

**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**August 10, 2021 – 5:30 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

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

***Beginning:*** 5:00 PM

***Location:*** Virtual/Electronic

**Members Present:** Commissioner Habbab, Commissioner Solla-Yates, Chairman Mitchell, Commissioner Russell, Commissioner Stolzenberg, Commissioner Lahendro

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Dowell

**Staff Present:** Joe Rice, Patrick Cory, Missy Creasy, Alex Ikefuna, Lisa Robertson, Danna O’Connell

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and he asked Ms. Creasy to provide an overview of the agenda for the evening which was done. It was noted that the spelling of Yolunda Harrell’s name needs to be updated in the minutes.

Chair Mitchell asked Commissioner Solla-Yates to review the request concerning the traffic light at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Water Street. Commissioner Solla-Yates noted that he had expressed concern about the benefit of this traffic light based on the cost of it remaining from a monetary standpoint and operational standpoint for transit. It was noted that there are at least three options that could be considered: keep the light, remove the light, place the light on flashing. Ms. Creasy noted that there was a discussion last month with Chair Mitchell, Commissioner Solla-Yates and staff including Brennen Duncan. It was noted that this item could be brought up to the full commission and if there was agreement, that staff could provide a letter to Deputy City Manager Sam Sanders with the details so consideration of the request could be given to Council. As all commissioners were in agreement with moving forward with review, it was noted that the next step would be for Traffic staff to meet with Mr. Sanders to see if he wants to take it forward to Council.

Commissioner Lahendro noted his discussion with members of the Rugby neighborhood in relation to the future land use map. Commissioner Stolzenberg provided comments and a brief discussion took place.

Commissioner Habbab noted that he and his firm are involved with the Park Street and MACAA sites so he will likely not be participating in the conversation. Clarification will take place prior to the meeting.

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

***Beginning:*** 5:30 PM

***Location:*** Virtual/Electronic

**A. COMMISSIONER’S REPORT**

**Commissioner Russell** – Council approved the design for the Fontaine Avenue Streetscape, which is a smart-scale project. The final design will continue while property is acquired for right of way. It is projected for construction to begin sometime in 2023.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I had two meetings this month. The MPO Technical Committee met. We reviewed potential smart-scale submission projects for the next round of smart-scale. There are five projects under consideration right now, including District Avenue Roundabout up by Stonefield, improvements on Fifth Street, improvements on Avon, and the Rivanna Corridor Bridge. There was another project proposed by a member of CTAC (Citizens Transportation Advisory Commission), which was a flyover leaving 29 and 250 into the middle of 29 up to Hydraulic. That seemed to be too expensive to not merit constraint or any long range transportation plan. The decision was made to put that off until we do a long range planning process. We also had a meeting of TJPDC, which is starting its process of reviewing applications for a new Executive Director. They also approved a regional affordable housing plan. That goes a long way towards generalizing the affordable housing plan of the city and the county and adding all of our outlying areas with recommendations for what they can do. The inter-government panel on climate change has released the first part of its six assessment report. Most of the material in there is bad news. Some of it is tentatively possibly good news if we act on it. I would encourage all of you to read it. We are currently at one degree Celsius of warming over the baseline. We are essentially guaranteed to go past 1.5 degrees Celsius at this point. We're most likely looking at 3 degrees or more unless we see a very significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The good news is if we can reach net zero by the middle of the century, we will hit 1.5 degrees Celsius and then fall back/start to decline. The problem won't keep getting worse. However, that would be a significant departure from current trends and requires significant change in how we live our lives and how we make governmental policy. I encourage you all to read that and think about that as we consider our policies moving forward.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – Since our last meeting, I attended the Board of Architectural Review meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup>. It was a very quick meeting. We had one Certificate of Appropriateness that was passed. We had a long discussion with the designers for the new courthouse building. This was a preliminary discussion where we had the opportunity to review and comment upon some of the very conceptual designs for the new courthouse. The Tree Commission met the same night as the Planning Commission. I wasn't able to attend. August is going to be quiet as well. There is no Tree Commission meeting in August. I was asked to attend a meeting with three residents of the Meadowbrook and Rugby Road communities. This was to listen to their concerns regarding the Comprehensive Plan recommendations that have been put forward to this point. As a result of listening to them, I did recommend that they put this in a written form that was sent to me last week. I reviewed it. I have asked that it be sent onto the other commissioners, the Council, and to our consultants. In summary, they are challenging the three main justifications for making significant changes to the land use zoning. The first justification is how population growth is being anticipated and how that population is being looked at in the future. Secondly, they're challenging the idea that Charlottesville is landlocked and needs to be up-zoned. Thirdly, they are challenging the method used for calculating cost burden/households. I found their presentation and discussion with me to be very thoughtful and was based upon a great deal of work. I would love to hear the consultants' response to some of these counter-arguments that have been put forward.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – The Housing Advisory Committee met on July 21<sup>st</sup>. We met with some new city staff. Ashley Marshall and Sam Sanders are the new deputy city managers. We talked about how we actually are going to implement this new housing plan. The answer right now is staffing. We're going to hire people to do the work, which is very exciting and what I wanted to hear. Mr. Sanders broke some news that a new hire with NDS has been made. It is Mr. Freas. His current priority is hiring a new Housing Coordinator to help us answer these complicated and quantitative questions that keep coming up.

