it. I see enormous conformance with the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Lahendro – In our packet, as commissioners, we have been given a number of goals from the comprehensive plan that we are supposed to consider, as we look at this application. In my mind, it fails to adequately comply with two of those important goals. One is the environment. Goal 2.2: Expand and protect the overall tree canopy. The entrance corridor goal 8.4: Use street trees and landscaping to provide shade. Transportation goal 1.1: Provide a shared path that is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. I think the way the shared path terminates at the top, across from Hilltop, is irresponsible. I know this is within the perimeter of our study area. Something has to be done, other than just to stop it. Something else must be possible. I think there hasn't been adequate study of the options and what they mean to the tree canopy. What would it mean to not have the buffer? I doubt that it would ever be planted with anything that could stay there. It's too dark there. The perception is that it's going to be part of the path. You would still have layups and vertical elements on the side, with or without the buffer. I really question the need of the buffer. I would like to know how many trees we lose as a result of putting that buffer in. I don't think the study has been done to be able to come to a conclusion. I am very disappointed with what I see here. I don't think it complies with the comprehensive plan.

Councilor Snook – I gather from the materials that the right of way is 45 feet wide. Is that correct?

Mr. Kling – The right of way along this corridor varies from parcel to parcel. It's not consistent. To say that it's 45 feet wide consistently would not be accurate.

Councilor Snook – Looking at the diagram for option 3, the width of the improvements would be about 36 feet wide. Is there a comparable number for options 1, 2, and 4?

Mr. Kling – Everything from previous meetings is available on the project website. Our preferred option does limit the extent of right of way take to the maximum extent possible. It was referenced multiple times tonight that the city was moving forward with option 3. That is not the case. They are moving forward with a hybrid option 3 and 4. Option 3 had a five foot buffer space. The preferred option has a 3 foot buffer space. I just wanted to clarify that. There are plans in place. Currently, the city is working with a consultant to come up with a striping plan for Barracks Road from Hilltop to Rugby. I know that it's been brought up a couple of times tonight that the trail was terminating to nowhere at Hilltop. We have plans in place to add improved bicycle facilities in that area.

Councilor Snook – If you look at the north side of Barracks Road from Blue Ridge down to Hessian, we're dealing mainly with backyards, where the houses are a good distance away, is there any thought of edging the road, at least in this area, a little bit to the north to minimize the impact of the people on the south?

Mr. Kling – It's something that we explored early on. The majority of the utilities along the corridor are on the north side of the street. To shift the physical roadway to the north would heighten the budget extremely. In this instance, you're looking to have to relocate every utility along the corridor. Commissioner Stolzenberg had mentioned earlier our shifting of the lanes on the corridor to the paved shoulder that's currently there. We were able to gain some existing space there. In terms of physical shifts, we don't anticipate that.

Councilor Snook – Is there magic to 11 feet and 10 feet? Is there a design standard we're dealing with there at some point?

Mr. Kling – I think it goes back to buses and larger vehicles and particularly emergency access that we like to incorporate in all of our projects. We have members of police and fire on our steering committees. It's very important to them that we try to keep those lanes at a width that accommodate those larger vehicles when needed.

Commissioner Green – Councilor Snook. I was looking at that same thing about the right of way and why we were keeping it on the north side. The city has already acquired a 15 foot strip reserved on the south side as well. I think that it is utilities. You can't read it on our materials. You have to go to that website. You can zoom in and see the actual words.

Councilor Snook – How much right of way do we expect to take?

Mr. Copeland – It obviously varies. I would estimate 15 to 20 feet on average. Some areas may be less than 15 feet and some areas more. Depending on how much we are able to move the road to the north and utilize as much of that pavement as we can. That area may be closer to 10 to 12 feet that we need. In areas that is pretty tight already. In general terms, that is what I am thinking.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Is that distance from the edge of the existing roadway or the edge of the city's existing easement?

Mr. Copeland – That's from the edge of the existing roadway. It can stay entirely within the existing city easement that's in place.

Commissioner Green – We already own the easement.

Mr. Copeland – It's not in addition to that easement.