**Commissioner Habbab** – No Report

## **B. UNIVERSITY REPORT**

**Commissioner Palmer** – Fall Semester starts August 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be in full swing around Grounds starting next week. The bus schedule for UTS has changed. They're adding a little bit more coverage and frequency. If you are interested in seeing those routes, you can go to the UTS website. They're not back to what they were. They're more robust.

## **C. CHAIR'S REPORT**

**Chairman Mitchell** – I didn't make any of the meetings this month. We have an annual meeting happening in Sept. At that meeting, we will need to elect a new chair and a new vice-chair. We have asked our senior commissioners (Ms. Dowell and Mr. Lahendro) to work to nominate two new officers. It would be very helpful in our meeting (with the consultants) later this month that we look at the data behind some of the assumptions you have made. There is some debate as to what methods were used to get data. A little feedback on that would be of great value.

## **D. DEPARTMENT OF NDS**

**Ms. Creasy** – We have a new director, James Freas, who will be joining us September 13<sup>th</sup>. We will welcome him. That is the week of your meeting. Chair Mitchell noted the annual meeting. We will have some activities that occur based on that. Tomorrow evening at 6:00, there's a meeting on the Belmont Bridge. It's a meeting to provide background on the construction project to come. There's been quite a bit of activity over there. There will be more to come. The meeting is going to touch on that. If you go to [belmontbridge.org](http://belmontbridge.org), you can register for that meeting. It looks to be very informative, especially for people who spend any amount of time in downtown Charlottesville. You have a work session later this month on the 24<sup>th</sup>, which we will have preliminary discussions on Park Street and MACAA sites. They're preparing some rezoning applications. This is an opportunity for you to weigh in on their proposal at this point. They have outlined a number of questions in their report, which will be helpful for a robust conversation with them. They will take that feedback and move to the next step of the process. They are also currently having a community meeting right now on that project. We'll have some feedback on that. This will give the public the opportunity as we move forward. Those are two pretty big developments. On the 31<sup>st</sup> is the meeting with the consultants where we will review changes that have been proposed to the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map based on the comments that we've received in the last comment period. We expect that meeting will probably take a little bit of time. We'll have materials to you for both of those work sessions a week in advance. The consultants are working very hard to get things moving along. We're going to be right up to the line putting those materials together. We will have some opportunity for you to review in advance. They'll be open to the public in time for the discussion at that August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. We will see where things stand at that point.

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

**James Groves** – I teach climate change and sustainability at UVA. The United Nations issued a new comprehensive science report on climate change yesterday. The report states that our lifestyles are eroding the natural world around us setting the stage for increasingly difficult living conditions for everyone and everything. I find myself reflecting upon what our community should be doing to contribute to climate solutions. That reflection has me thinking about the city's draft comprehensive plan. The current draft lacks important, specific recommendations that should certainly be included in the city's approach to addressing climate change. The current draft does not recommend the use of

commercial, property assessed clean energy financing to upgrade the energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water management systems of commercial and multi-family buildings of 5 or more units. It does not recommend creation of a city green bank that could finance similar climate friendly upgrades to smaller residential structures. The draft plan does not consider the critical role that city financed micro-mobility could play in addressing climate change and delivering social justice inequity. Investments in sustainability solutions like sea-pace financing, a green bank, and micro-mobility solutions could put critical money in the pockets of our needy neighbors (year after year) while stabilizing the climate for all of us. The current comprehensive plan draft plans to invest millions in one-time tax relief, temporary operating subsidies for housing, and large, expensive transit buses. Such proposed investments won't contribute to lasting wealth accumulation and housing availability in our low-income community. They won't address climate change. While the current draft plan envisions the investment of millions towards equity and housing affordability, it fails to propose investments that could address equity, housing affordability, and climate change. Let's not miss the opportunity to address housing affordability, equity, and climate change.