Commissioner Green – We are not taking, by eminent domain, any more land. We already own the land. People are just utilizing it for their own yard.

Mr. Copeland – There is a prescriptive easement. From the center line of the road, it is 30 feet total, with 15 feet of prescriptive easement or 15 feet city easement. It's a total of 30 feet based on the preferred option. There are some areas like bus stops that we go outside of.

Commissioner Heaton – I have a question about the time limitations on the VDOT grant and where we are in that proposal. What are some of the actions of the Planning Commission might do to jeopardize it?

Ms. Creasy – Mr. Kling is going to know a little bit better about the timing of next steps.

Mr. Kling – We were awarded the grant in 2018. That starts when you sign the agreement with VDOT. That starts the window. Luckily, we realize that this project is a priority. We requested for some funding to be accelerated, which allowed us to start this project about a year or two earlier than anticipated. As of now, we are in good shape. Any holdup in that process can jeopardize the project. I will note that once you are out of the 5 to 6 year time window, VDOT does have the ability to rescind funds. The city would be on the hook for and have to repay any design and engineering work to date for that.

Commissioner Green – It's not just the money. If we rescind on funds, and pay them back, that looks bad on all of our smart scale projects in the future too. We have been fortunate with the funding that we have received for some projects.

Mr. Kling – VDOT is planning to move towards a model where localities are judged on how well they deliver projects. If we don't deliver projects on time and on budget, that jeopardizes any funds we may get in the future.

Chairman Mitchell – The question that we have to answer is: Does the general character of the proposed improvement of this preliminary design comply with the existing comprehensive plan? There is much work that needs to be done. The feedback that we have gotten from the folks that bike around this city and the folks that walk around this city and the folks that live in the area is feedback that we need to take into account when we move from where we are in the winter and to when we move to the detailed design and detailed engineering. There is much work yet to be done. I do believe that the vision of this application does meet with the comprehensive plan.

Motion: Commissioner Green - I move that the proposed Barrack/Emmet Improvements Project concept, located on Barracks Road between Emmet Street and Buckingham Road in the City of Charlottesville, to determine if the general character and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof (Motion seconded by Commissioner Solla-Yates). Motion is passed 6-1.

2. **SP19-00010 -Harris Street Apartments** - Landowner Cville Business Park, LLC is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) pursuant to City Code Sec. 34-457(b)(5) to authorize a specific mixed-use development (apartments (“multifamily dwellings”) with some commercial uses) at 1221, 1223 and 1225 Harris Street (“Subject Property”). The Subject Property has approximately 345 feet of frontage on Harris Street, and is further identified on City Real Property Tax Map 34 as Parcels 90B, 90C and 90.1 (City Real Estate Parcel IDs 340090B00, 340090C00, and 340090100), having a total area of approximately 2.446 acres. The Subject Property is zoned Industrial Corridor (IC). In the IC district, multifamily residential development is allowed only as part of a mixed-use building or development. The project proposed by the applicant is a 6-story, 166,800 square foot mixed-use building with 13,050 square feet of ground floor commercial space, and up to 105 residential dwelling units (approximately 98,975 square feet, total) above the ground floor (up to 43 DUA). In the IC zoning district, mixed use buildings are allowed by-right, up to a height of 4 stories, with residential density up to 21 dwelling units per acre (DUA). The application also seeks approval of two (2) additional building stories, and an additional 22 DUA. The Comprehensive Land Use Map for this area calls for Business and Technology, but no density range is specified by the Comprehensive Plan. Information pertaining to this application may be viewed online at <http://www.charlottesville.org/departments-and-services/departments-hz/neighborhood-development-services> or obtained from the Department of Neighborhood Development Services, 2nd Floor of City Hall, 610 East Main Street. Persons interested in this Comprehensive Plan Amendment request may contact NDS Planner Brian Haluska by e-mail (haluska@charlottesville.org) or by telephone (434-970-3186).