## **F. CONSENT AGENDA**

### 1. Minutes – March 9, 2021 – Pre-Meeting and Regular Meeting

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

**Commissioner Solla-Yates moved to approve the Consent Agenda with small changes. (Second by Commissioner Lahendro) Motion passes 6-0.**

## **III. JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSION AND COUNCIL**

*Beginning:* 6:00 PM

*Continuing:* Until all public hearings are complete

*Format:* (i) Staff Report, (ii) Applicant Presentation (iii) Hearing, (iv) Commission Discussion and Recommendation

*No Hearings This Month*

## **IV. COMMISSION'S ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Cville Plans Together – Schedule Review**

**Jennifer Koch, Cville Plans Together** – I am here to give you a brief update as far as what we're thinking with the next steps in the schedule. What we have heard from you is that you would like to see us have a comprehensive plan to Council this year. We have worked backward from that. That's the schedule you now see here. We have been finalizing the summary of what we heard during the engagement period, starting with revisions to the land use map and the chapters; specifically the land use and urban form, historic, cultural, and preservation chapter. We will be sharing with you that engagement summary, which will provide a bit more detail than we did when we met with you last time. On August 31<sup>st</sup>, we will come to you with what we're proposing and some adjustments to the Future Land Use Map and the Land Use, Urban Form, Historic, Cultural Preservation Chapter to respond to what we heard. We will get feedback from you and the community on that. We plan to make it known that we will be sharing information with you about the next steps following our meeting tonight. Following the meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup>, the next time we will meet with you is a couple of weeks after that. We will share with you the rest of the chapters and revisions to the chapters at that meeting. One thing you will not have seen before that point is the Implementation Chapter, which is key to making the plan happen. We know with the September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting that we will share those chapters with you. In mid-

September, we will be meeting with the steering committee. I will be following up with them tomorrow. Following those meetings, we will be working toward a joint hearing with the Planning Commission and Council on October 12<sup>th</sup> and the first Council hearing on November 15<sup>th</sup> and the second reading on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Chairman Mitchell** – With the second reading, is that when Council actually votes up or down on whatever recommendation we make?

**Ms. Creasy** – That is typically what occurs. It is a little tight with the new Council. We will see where things go.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – I see where the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission has adopted a regional affordable housing plan. Are the consultants aware of this? Have they been studying it to see what impact it has on the city's comprehensive plan?

**Ms. Koch** – We have begun to review it. We have not had a discussion about how it may impact the plan. That's something we will do and talk about when we meet with you on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Ms. Creasy** – The city's portion of the regional plan is based on the housing study that was just recently completed. That is very clearly linked into that. Looking at it from a regional perspective on the comp plan as a whole will make sense to do.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – Would there be any benefit for the Planning Commission to get a presentation by the District Commission on their housing affordability plan to see how we fit in? We're part of the region. I am unaware of it. I was surprised to read the article in the paper.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – The regional plan is a super-set of Albemarle County's and Charlottesville's individual plans plus extra recommendations for outlying counties. It makes locality by locality recommendations. In Charlottesville's case, it all comes straight from the affordable housing plan that we passed. I think it would be useful to hear from them and to hear what the recommendations are for other counties. I wouldn't say it is a blocking item or super-relevant for this comp plan process. Albemarle has its unique housing plan. That's worth a review. It's pretty close to being passed. The really new piece of this regional plan is for Nelson, Fluvanna, Greene, and Louisa Counties. We're all part of the same metro area and the same overall housing market. It's important for us to keep apprised of what is going on out there. I don't think it necessarily changes anything with regards to this timeline.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – I was just hoping that there was something addressing mass transit routes and how they're connected between counties regionally so they can be taken advantage of for locating affordable housing.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – There's a bit about transportation in that plan, particularly transportation costs from commutes. I think the big thing that will happen with regional transportation is that TJPDC just awarded a contract to a consortium of firms for a transit vision plan. The goal of that process is to create a real overarching vision of what we want to see out of our transit system from frequency to coverage. That will be starting in earnest in the next quarter.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – I don't see affordable housing and mass transit routes to be independent of each other. I think they're closely tied together.

**Ms. Koch** – In terms of the discussion you had with the Rugby/Meadowbrook representatives, we have been compiling responses to FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions). Those types of questions are certainly within there. We are working with the rest of the consultant team to make sure we have responses for those Frequently Asked Questions.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – My question is about the August 31<sup>st</sup> work session and what our goal is coming out of that. Are you planning on giving us an updated draft going into that? Are we planning on coming out of the work session with all of the feedback to get to a final draft?

**Ms. Koch** – Ideally that will be what we hope for given the accelerated schedule we are working under. If coming out of that meeting, we need to revisit the schedule or milestones after that, we will. That will be what we hope to come out with. We will be giving you that map and the land use chapter ahead of that meeting.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Is there any consideration for a September work session? Or is that because the Communications Department can't run the webinar?

**Ms. Koch** – I can speak with Missy about that to see about having that during your September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Is that what you're referring to?

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I would suggest to have it tentatively on the calendar in case there are additional discussion items ahead of going to our joint hearing in October. The overall timeline makes a lot of sense. A December final vote is after the six month delay that was requested by the Slow the Vote people in May. That seems reasonable. My concern is just the number of meetings and amount of work to be done with the timeline. In 2018, we were meeting every week to get the things done. We have offloaded a lot of the work onto you. I would imagine that we would be willing to put in a second meeting in a month to make sure we get this done.

**Ms. Koch** – I am seeing a lot of. “thumbs ups and nods.” Missy will coordinate with you on that.

**Ms. Creasy** – I am looking at the calendar, the advertising, and all of those things that have to happen. There is a lot of ‘balls that have to be tossed up in the air.’ We have some guidance from Council. We're going to need to do the best we can at this point in time to move that forward. If we find that there is something that needs to change along the way, we have to make sure that our governing body is aware of that.

**Chairman Mitchell** – The only comment I will make is that slippage is not an option. We do not want to have to educate a new Council. If it slips, we could be looking at another couple of years.

## 2. Presentation – Rivanna River Corridor Plan

**Nick Morrison** – This is a joint effort between Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. The goal of this phase of this planning project was to develop a vision and action plan for that urban section of the corridor. It is a phased approach. The first phase was existing conditions and an inventory that was completed in 2018. This current phase/visioning phase is occurring right now. Should there be a third phase, that would be getting into more of an in depth implementation and the development of a master plan.

When we're talking about this urban section of the river, we're looking at Penn Park (northern terminus) down to I-64 (southern terminus). This was defined by the technical committee (made up of staff from

the city and county) as a more concentrated effort than what was done in that first phase. That first phase was a very simple, generic study area. It was a half-mile buffer up to the South Fork Reservoir down to Free Bridge near Shadwell to the south. It is a much more concentrated effort in this phase.

This project kicked off in the summer of 2019. We brought the technical committee back. We reviewed the existing maps from Phase I and are working on refining that study area. In September of 2019, we did our first public engagement push. It was a tabling at the Flow River Fest. Throughout the winter of 2020, we started developing a business outreach strategy. We had targeted outreach efforts. COVID threw a wrench in all of those discussions. We had to regroup and think through a different approach. Working through that, we came up with these virtual webinars, which occurred in the fall of 2020. We concurrently did some plan drafting. This year, we are working on the final documentation and drafting the final plan.

**Shirese Franklin** – The steering committee held public meetings via Zoom in September and April. Signs were also placed along the river corridor to direct users to the Urban River Corridor website to offer feedback. In October 2022, webinars were held on Zoom. Notifications for those webinars were sent via mailings and email notifications to the property owners within the project area and to stakeholder groups. A webinar was also held on the Rivanna River Bridge pedestrian crossing feasibility study in November of 2020. There were 70 unique comments gathered on the website. Most centered on protecting and preserving the environment and recreational amenities. Within the public webinars, 44 people attended. We did a participant poll within the webinars. Eighty-eight percent of the participants agreed with the vision statement. Some of the feedback included the need to communicate more active stewardship role protecting the natural environment and ways to encourage more recreation uses. Most participants were overwhelmingly OK with the guiding principles. Public safety measures, protecting historic places and cultural features were very favorable. Environmental protection also scored highly. Nothing scored low among the people who participated.