i. Staff Report

Brain Haluska, Principle Planner – Before the planning commission is a special use permit for these properties. This is industrial corridor zoning, which is somewhat unusual. We don't see a whole lot of applications in properties zoned industrial corridor. Industrial zoning does measure height by stories. If you go to section 34-1100, four stories cannot exceed 50 feet in height and six stories cannot exceed 70 feet in height. The applicant's proposal is a six story building, as shown in your packet. There is a maximum height of sixty feet with their six stories. The special use permit is for the additional two stories in height, as well as an increase in residential density up to 43 dwelling units per acre on the site. The maximum allowed in the industrial corridor that you can request is 63 units per acre. The proposed building is roughly 166,000 square feet. It contains parking in the structure, underneath the structure, and several different places. The site fronts on both Allied Street and Harris Street. This building "stairsteps" up the hill. There is about a 40 or 50 foot difference in grade between Allied Street and Harris Street. The building is aimed at responding to that. A couple of points that are not in your staff report. One point is the site is subject to the critical slope ordinance. There are critical slopes on this site. Part of it is proximity to a waterway that cuts through the site. If you have been out to the cul de sac at the end of Allied Street, you have seen a waterway in a culvert. That waterway is designated on the map. Any slopes within 200 feet of that waterway do qualify under the critical slope ordinance. The applicant would need to seek a critical slope waiver prior to the construction of the building that they've shown. I do want to state that the special use permit sets a maximum height. Maximum density doesn't automatically guarantee the building would be built. Staff recommended conditions don't tie the applicant to this specific building. Part of that is out of concern of re-engineering or any kind of re-design. That critical slope situation may end up reducing the size or unit count of the building. 105 units is the maximum under 43 dwelling units per acre. I do want to note that the site is comprised of two buildings on Harris Street. It also includes 221 Harris Street, which is the Habitat Store. The site is almost 2.5 acres. As a result of that, one of the questions that came up in the pre-meeting was about 34-12, the affordable housing ordinance that we have currently. What would we potentially get out of that at the building permit stage? Based on the applicant's package, I was able to run the numbers. We could anticipate three units of affordable housing on site or off site or a donation to the Affordable Housing Fund, in lieu of payment of \$377,000. That would be roughly what we are talking about. Part of the reason for those numbers, is that the site itself is over 2.5 acres. It takes a large amount of this building before you hit 1.0 floor/area ratio because of the amount of area that is included. Those would be the numbers under 34-12. 34-12 is a zoning requirement triggered by granting the special use permit on the property. It is something that we discuss through the site plan process and ultimately is resolved at the building permit stage. I do want to review the conditions that are suggested in here. Condition 1A is a condition that we have used in the past, just to make sure the parking design is incorporated into the final project. 1B is intended to lock in the height as it is shown. They show a maximum plane of 510 feet above sea level in their drawings. We have suggested that it be memorialized. That is ten feet lower than what the code would allow. We are assuming that is a voluntary reduction in part to address the massing of this building. It is a very large building on Harris Street. There is a traffic study proposed in condition 2. This relates to the proximity of this project to the intersection of McIntire

Road and Harris Street. That is an intersection that has been identified by city staff as being problematic. The queuing of the people trying to make the movement towards the bypass or even back towards McIntire does tend to back up the hill of Harris Street. They have indicated that. The long term plan has always been to look at that intersection. The construction of this building would accelerate that. During the peak hour, you're talking about 50 additional trips going in that direction even if you split the traffic 50-50 on Harris Street. That's going to back up almost to the top of the hill. We're going to start seeing further impact. The McIntire and Harris intersection has some topographic challenges to it. There are some ideas that have been suggested in the past about traffic circles. Harris is extremely steep coming down the hill. You can't really make the grade up. One topic that we have discussed is that the applicant owns all of the land in the McIntire Business Park. One of the pieces there is that entry way right before that intersection. That gives you an idea of the larger discussion that's happening with the traffic. The condition is that they would do a preliminary traffic study. They would scope that with the traffic engineer and submit that as part of their site plan. We would have a discussion on whether the roads can support this building.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Looking at the site plan, it doesn't look like any of the building footprint is on that 1221 Allied parcel. Does that still count for the lot area?