We also had stakeholder discussions with technical committee members and subject matter experts in the following fields: environmental protection, recreational activities, public health, safety, and welfare, development and redevelopment, historic places and cultural features, and multi-purpose trails and bridges.

We also did a benchmarking. The technical committee helped identify benchmarking communities. We cannot locate a nearly identical community. We did find four with similar themes. They're the ones you see. The common themes were trail networks and access, rich local history, and wanting to foster connections to the water. Some other considerations are accessibility, wayfinding & navigation, environmental considerations, and zoning.

**Mr. Morrison** – Through all of those various touchpoints, this vision statement was crafted. **The Rivanna River, flowing through Charlottesville and Albemarle County, is one of the community's greatest assets. In and near Free Bridge, Woolen Mills, and the Pantops area, the river corridor is and will be a dynamic place where people can experience a natural environment, healthy outdoor activities and venues, peaceful and serene opportunities, and important historic and cultural points of interest.** Based on feedback we got from that steering committee meeting in April of this year, there were a couple of tweaks. That was vetted through the steering committee made up of planning commissioners, elected officials, and citizen appointed people and through the technical committee as well.

To help achieve that overall vision statement are these guiding principles that were developed with looking at environment protection and stewardship, recreational activities, public safety & wellness

measures, new development & redevelopment, historic places & cultural features, and multi-purpose trails and bridges. Those tie back into the higher level recommendation categories.

When we get into the recommendations, this is the implementation matrix. It is separate from the current draft plan. We still have to incorporate that into the template draft. This is a high-level overview of what the implementation matrix would like to help us with those recommendations. In terms of timeframe, there are these information buckets next to the recommendation to provide more context to each recommendation. The timeframe, with ongoing projects and anything that was identified as short-term, was less than five years. Anything that was long-term was more than five years. There is a fiscal impact category in terms of what that cost would be; zero being no fiscal impact beyond just staff time with small, moderate, and large impacts based on those expectations.

I am not going to read all of these recommendations. In terms of environmental protection (high level), we're looking for approaches to protect any sort of sensitive ecological areas, any approved ongoing coordination between the city and the county, particularly in water quality and conservation, and stormwater management principles.

In terms of recreational activities, we're looking at improving connectivity, especially with the trails, not only within the corridor, but to the corridor. We're also looking at improving and expanding the park system within the corridor, and looking at access to the river. That's one thing we heard over and over again. Continuing to support bicycle and pedestrian connections, promoting the use of trails (not only for recreation), but also for commuting traffic. We're looking at ways to incorporate that trail section into the larger network of greenways and blueways and continued support for the regional Three Notched Trail.

**Ms. Franklin** – With this recommendation, the common theme seems to be educating river users on the appropriate response to potential emergency situations, while promoting safe and healthy behavior. Enhancing and preserving the natural beauty and ecological functions of the corridor was an overwhelming theme. The theme of business to scale: small scaled oriented businesses that offer recreational enjoyment of the area was one of the major factors, while still promoting and preserving nature.

Educating the public about historic and cultural activities that shape the river corridor, preserving those sensitive areas, and engaging with local parties with significant ties to the area, such as the Monacan Tribe or participating with The Monticello Local Cultural Department was a prominent theme.

**Sandy Shackelford** – One of the things I want to emphasize that one of the major things with this planning effort is that there is not necessarily one predominant goal for the development of the corridor area. You look at other communities and there's an economic development plan or preservation plan or recreational plan. It was very important to the stakeholders that we discussed this with. It was a confluence of all of these plans together and finding the right balance. The other thing I want to emphasize is that we really relied on the existing land use that was already in place to guide that process. Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville have made it clear that they felt really confident with the land use that have been identified in the river corridor. This was really an effort to support the other activities and development efforts and really define that without going back and reviewing the land use.

**Chairman Mitchell** – When we met back in April/May, there was a wonderful graphic you guys used that showed environmental protection encircling all of the guidelines. I liked that a lot because that is the most important thing we have to worry about. We can talk about this other development stuff. We have to do protection of that river first and foremost. It sounds to me like there was an equalization process



where environmental protection was made equal to all of the other things like development and recreation. Is that what happened?

**Ms. Shackelford** – No. We changed the graphic. It was not our intention to change the priority.

**Chairman Mitchell** – Is environmental protection still the prime directive?

**Ms. Shackelford** – Yes it is. We changed the graphic so there is not that circle. The graphic still indicates that. The discussion that we had was that environmental protection was going to be a goal and had to be the first and most important goal we considered. All other efforts had to relate back to what are going to be the environmental impacts. That is still referenced in the plan. We just didn't use that same graphic.