Mr. Haluska – There is a section in our ordinance in the commercial section, which is where the industrial corridor resides, that specifically talks about mixed use sites and the ability to assemble them out of multiple parcels. What the applicant is doing by submitting this special use permit is forgoing any residential density should they hit 105 units in this building. They are forgoing any residential density on 1221 in the future. They are contiguous sites. That does meet the definition of a mixed use development site in that section of the code.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Would the Habitat Store count for that FAR?

Mr. Haluska – I believe that commercial space is excluded or counted at a different rate. It's something that we would have to work out. That was a thought that dawned on me as I was going in. This is just based on the new building that I see here. I don't believe that it counts in our calculations.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – On affordable housing, Mayor Walker emailed the Planning Commission concerned about displacement from this site in connection with the West Second proposal. There was affordable housing proposed as part of Harris Street. Can you help me understand that?

Mr. Haluska – I was involved in the discussion on West Second. I was the planner for that project. At no time were we discussing any of these properties with the applicant. I believe they were talking about an alternative site on Harris Street that was much closer to Preston Avenue. In frequent conversations with the applicant, there has been a broader discussion about Harris and what it is evolving into as land use, the kind of infrastructure, and the kind of services we have for residents. It is primarily an industrial

and commercial corridor that we are now starting to see some residential development on it and how we link those residents to the rest of the city without using their cars. There is some appetite for increased pedestrian improvements in that area. The owners along the road have mentioned potential bus service down Harris. That might be a route that CAT needs to look into.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – You mentioned the industrial zoning, which is LI TCH zoning. That’s the only zoning we have been able to produce affordable housing effectively on and in quantity. Are we losing affordable housing by putting up this housing?

Mr. Haluska – I don’t believe that there is any housing on the site. There is no loss of units. There is a residential style building on the site. I don’t believe that it is currently being used as a residence. The applicant can certainly clarify that. There is no loss of units in this area. There is opportunity for more density in the future. The zoning does allow the applicant to potentially seek up to 63 DUA. They did contemplate that at one point. They may seek an amendment to this SUP in the future if the Habitat Store was a site that they were looking at.

ii. Applicant

Chris Virgilio, Development Manager – I do want to give you an overview of the project from our perspective. We are requesting an SUP for 54 dwelling units and 2 additional stories of height. The project totals are 105 housing units, 130 parking spaces, and 7000 square feet of commercial space. These totals are approximate right now. Some of the programming inside the building is moving and evolving as we think more about the project. This has been put together to visualize the project’s central location and what is available within 5, 10, and 15 minute walk. The residences in this building would obviously have the nearly 100 businesses of McIntire Plaza, right outside of their doors. Most of those businesses are small businesses and locally owned. We do have access to a lot of community space outside of their apartments in this building. The Greenway is a couple of blocks away, which takes you up to a paved part of the Rivanna Trail and McIntire Park. It can also take you downtown. The downtown mall and the Dairy Central development is less than a mile away. There is not a CAT bus stop within the immediate vicinity of the building. With everything going on in McIntire Plaza and this building, it would be good reason to get a CAT stop. For residents who have to use a car, there is quick access on and off the bypass. Staff gave a pretty good overview of the site. There are two existing structures: a small partial building and 1223 Harris Street. The footprint of the new building is shown in blue. I will quickly walk you through the levels of the building. Levels 5 and 6 would be the additional levels allowed by the SUP. Residential use and amenities would be on level 6. Levels 2 to 4 would be residential use. Level 1 would primarily be parking and commercial frontage along Harris Street. Under the Harris Street grade, we have four levels under the building. We designed these levels to step down following the grade and the topography from Harris Street down to Allied Street. We did this for a couple of reasons. It’s less disruptive to the topography. It also gives us the ability to have entrances and exits for cars and bicycles to each level of parking. It allows us to eliminate some of the interior ramping.