**Chairman Mitchell** – As long as environmental protection is the prime directive, I am comfortable with what you have.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – You have about 100 action items. Where do you go from here? I am worried about creating another report that is so overwhelming, so many action items that are so disconnected that it goes back on a shelf. What is the implementation for this? What's the prioritization of the action items within each category? Are there action items that can be logically bundled to create less expense and better significance?

**Ms. Shackelford** – We talked about this with the technical committee. One of the things we're really going to be refining before we present a final draft for your consideration is identifying a few really short-term goals that will be our priority items. Those are what we're going to focus on. My thought was that we focus on the foundational action items that are going to be needed to build off many of these other ones. We're focusing on things like inventorying existing infrastructure, conditions, systems, or things like that. We're looking at where there is already a lot of public support, low cost, and focus on what those things are that we can do relatively simply with the existing resources and trying to prioritize the easy things that can be implemented.

**Mr. Morrison** – That's my understanding. I will add that several of those recommendations were identified through the other planning efforts that the county and the city had undertaken. There was some cross-referencing that county and city staff wanted to be done within this plan. Some examples are from the Pantops Master Area Plan. Some of those are underway. Attaching some sort of status on those would be helpful within the implementation framework.

**Ms. Creasy** – Some of the things that led to the volume had to do with a number of parks and rec requests for clarity and potential for grant opportunities. The goal was to try and be as comprehensive as possible to allow for potential grant opportunities to support the plan. We have to find the early 'wins' to keep the plan moving forward.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – If you're trying to be comprehensive, you end with everyone 'throwing up their hands' and never get this done. There really needs to be a clear roadmap. If it's more than one locality working together, how do they work together? Call that out and call out how you're prioritizing these things. I focused on the cultural and historic sections. I find it pretty weak. I don't see the historic organizations in the county and the city involved with this. I don't see where the staff people from both places were involved. I don't see where the Department of Historic Resources was involved. That would have helped with some of the assumptions. You just assumed that everyone wants to be able to visit all of these cultural sites. I expect there's some pretty historic sites along this river that we don't want to

have people going with metal detectors ravaging and destroying. That may not be the case. It takes more than just surveying and listing all of the known cultural sites. It takes an analysis of how they're connected together and the history of the whole area through time. I really find them to be piecemeal and disconnected with no overall clear vision. I also couldn't find the acronym for NPR. It's not listed.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – I found it useful to refocus on topics that I have some confidence in. I was focusing on racial and economic equity as well as affordable housing. If you search for “affordable” in this plan, you get zero hits. That's disappointing. The affordable housing crisis is big in this region and only getting worse. I would love to see that acknowledged in the text of this plan with goals and measurements listed. Would love specific smart growth strategies; talking about ways to prioritize affordable housing with advantages in terms of private land use. I would have liked to have seen ways to increase height and decrease disturbance and smart growth principles listed specifically. There was discussion earlier about an idea of incorporating equity into the text. I do see it discussed a little bit. Transportation is an equity thing. That's admirable. I would like more clarity about what we mean by that. Are we talking about racial equity? Are we talking about economic equity? How are we following through? Just not in the provision of services but in the way we're providing it. I urge you to work with city staff. We have excellent resources on this topic.

**Chairman Mitchell** – You were talking the work that we're doing on River Road. You were talking about protecting the river with buffers and moving development back a little bit. Can you talk about that?

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – I was thinking about a “green fingers” idea; establishing priority areas, not just along the river, but waterways feeding into the river that are prioritized for conservation value and prioritizing areas that are not there more for housing and other land uses.

**Chairman Mitchell** – You're suggesting that moving things back from the river is important. You're thinking about increasing the density and moving that development away from the river so the river would not be impacted by that increased density. Is that correct?

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – That's correct.

**Commissioner Habbab** – I appreciate that the goal of this process has been the protection and restoration enhancement of the river. That's very important. I had a question about the development/redevelopment portion. It said in ongoing “promote high quality design and positive individual impact on all new development and redevelopment projects that are visible from within the river corridor.” That's not visible from within the river pathway/park themselves? That's just the overall developed part?

**Ms. Shackelford** – The corridor refers to the entire buffer, which is basically the river and the immediate adjacent properties. When we say corridor, that's what we're referring to. We're really talking about the impacts on people who are using or recreating on or near the river.

**Commissioner Habbab** – I wanted to make sure I understood that. We want to keep that natural aspect of those trails and not promote visible developments. I want to echo Commissioner Solla-Yates' point on equitable spaces and making sure we have that somewhere written down.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Are we saying we don't want any development visible at all? Or do we want anything that is visible to adhere to aesthetic standards? I have two categories of comments.

I will start with the transportation. There seems to be a tension in this plan behind the primacy of environmental protection and a very significant focus on adding parking directly next to the river. There are a couple of points that loosely say “let’s get shared parking if we can otherwise we’ll do new parking.” The only thing that talks about transit is signage from transit stops. That’s good. It would make sense to have stuff about connections to the river area – both transit and pedestrian/bicyclists. I am also confused about this idea that adding pedestrian facilities means we must add more parking as well. One suggestion is that if we’re going to add any parking that it should be environmentally friendly.

**Ms. Shackelford** – That’s a very fair comment. I think we felt that tension as we were developing the plan. If we are able to move forward with a new crossing across the river, that would actually reduce the demand on parking. There’s also some experience that might indicate that it become an attraction. Our goal was really to focus less on “let’s assume that we need parking. Let’s just continue to assess whether or not we actually need parking.” We’re not necessarily planning it. We’re going to be aware of what those opportunities are. If we need it, we know where we can prioritize it. That’s how we were trying to resolve the tension.

I agree with those points on the trail connections. Some of those actually are addressing the recreation activities section as well. There was a little bit of overlap there. If we can come up with a better way to make that connection, that’s helpful to hear.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I definitely noticed the need to assess before doing it. I appreciated that. It can be a little bit stronger.

The other category of comments is about public health, safety, and wellness measures group of recommendations. I find it a little jarring that the first recommendation(s) is about clearing out a group of people experiencing homelessness to take shelter under the bridge on the Albemarle side. That’s not to say the recommendations are unreasonable. I think they are fairly measured. Is the primacy of that driven by significant outcry you have heard?

**Ms. Shackelford** – That one was actually softened significantly from the original language based on our conversations with the public, chief of police, and other public safety officials. What we really wanted to emphasize is that it wasn’t really about driving people who are homeless out of their sheltering locations. It was more about “let’s find them safer alternatives.” That’s what we’re really trying to communicate. If that’s not what is being communicated, that’s really important for us to know.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I don’t find the individual recommendations to be too harsh. They’re pretty measured and reasonable. One point three could be to use some specificity about what those public health impacts are that we’re mitigating. It would help to move it down the list unless it really is the most important thing which brings me to the public health and safety thing I think when I go to the river. I am thinking about the dog who went into the river and died two years ago. Every time I go floating down the river, we get a report in the newspaper that bacteria levels are elevated and nobody should go into the river. Every time I go, it comes up in conversation. I was surprised there wasn’t something about water quality and safety of the water.

**Chairman Mitchell** – I am looking at the recommendations regarding recreational activities. There’s a recommendation that we consider installing rapids. Does that make sense?

**Ms. Shackelford** – That was an initiative Albemarle Parks and Rec had been considering. That’s why it was included. It was something they had been investigating.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I didn't know you could install rapids.

I was a little surprised to not see anything about the River Road Industrial Corridor and the effect of that on the river and what might be good for it moving forward. There's a lot of industrial development and impervious surface in the floodplain. It's a really good place and opportunity for development. It is one of the few remaining places where you can have light industrial in the city. It would have been helpful if we had thought about that and adopted in this plan. That could have guided our comp plan discussion of that.

The paragraph about the Free Bridge was confusing. It could use a quick rewrite.

**Commissioner Russell** – I also felt the historic section was a little disjointed. I do appreciate that you all incorporated a lot of the things that I had added in terms of additional historic resources. We could do a better job. It seems that "here's the history" and then goes into other elements of the plan. The Richmond case study really says beautifully "helping visitors develop a fuller understanding of the different aspects of different peoples' lives throughout history of the region will help them establish stronger connections and understanding." I think that we're not quite making that point. Why are we talking about the history? What could that mean in experiencing any of these opportunities within the corridor?

Since a previous edit, you synthesized the recommendations to not have sub-bullets and consolidated those. I did feel that the recommendation around partnering with the Monacan Tribe seemed a little presumptuous. There was text under that said "Continue to foster a stronger relationship with tribe elders to support their initiatives." I am eager to jump into the hows of everything.