This maximizes the efficiency of the space. It's good design from that perspective. These G levels will primarily be parking with some commercial use. We will have commercial frontage on Allied Street. These plans are evolving. The orange drop off area for residents to meet visitors and it is activity we don't want on Harris Street. We understand that this project is not subject to architectural review or corridor review. We have been improving McIntire Plaza over the last ten years. We do care what the building looks like. We see as a continuation of McIntire Plaza. It will be a part of this community. The city is looking to add a sidewalk. We are working with the city to potentially underground the utilities and include some street lighting. We think that Charlottesville would benefit from this project. It's mixed use and residential density and an appropriate place. The location supports sustainability principles. It's going to enhance the appearance of an under-utilized site. It's going to support a lot of local business owners.

Commissioner Dowell – How many affordable housing units for this building?

Mr. Virgilio – For this building, we are committed to meet what the ordinance requires. Woodard Properties, as a company, owns and manages over 100 units of affordable housing across the city. We accept housing choice vouchers at any of our apartments

Commissioner Dowell – Are you currently going to provide units or pay into the fund?

Mr. Virgilio – It's hard to say right now. I would like to learn more about the project costs and reserve that decision until later on in the project design as it develops. We are open to either option. I know a lot of people prefer the units in the building. I think that we are open to looking at that.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – The duplex on site is not occupied?

Mr. Virgilio – It is occupied. It is a market rate duplex.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – There is a stairwell near Cville Coffee to the Birdwood neighborhood. Will there be a similar way to go from the bottom up to the top for this development front on Harris Street in these designs?

Mr. Virgilio – We would work to navigate pedestrians through all parts of the building footprint.

Commissioner Stolzenberg - Will there be open access to non-residents to go up like there is in the back of the complex?

Mr. Virgilio – Most likely not. They would have to go up the new sidewalk.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – I noticed the big courtyard cutout on the back facing the Habitat Store. What is the reasoning behind not putting housing in that footprint?

Mr. Virgilio – The shape of the building on either side allows it to have more windows. It was a better layout. If the building is too big and too square, some of that interior space is unusable.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – You guys seems to have a lot of parking. Is that in excess of city requirements? What is the reasoning there?

Mr. Virgilio – The requirement is one parking space per unit. That would be 100 spots right there. With the commercial space, that would be another 14 spots. There are maybe a few spaces left over to get to that 130. I don't think that it's grossly excessive for parking.

Commissioner Lahendro – I know that this is very early and looking at the massing plans on the site. It looks like you are filling up the site with building. I am concerned about that space between the public streets, sidewalks, activity, and the buildings. Are there modes of public activity being thought about? What kind of amenities humanize this complex?

Mr. Virgilio – For the residents, we are planning amenities on the rooftop and the courtyard.

Commissioner Lahendro – Is the courtyard accessible from the street?

Mr. Virgilio – It wouldn't be publicly accessible. We are proposing a little setback on Allied Street. There won't be a lot of room for big canopy trees on the site. We feel that McIntire Plaza in general is more of an urban environment. Utilizing this site to its potential, we felt, was a good move in lieu of creating more green space on site. Residents are really close. The community outdoor green space could be used, while not displacing places to live in parcels like this was our thinking.

Commissioner Lahendro – On Harris Street, it looks like you are building right up to the property line.

Mr. Virgilio – On Harris Street, you have to build to a certain distance of the street. You are not allowed to exceed. There is a minimum off Harris Street.

Commissioner Lahendro – What is being asked for is to increase the height of the building on Harris Street from four to six, which increases that scale and that relationship to the street already. Four stories is already taller than the other things on Harris Street. Going up to six stories exacerbates that. I am concerned about that relationship.

Chairman Mitchell – Commissioner Lahendro, Isn't the construction going to be in this little valley there?

Commissioner Lahendro – It's going to be six stories above the plane of Harris Street. They're building in the hole. It's actually taller. It's going to be six stories above Harris Street.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – Staff has recommended some requirements that we might consider if we choose to grant his request. Do those pose a serious constriction?

Mr. Virgilio – In this location, that's our plan. I don't think that would change. We don't see any issue with the traffic study. I think that the residents coming to and from the building at this location is counter-flow to rush hour traffic at the Harris and McIntire intersection.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – That extra ten feet would be allowed under the six story rule. Would you be able to fit more units in potentially if you had that extra ten feet or does that not make a difference to you?

Mr. Virgilio – I don't know if you're allowed to exceed six stories and add that ten feet. That would be a question that we would have to look into. I don't know if anybody here knows that answer. We would be open to looking at more units if we could design within that maximum height.

Commissioner Heaton – At what time would you be able to say definitely? Do you have a calculation of how many more units and how that would affect the affordable housing percentages? At what time would you have a better idea?

Mr. Virgilio – I think later on in the design, probably in the building permit stage.

Mr. Haluska – There are no required setbacks on the site. There is a maximum front setback of twenty feet on primary streets. Harris Street is a primary street on this corridor. They can step it back or set back the building up to twenty feet on the primary streets. Six stories is the height limit. They can't add a seventh with the additional height. I am merely reflecting what they show in their packet, which is Harris Street sitting at an average grade of 450 feet above sea level. They show their roofline at 510. They can go to 520, but there is no additional square footage added by doing that. You're adding more floor to ceiling height at that point.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – How do we calculate number of stories?

Mr. Haluska – Anything below the grade does not count. One of the ways they have designed it is that it steps down so that it doesn't exceed the six story height requirement at any point.

Commissioner Heaton – That's all parking below the grade?

Mr. Haluska – There are a few commercial spaces. If you look at your packet, they have an entrance off of Allied Street to get to that bottom floor. You would turn the corner.

There is the access road that goes by the Habitat Store that goes up the hill to get to the parking lot for the Habitat Store that they can use to get into one or two of the floors there. At some point, they have to use Harris Street for the rest of it. Once you ramp inside, you start losing a lot of the efficiency. You lose a lot of spaces.

Commissioner Heaton – G-4 is at grade, and it is not necessarily parking.

Mr. Haluska – There is about 4,000 square feet at that level. It looks like they are contemplating a little bit of corner commercial there and parking behind it. As you go up, there is a commercial space on G-2.

Commissioner Heaton – Isn't Allied Street a street that would have some trouble with congestion?

Mr. Haluska – The issue with Allied Street isn't the volume of cars on it. It's that it's so close to the intersection of Harris and McIntire. Making a left turn is really tough. Somebody has to let you in.

Commissioner Heaton – I think that's a potential safety concern.

Mr. Haluska – What the traffic engineer mentioned in the past meeting was the long term solution here is to have a dedicated right turn lane coming down from Harris onto McIntire to pull anybody trying to go right out of that queue may make Allied work a little better. It's a clunky intersection. It's all on one side of it and that makes it worse.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Is the underground parking requirement in there because it is in the plans?

Mr. Haluska – That is because it is in the plans. I do think avoiding surface parking at all possible, in terms of the efficiency of the site is good. I don't know if they have other plans. It was mainly to try to pull the aspects of the building we thought were really beneficial. I would hate for the planning commission to see this and then get a building with just surface parking.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Would it make sense to maybe flip that condition that it has to be underground parking, no surface parking? Is it technically underground if it's at grade for Allied Street?

Mr. Haluska – You can say that its structured parking at that point contained within walls. If you want to change it to structured parking, that's fine.

iii. Public Hearing

Josh Carp – I am in support of this proposal. I don't think that it's perfect. I would like to see less parking and more affordable housing. If the apartments are market rate, that sounds great to me. I am sure that there are improvements to be made with the plan. It does

sound perfect to replace one duplex with over 100 units. I would love to see something built on that site.

Martin Chapman – I have two commercial buildings on Harris Street. I came to the meeting to learn what is going on. You do need to realize that Harris Street is a really busy street. It's the economic engine of the city. I applaud all of the development happening at McIntire Plaza. There is a loss of industrial land. There are very few spaces in the city where you can do this kind of work. I do acknowledge the need for affordable housing. There are issues in terms of traffic that could be serious. This is not a leafy suburban neighborhood. This is concrete. The city does need to do more development on Harris Street. There are no reputable sidewalks on Harris Street. There are huge areas on Harris Street that can be redeveloped. It should be an area for technology development. I am here to advocate for a better street.

Nancy Carpenter – I do like McIntire Plaza. There are some great businesses there. There does need to be a robust effort by the city to make that road better with pedestrian and bike lanes. It's not safe now with the sight distance when you're coming up from McIntire to really see what is coming towards you. I do support more affordable housing. I was a little disappointed that I didn't hear anything about what the income level might be for any affordable units that might be placed in that building. It would be nice for Woodard Properties to reach out to the neighborhood association. The traffic study also does need to look at the impact in surrounding neighborhoods.

iv. Commissioner Discussion and Motion

Commissioner Heaton – I would like for the developer to have engaged with the neighborhood and the industrial neighbors. I think that there is great opportunity for creativity in this new kind of urban living. It's going to require people talking to each other.

Commissioner Green – This one is a double edged sword for me. It is an area where there is an industrial area. I think that we need to be sensitive of that. This would be that perfect location for the biotech industry. It is a wonderful shopping center. We talk about mixing in housing. I wonder if there is a way to think about how we do that. I think this is a great opportunity to look at one of those wide streets that doesn't have to be a wide street. That increases traffic speeds. This is like a speedway to get from 250 to Preston. I think we should take a look at that. We should be putting this onto our list. There is a lot of heavy industrial traffic on this road. The connectivity would be super helpful from the top of that hill for people wanting to access the shopping.

Commissioner Heaton – In looking at other municipalities that have gone through big growth, this is an urban type area in the city. You could do elevated pedestrian walkways. You would have to work creatively with the neighbors. It would be a whole different feel than anything else in the city. I think that Charlottesville is capable of it.

Commissioner Green – I think that it looks great. I think there is some opportunity for the pedestrian accessibility.

Commissioner Lahendro – I would like to build upon that as well. Harris Street is a miserable street to walk on. We are seeing this development and this activity at this end. I am interested in making sure that we have a humane pedestrian friendly way of walking along the street and the relationship to this development. I want to make sure that it is an attractive green place. I want it be such that you want to walk by it.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – Harris Street is terrifying with all of those concrete trucks there. Going up Schenk’s Greenway is pretty good. It starts way up McIntire. We need to have those cohesive connections. I think that it makes sense people commuting up and down there to go along that McIntire path.

Motion: Commissioner Solla-Yates - I move to recommend approval of a special use permit allowing the specific development proposed within the application materials for SP19-00010 subject to the following reasonable conditions and safeguards: The conditions presented in the staff report (Motion seconded by Commissioner Stolzenberg). Motion passed 7-0

STAFF’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the application be approved with the following conditions:

1. The specific development being approved by this special use permit (“Project”), as described within the site plan exhibit required by City Code §34-158(a)(1), shall have the following minimum attributes/ characteristics: a. Underground parking shall be provided within a parking garage structure constructed underneath the Building. b. The maximum permitted height of the top of the building shall not exceed an elevation of 510 feet above sea level, with the exception of rooftop structures as regulated in section 34-1101 of the City Code.
2. The applicant shall provide a preliminary traffic study of the immediate area surrounding the building, as well as traffic impact on Allied Street, Harris Street and the intersection of Harris Street and McIntire Road. The scope of the traffic study shall be approved by the City Traffic Engineer prior to submission, and must be submitted to the City for review and comment prior to the approval of the final site plan for the project.

The Chairman recessed the meeting for five minutes.

Communication among Commissioners and the Role of Social Media

Lisa Robertson, Deputy City Attorney worked with Missy Creasy, Assistant Director of Neighborhood Development Services, in developing guidelines in how the Commissioners speak and communicate with each other, communicate with the public, and the role of social media. Commissioner Stolzenberg and Chairman Mitchell worked with Ms. Creasy and Ms. Robertson in drafting some updated

language on the operating guidelines. These new guidelines and language were presented to the Planning Commission for review.

Motion: Commissioner Heaton – We accept these guidelines with the stipulation that staff look at them to make gender neutral pronouns (Commissioner Dowell seconded). Motion passed 7-0.

IV. COMMISSION'S ACTION ITEMS

Continuing: until all action items are concluded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.