Could you tell me a little more about Phase III? What would that look like? What would that potentially cost?

**Ms. Shackelford** – Phase III would be more of a design plan. The Richmond plan ended up with a master plan where they put things on paper. They identified where they were going to do preservation efforts and the historical sites they were going to renovate. They put it on paper. They put cost estimates down and created an implementation plan. As far as the cost, I have no 'ballpark' to provide for that.

**Commissioner Russell** – In response to that, we talk about encouraging high quality design. I would really like to see more innovation and above and beyond state required stormwater management. We don't have any 'teeth' to do that. Wouldn't we need to have some sort of overlay come from this plan in order to implement these things? When would be the time to do that?

**Ms. Shackelford** – Without an overlay to schedule out when exactly all of these initiatives could occur, one of the things we're going to be putting together as a 'next steps' section at the end of this based on your feedback, that might be where we can reflect some of these if we want to move this towards being prepared to go into a master planning opportunity. We can talk about what needs to be in place to do that.

**Commissioner Russell** – Maybe it is through the master plan work that a recommendation comes out of that and leads to an ordinance overlay or revised design standards.

**Chairman Mitchell** – I will reiterate my interest in protecting the river as it relates to the environment. I have been to those cities that we used to benchmark. None of them are like Charlottesville. These riverfronts are very developed; more developed than what we're envisioning. When you're thinking

about what we want the Rivanna Corridor to look like, none of those five sites we ‘visited’ are what we want to be. We don’t want to be that developed based on the emphasis on protecting the environment and the river.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – In the plan there are two things that we’re saying for environmental protection. It is not so much in the recommendations but in the text of the plan. One of them is the physical and measurable environmental quality. The other is this more vague sense of being out in secluded wilderness. The prime importance is to protect the actual water quality and environmental quality of the river. It is also important to make it a more accessible place. The idea of reorienting nearby development towards the river rather than the whole city ‘turning its back’ on it to the point it is this industrial backwater, which ends up being really bad for the environment, is a really good idea. If you have apartments or restaurants that front the river and have access to it that would create a positive feedback loop where we could care more about the quality of the river and more people would be able to use the river. That might detract from this current sense of being out in the wilderness. It is important more city residents be able to use the river.

**Chairman Mitchell** – I agree to some degree. I agree more with what Lyle was proposing. We do have development on the river. We have buffer, some green space, and then things away. I would not like to see that development right against the river like in Lynchburg and Richmond.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Having development nearby and front on the river area open up to it and provide access to it would be productive.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – It might be useful to talk about parking strategies of parking under and prioritizing storage for more sustainable methods like bicycles. I would like your thoughts on affordable housing, racial, and economic equity. I didn’t get that feedback.

**Ms. Shackelford** – We’re trying to be mindful of the other efforts that are happening. There were some other housing plan efforts. It really wasn’t in the scope of what we were discussing at that point. We’ll need to discuss with staff after this point to see where those opportunities might be to pull some references into this plan. As far as racial equity, I don’t think that we specifically defined what we were trying to do when we were looking at equity other than looking at what are the opportunities and the lack of service or under service that is overlooked. Those people are not participating as regularly in the process. That’s an indicator of equity.

**Mr. Morrison** – I will touch on some of the work that the MPO is doing, specifically an equity in transportation study. That is overlapping of these things. They don’t happen in a vacuum. That’s one component looking at access. There is some ongoing work to be able to build an assessment tool of certain trip generators or trackers. That could be defined as that river corridor. There is ongoing work that could possibly tie into that more specific realm.

**Ms. Creasy** – We have a number of comments. We’ll work with the group to work on how best to integrate. A lot of the comment areas that you noted were things the steering committee spent a lot of time discussing and trying to sort through. We’re working to try and make sure we’re representing both the city and county in some of the things you all came up with were things that one or the other may have been focused on. We’re trying to balance those things out and make this as valuable for both partners as part of this. You had some really good thoughts to add. Some of the things might be beyond the scope. There might be some things that can be considered as recommendations or next steps.

**Chairman Mitchell** – There would be value for us if you catalog things that might be beyond the scope. We know that so we don't keep pushing those issues. When does the county look at this?

**Ms. Shackelford** – They're still trying to determine their process for how they're going to 'walk' it through their process. There was some debate over whether they would be adopting it as an amendment or a 'stand-alone' plan.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM