

**Planning Commission Work Session**

**August 24, 2021 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**Virtual Meeting**

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

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Dowell, Commissioner Habbab

**Staff Present:** Patrick Cory, Missy Creasy, Lachen Parks, Dannan O’Connell, Alex Ikefuna, Brennen Duncan, Lisa Robertson

The Chairman called the work session to order at 5:00 PM.

**1. Preliminary Discussion Park Street Christian Church PUD**

**Commissioner Habbab Statement – I have a statement to make regarding my participation in the Planning Commission’s consideration of the MACAA site PUD application and Park Street Christian Church PUD application. I am employed by BRW Architects. As a result of the annual salary that I receive from BRW Architects, I am required to disqualify myself from participating in the transactions. If anyone would like to review the detailed written disclosure statement that I have filed with the Secretary of the Planning Commission Council, that statement is available upon request.**

**I am involved on the periphery of these projects.**

**Commissioner Habbab left the meeting following the reading of the above statement.**

**Dannan O’Connell, City Planner –** Piedmont Housing Alliance, in partnership with BRW Architects, Timmons Group and Park Street Christian Church, are proposing to develop the property at 1200 Park Street (Parcel ID# 470002120) outside the current by-right land use designation. 1200 Park Street is approximately 7.43 acres with road frontage on Park Street and Cutler Lane and is currently developed with existing church and childcare uses. The Comprehensive Land Use Map for this area calls for Low Density Residential. The applicants are proposing a rezoning to PUD to accommodate a plan for two new buildings containing 50 apartments for age-restricted senior housing, along with landscaping, a new vehicular access point and 54 new parking spaces.

**Applicant Presentation**

**Bruce Wardell, BRW Architects –** The materials that we are presenting to you tonight have some slight differences from what were responses to a series of community meetings.

This project is a collaboration between the Piedmont Housing Alliance (Non-Profit Developer), Timmons Group (Architectural Firm), and the Congregation of Park Street Christian Church. A couple of years ago, they really began to focus on their commitment to contributing to the need for affordable housing in our community and began to understand the resources that they have with the land that they own surrounding their property. Their desire to contribute in some significant way to senior affordable housing was the genesis of this project.

Over the past couple of months, we have had a number of meetings. The first meeting was really an informal invitation to the community surrounding Park Street Christian Church. The purpose of the meeting

was to introduce the community to the project. It will provide 50 affordable housing units on the property that Park Street Christian Church owns. Following that meeting, we followed that up with the required entitlement community meeting at Charlottesville High School in the library on August 10<sup>th</sup>. We're now at the Planning Commission Work Session. What you will see tonight has some feedback, some response to the information and the questions, and the issues that were brought up in both community meetings. What is driving the schedule forward for this is a target that you see on the schedule for March 2022, which is the deadline for the low income housing tax credit application. That happens once a year. It's a competitive application. We have to reverse engineer our schedule to meet that deadline. That deadline will require a rezoning prior to submitting the application.

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This is an overview of the site. You can see that it goes along Park Street. Park Street goes down and parallels the John Warner Parkway. It is the old major way to access downtown. It is on the edge of the Lochlyn Hills Neighborhood.

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This is a diagram of the overall site. You can see the main church sanctuary. There is also an operating preschool that is adjacent to the sanctuary with parking along Cutler Lane. There's a heavily wooded section of the site that goes west down to Park Street and north to a heavily wooded and primarily critical slope that has walking trails that connect to the Rivanna Trail. That's a walking trail already used.

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Some of the characteristics of this site are that there is a parking lot right off Cutler Lane that has been there since the buildings were built in the 1960s. The rear yards of the church and preschool are outdoor education areas and play areas. Below that is this heavily wooded slope that goes down to Park Street. Park Street goes around to the north and becomes Rio Road. Cutler Lane is on the lower right hand side. You can see the beginning of the neighborhood and the texture of the neighborhood there.

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This is the zoning map. The site is currently zoned R-1. It is adjacent to an R-2 site to the west and a good amount of open park space that surrounds that area. In the current proposed land use map, you can see that the density of this area has been upgraded on the proposed land use map. It is that kind of strategic upgrading of the density of the site that we have looked at as we thought about developing the 50 affordable housing units on this site.

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This shows some photographic images of the road as it passes Cutler Lane. One of the things we are requesting in the site is for waiver of the sidewalk along this road. You can see the topography that comes down to the very edge of the pavement in this area. That is part of the critical slopes that go up towards the main, level part of the property where we are proposing to do our development. You can see why the physical condition that begins to effect the ability to any kind of reasonable way to introduce a sidewalk on this side of the road. There is a sidewalk on the west side of Park Street along this area.

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This is a depiction of our proposal. It is two buildings that will comprise of 50 housing units. The tan areas are the critical slopes. The solid green lines are proposed connections to the Rivanna Trail. For those 50 units, we are providing 54 parking spaces. We have placed the buildings on the opposite side of the site from the neighborhood. There is a significant slope on this side of the property. These buildings will be screened from Park Street and, to a larger extent, screened from the neighborhood.

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In building 1, there are 27 proposed units. In building 2, there are 23 proposed units. One of the other concepts that is fundamental to the church is to provide an inter-generational community with the preschool, with the church, the fellowship of the church, and the facilities. They imagine developing a series of relationships with the people that live in these units. The children from the preschool and the residents of the units can begin to building relationships with each other and make this an inter-generational community that is fostered and shepherded by the congregation of the church.

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This is a basic conceptual section. The buildings are three story buildings. They are set down the hill from the existing building. Cutler Lane is on the right, Park Street is on the left, and the proposed parking is in between the church facilities and the proposed building locations.

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This is a conceptual idea of the two buildings. Piedmont Housing Alliance will put solar panels on all of their buildings. The buildings are built to passive house standards. These two buildings will be built to a quality that is well above what you would normally expect for affordable housing. You can see how the parking is tucked between the new housing and the church facilities. You can also see how the existing tree coverage between the buildings and Park Street will continue to provide the screening on Park Street along this site.

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This is a conceptual sketch of the new buildings from the entrance to the parking area. You can see the slope up the hill to the preschool on the right. You can see the two buildings related to each other on the left. You can see how the site continues to slope down to the left where we can get some lower level units on one level below. All of these units are affordable. All of them will be accessible with elevators in each of the buildings.

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The precedent we thought about for this project is the development that has happened at McGuffey Hill. You have a fairly intense development of apartment buildings on the side of a hill overlooking the intersection of High Street and McIntire. You can see the tree cover provides a pretty significant visual buffer between the housing on the side of the slope and the public sphere.

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These are some visual images of the site. This is the view of the church building from Cutler Lane. There is a model of the volume of the proposed building beyond that. You can see that volume where the roof of the proposed building is below the roof of both the preschool and the church.

This is a view from Cutler Lane looking up towards the church at where we're proposing to bring the drive in. This is the volume that you would see from Cutler Lane and the neighborhood side of the property. You can see the sidewalk going up Cutler Lane on the west side of Cutler Lane. You can see the two church buildings and the proposed structures to the left.

From Park Street, the picture on the left is the summer view of the buildings. The picture on the right is where those buildings actually are up the hill from Park Street behind the vegetation.

**Scott Dunn, BRW Architects** – At the request of the city, a traffic impact study was required as part of this PUD process. The traffic study looked at this site and the MACAA site as one project. Both developments are included as one traffic study. Specific to this site, we looked primarily at the Cutler Lane and North Avenue intersections. The North Avenue intersection is signalized. The Cutler Lane intersection is not signalized. At the signalized intersection at North Avenue, with the development in place, we see a level of service A in the morning and a level of service B in the afternoon on North Avenue. At Cutler Lane, we see level of service C in the morning and level of service D in the afternoon. Based on the traffic volumes we were looking at, the proposed apartments generate about 350 trips per day with 25 trips in the morning and 35 trips in the afternoon. This amount of traffic doesn't warrant any geometric improvements at either location. There have been some concerns expressed regarding traffic impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods.

**Jonathan Showalter, BRW Architects** – We had two community meetings. Some things we heard in those meetings were concerns about increased traffic in the neighborhood. Whenever there is development, there is concern about how it is going to impact the traffic. One of their concerns is traffic on Wilder Drive. It is fairly narrow. People leaving this development using Wilder Drive will lead to increasing traffic on Wilder Drive. We looked at decreasing traffic or keeping it from increasing here. One option we're looking at is a right turn only out of this site onto Cutler Lane and down to Park Street to exit. Another item that the neighbors mentioned as an existing issue was the sight distance looking right onto Park Street. We have been looking at that. It appears that we can fix that through clearing brush. Those are two initial concerns that we addressed there.

**Mr. Wardell** – What you see here are the top issues that were expressed by the community in the first two community meetings. The interaction at Park Street and Cutler Lane was a concern. The cut-through traffic at Wilder Lane was another concern. There were also issues about the loss of trees and the scale of the project.

**Kurt Keesecker, BRW Architects** – Before we were done with our presentation, we were asked to call out any differences between the packets you received from August 3<sup>rd</sup> and what was recently uploaded. Generally, the content is the same. There were no changes in the update that we just sent over. The changes are as follows.

- We shifted the parking areas to avoid some critical slopes and be able to add a dumpster at the end.
- We changed the driveway pattern to avoid a couple of trees that neighbors were concerned about losing (big specimen trees) in the big amenity green space on Cutler.
- We added a few more trees in our parking area. We're trying to make that more like a landscape parking area instead of a typical parking zone.
- We have included hand-sketched perspectives. We did not include the matrix and comp plan comments. They're the same. We haven't changed any of that content.
- The August 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation had a dashed line running beside the parking lot that inferred some kind of easement there that would allow the trail to move through in front of the buildings. In talking with the Rivanna Trail Foundation, they prefer that run around behind the buildings. We have started to

talk more about those formal connections to the Rivanna Trail running through the woods and not the parking lot.

## **Public Comments**

**Vikki Bravo** – I am with Congregation Beth Israel and part of IMPACT with 27 congregations committed to solving community problems. I am here to voice my and IMPACT's support for the Park Street Christian Church proposal. Having a safe and stable place to come home to is the foundation for our wellbeing and mental health. We are in a housing crisis. Over 4,000 families in our community pay more than half their income towards housing. Over 1,000 of those are senior households. We have senior citizens who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. We have seniors cutting back on their medication. We have seniors who are isolated because they can't afford to live near their churches, community centers, and other sources of companionship. Many of these seniors have lived in this community most of their lives. Shouldn't senior members have safety and security in their golden years? Shouldn't they be able to pay their rent and have enough money for other necessities? Safe shelter is a basic human need. Together we can create a place where seniors can live well, stay involved, and continue to contribute to our community.

**Phillip Schmidt** – What nobody has said a word about is the community you're putting this into. This is a stable fully integrated middle-class community. It is the sort of community where people are investing in their homes. It is the sort of community zoning is trying to protect. It is the sort of community that most cities would be proud to have. This project was revealed to the neighborhood four weeks ago. This is bad timing. The area is changing. Park Street has 320 residences that are going to go in on Rio and John Warner Parkway. In Downtown, we have 250,000 square feet of office space that is opening up. What is going to be the impact? What is the zoning actually going to look like? There are lots of controversial proposals. We're looking at 130 units into an owner occupied neighborhood. That's a radical change. We don't need to do it now. Those low income housing credits are going to be around. There is no hurry on doing this. This church has been sitting there for 60 years as a good neighbor. Why we have to do this with four weeks notice? The purpose of zoning is to protect property owners.

**Constance Johnson** – I was involved in the MACAA proposal a couple of years ago. My concern is about the neighborhood. I am for affordable housing. The project looks like the MACAA project a few years ago. They told us that a retired school teacher can live there. My sister is a retired teacher. She couldn't have afforded to live there with those numbers. Who is the target for this affordable housing?

**Cecilia Mills** – This is a heavily wooded section of town. My concern is for the trees. I just want to harken to speak for the trees. This is an unspoiled wilderness that we treasure. It is an affordable neighborhood. My neighbor didn't believe the traffic numbers. She sat at the intersection of Cutler and North on Monday from 4:45 to 5:30 and counted 750 cars. That's a better way to judge what level of service. That included cars turning to or from North and Cutler as well. Since the preschool traffic had already gone at that point, that wasn't part of her count. This plan feels a little 'pushy' in a time of crisis. If you put a parking lot in, I would like for it to be smaller. It could be smaller and not cause runoff down to the stream. Meadow Creek is at the bottom of this. I do have concerns about that. This is a neighborhood with no commercial services around it. The massing and scale is not in keeping with what currently exists there.

## **Planning Commission Feedback/Discussion**

**Commissioner Russell** – I would be interested in knowing more about the residents' concern about the four week notice. Can you tell me more about that?

**Mr. Wardell** – On July 27<sup>th</sup>, we had an initial community meeting with Park Street Christian Church. The conversations have been very informal with the Church for a long time. They were beginning to understand what was involved. The congregation is not familiar with how project development happens. There were some conversations that they were having internally about how to go about this. The plans really began to crystalize in May and June of this year. As soon as we began to have more crystallized plans, we could communicate what could happen on the site. The Church called a neighborhood meeting. It wasn't required. It was an informational meeting. The first required meeting was on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Chairman Mitchell** – We are probably 4 or 5 months away from making a recommendation. The public has 4 or 5 months to advise us. Council will probably vote on this in February. There is still lots of time for public input.

**Mr. Wardell** – The 3000 hours that Habitat spent with the neighbors was not the 3000 hours that they spent with the neighborhoods around Southwood. It was 3000 hours that they spent with the residents of Southwood developing and designing their own neighborhood. The precedent of spending that amount of time with the surrounding neighborhood is not a one for one comparison. We called a meeting as soon as we felt like we had information that was dependable and where we could give specific information about what kind of development could happen.

**Sunshine Mathon, Piedmont Housing Alliance** – As Mr. Wardell mentioned, the timeline is driven by a March Low Income Tax Application Process and having to work backwards from that timing. On the front end, we started having conversations with Mr. Wardell and his team and Park Street Christian Church 4 or 5 months ago. It takes a great deal of time to work through what the possibilities are on the site. We did not finalize a partnership in the last couple of months. It has been a very compressed process from our side. We went out to the community as quickly as possible to show them drawings and ideas to respond to as soon as we possibly could.

**Commissioner Stolzenbeg** – With parking, there are 54 spaces for 50 units. That is the amount required by code. In your application narrative, you were going to provide parking to meet the amount that you have seen in actual use at other PHA properties. Are you saying that you are exceeding that amount? Are you putting more parking than what you need here?

**Mr. Mathon** – Our informal assessment of the parking needs at other similar senior communities amongst the properties we own and operate is around three quarters of a parking spot per apartment. Because we are in a neighborhood where there is some on street parking but not a lot, we also have to allow for visitors, JAUNT, and other types of parking. We don't have a lot of overflow capacity without impacting the neighborhoods significantly. We went through a process of evaluating the right number of parking spots. There is no magic rule way to predict it absolutely. We felt this was the right balance point between keeping parking at a minimum and not overburdening the neighborhood with a potential peak time with visitors.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – For Friendship Court, you submitted some parking data a few years ago to City Council to ask for an addition of a parking modified zone. In that study, the peak usage was a little under .75 spaces per unit. The on street parking was not being utilized by residents. That .75 included visitors. The numbers of cars registered onsite was significantly lower than that. Is it the case that senior housing requires more parking than generally available housing? My inclination would be the opposite.

**Mr. Mathon** – There are some differences with Friendship Court. Friendship Court is family housing, not senior focused. There are some seniors living onsite. I think Friendship Court is unique amongst the other properties we operate because of its core location (heart of the city) and the proximity to the central bus zone. Even though people may not have a choice about where they live based on their income, I think

there's a little bit of a soft selection process that happens there in Friendship Court that's different than our senior communities. I would agree with you in principle. If you look at other family properties that we have, we don't necessarily have the same parking counts as we do at Friendship Court in an informal count level. I think Friendship Court is a mis-comparison. If you compare our other family properties to our senior properties, I think you'll see the senior properties are a lower count as a comparison.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – In looking at the unit mix, it is about half two bedroom, a few three bedroom, and a little under half one bedroom. What made you come to that unit mix? I would expect, for senior housing, it would primarily be people without kids in the house. It would tend to skew towards one bedroom. Is the intent to be co-living situations where you put multiple seniors in a unit? Is that driven by the parking requirement? If you add more units, you would have to add more parking.

**Mr. Mathon** – It is proclivity of the low income tax program. The way the state of Virginia structures the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LI HTC), they do not differentiate between a senior community and a family community in their guidelines. It is a very competitive process to get funding. You have to check every possible box you can in terms of getting points to be competitive. They have an artificial cap at the percentage of one bedroom apartments in any given property to be able to check a certain number of points. If we had our druthers, we probably would have had a higher preponderance of one bedrooms compared to two. If we want to get this project funded, we have to check the boxes where we can. In some ways, we have control over that. In some ways, we have to go with the way the funding is structured.

**Chairman Mitchell** – There are a lot of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. We need extra bedrooms for that.

**Mr. Mathon** – We certainly have that condition in many of our properties. We also have some seniors with live-in caretakers where a second bedroom is necessary as well.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – What is the age requirement? Does there have to be a member of the household that is above that threshold? Does it mean kids are banned?

**Mr. Mathon** – It means that the primary leaseholder has to meet the senior threshold. They could have grandchildren living with them. They could be living with a partner who is younger than the senior age. They could have their adult child living with them if they're both in the lease.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Do you feel that this proposal is the boldest, most community serving proposal that you could make either financially viable or practically viable? Is this a cautious proposal because you are worried about getting it passed or in a different scenario, you might be able to house more families in need?

**Mr. Mathon** – Every time we look at a project like this, you have to balance a wide variety of priorities and feasibilities. Some of the site challenges are critical slopes, available land, and the existing tree cover. We want to be responsible and responsive to that and the potential for how much surface parking we're going to be building, the fundability, and the number of units we need to have to pass the critical funding threshold. At the same time, keep height in place that is neighborhood sensitive and make sure we have elevator accessible buildings. There are many factors that can come to bear in terms of that decision making process. Is this the only solution we could have come forward with? Probably not. If you looked at pure and raw numbers of how many units could go on this site, it probably would be more than what we're showing. As a developer that wants to be context sensitive and sensitive to what the church wants to see, that was part of the negotiation process (the impact on their land as it currently exists), what the neighborhood wants to see, and what is achievable from a funding perspective. The larger number of units we propose, the bigger the

funding gap. Construction costs are continuing to skyrocket in unprecedented ways. We're trying to balance all of those pieces together. There's no perfect answer. This proposal is the one we want to build.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – Can you clarify the significance of LI HTC funding? Is that important to the success of this project?

**Mr. Mathon** – The project will not happen without low income tax credits. Ninety-five percent of the affordable housing across the nation gets built on an annual basis utilizing the LI HTC program. It is the largest public/private enterprise nationwide. Its singular purpose is to build affordable rental housing. You cannot build affordable rental housing without LI HTC funding. It probably covers 50 to 55 percent of the construction costs. You build on top of that 5 to 10 additional layers of funding in order to make a project meet the depth of affordability that we want to achieve and make the project viable over the long term. The baseline, critical funding source is LI HTC.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – I understand a little bit about the parking story. There is an existing very large surface lot there with relatively little tree cover. Is there a possibility of using that as a resource to meet parking requirements and different uses and possibly introduce some trees into that existing, impermeable surface?

**Mr. Wardell** – Using that parking for any kind of resourcing for parking for the housing units would create an unusable connection between the two because of the topography, the distance, and the remoteness. That parking lot was built when the church was built and before many of the zoning and planning standards were established. That part of the property is not intended to be part of the scope of this project. As the church decides how it may want to improve their property over time, I am certain that the kind of landscape and sustainability of anything they would do would be part of their consideration. It is not part of the scope of what we're looking at right here.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – I understand the motor vehicle story of the site. Increasingly, people are talking to me about bicycles. Senior communities are increasingly bicycle communities. How does that story work?

**Mr. Mathon** – There are many details with bike parking being one of them. That has not been determined. This is not the site planning phase. This is the zoning phase. With every project that we look at moving forward, sufficient bike parking is a critical part of necessary transportation infrastructure. It will be part of the story when the site planning process gets underway.

**Chairman Mitchell** – If we do vote to approve this PUD, are we able to restrict the demographics into perpetuity so that the demographics would be for senior housing?

**Lisa Robertson, City Attorney** – When a proposed PUD is submitted, that is a rezoning application. The applicant is describing for you the specific project that they're proposing to build. That project will have the characteristics described in the PUD development plan, including the narrative that comes with that and proffers that are submitted. You do have the ability to recommend approval of the specific project that's been described to you. This is not like a Special Use Permit where you have the ability to come up with conditions of approval yourself.

**Chairman Mitchell** – We cannot restrict this into perpetuity to senior demographics?

**Ms. Robertson** – Not unless the applicant PUD development plan says “this specific project is for a senior living community for people who have these characteristics.”

**Chairman Mitchell** – Applicant, you have been given guidance from counsel. I suggest that you take guidance from counsel into consideration when you submit your application.

Questions about the traffic.

**Brennen Duncan, Traffic Engineer** – I have met with the applicant and Timmons to go over what we would expect from a traffic impact analysis. We agreed that doing both of these projects in one study did make sense. They did send over their preliminary traffic study. I don't yet have a final version of it. As far as the numbers go, they had contacted me. With a lot of the traffic studies, there was concern from the neighbors about volumes now versus pre-COVID and what they're going to look like post-COVID. We did do an adjustment. I am comfortable with the numbers in the study. We took the existing numbers and inflated them to pre-COVID numbers and inflated that to regular traffic. As far as the raw numbers go, I am happy with the traffic report. I know the applicant, with the church site in particular, they had noted they're cutting back some of the foliage at the corner of Cutler. I did have conversations with them about maybe even possibly cutting into the critical slopes there to get better sight distance. That's currently a manmade critical slope on that hill. I believe that we have it in our code. If critical slope disturbance is to support a roadway, there is a waiver for that. That's something I would be in favor of if we can get as much sight distance in there. I believe they did note in their traffic study that it is below the recommended sight distance for an intersection as it is currently today. It's really nothing to do with this project. If we can improve that that would definitely be better. In our bicycle and pedestrian masterplan, that sidewalk they're asking to waive is one of the priorities of the neighborhood in getting down to the intersection with the Rivanna Trail. They also note in the traffic study about using the bus stop. The only bus stop that currently runs is north to south. The bus stop is on the west side, opposite side of Park Street from this development. There's currently no way to get across that. I would probably recommend that, as part of this development, we look at some sort of crossing at Cutler or somewhere around there. If this is going to be an elderly development, it is unrealistic to expect them to walk to get to the signal at North Street. There's no sidewalk on that stretch between Cutler and North. There's really no way to get to that signal and get across to the other side.

**Chairman Mitchell** – One of the reasons they wanted to avoid doing the sidewalks is because of the critical slope issues. There's a creek to the north of Park Street. Is this far enough away from the creek not to impact the creek? If it is, are we going to be able to get our engineering engaged to develop this so that it will have a limited impact on the creek?

**Mr. Duncan** – The other issue here is they don't want to cut into that bank. The existing pavement width there is around 35 feet. With our current standards and design manual, you only need 11 feet for each lane. There should be enough room there. A climbing lane is another thing in the bike and pedestrian masterplan: a climbing lane coming from Melbourne up the hill. There should be enough room there to install a 5 foot sidewalk and a 5 foot climbing lane and still have room for two travel lanes with very little impact to the slopes.

**Chairman Mitchell** – In general, they're trending towards asking for a waiver for other reasons. Should I be worried about the creek as it relates to this project?

**Ms. Creasy** – We're still in the early phases of evaluation. I don't know if we received any comments specific to that. We are noting that tonight.

**Chairman Mitchell** – My objective was to flag the applicant. That will be something I will be watching very carefully.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – For the part of the presentation that I saw and the preliminary review, I am pleased with how the concept plan minimizes significant importance to most of the trees. We preserved the trees on the hillside, critical slope. It still remains a wooded site. With the concept plan, I am fine with what is being proposed.

**Commissioner Russell** – You have me thinking about the importance of transit and ability to access that. I am not sure I appreciate where someone can/can't get to. Be thinking about that. Be thinking about the accessibility of the site for those without vehicles.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – I would like to applaud the church and everyone involved with this project. This seems like a great proposal. It is exactly the sort of need we have in the community. It's great to see you guys come together to use your land to make this happen. I would like to see a crosswalk there if you're going to ask for a waiver. If you can build the sidewalk without impacting the bend, that would be great. That might require a beacon given the curve to make it safe to cross the street. I would also urge you to look to see if you can be a little bolder with this plan; to add more units potentially without increasing the footprint or the pervious surface of the proposal. Whether that be adding a floor because your height is beneath that. The visual impact is roughly nothing. I don't think affordable senior housing is something that we need to be ashamed of and hide in the woods. It's Ok if people can see it. To the extent we can house more seniors in need, I would encourage you to do so.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – This is a project, in concept, the community can have some civic pride in. I am seeing solar panels and affordable housing for seniors. Many people have a very negative view of affordable housing, negative for the community. This, in concept, strikes me as a different story. I think it is a more positive one and more relevant to the future. We can elevate it.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – This is a great conceptual start to the project. It is very skillful in its design of minimizing the impact of multi-unit, larger buildings within a residential district. It very nicely preserves the critical slopes and trees. It works well with the church becoming an ancillary use behind the church, keeping the frontage from the road. I think this is a fantastic start to the project. It's a process. We have many months to go. I am very excited about this project.

**Chairman Mitchell** – I like what you are attempting to do. I only ask that you do something to guarantee that it will be senior housing and not morph into something else. I also ask that you work with the engineers to make sure you protect the stream and do a good job of presenting something to the engineers that will help them become comfortable with the protection of the critical slopes.

**Ms. Creasy** – The applicant had a number of questions that were part of their application. It might be a good idea to make sure that those have been addressed.

**Mr. Wardell** – Mr. Mathon has a good, concise summary of PHA's strategy towards long-term affordable housing. If you would like to hear that summary, that might help you frame your expectations over this process.

**Chairman Mitchell** – Let's go through the list. There are a couple of technical questions we didn't attempt to answer.

**Mr. Keesecker** – The first question was to make sure we were on the same page that the PUD was the correct approach to this site. There are other rezoning options that would help us achieve this density. The PUD allows us to be transparent and provide the expectations for the community and makes some promises in a more direct way. That's why we chose the PUD. We wanted to make those promises. We don't have a

mix of housing types. We have clustered our housing here. We just wanted to make sure there won't be any surprises about approaching this as a PUD.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – You could proffer those rather than submitting them as a PUD site plan. If we can reduce the ad hoc zoning we have around the city, it is going to reduce the workload with the staff over the long run.

**Mr. Keesecker** – We felt the proffer process is a little less transparent to the neighborhood and those that are trying to understand what we're trying to do. As a team, we decided a PUD was more revealing and easier to 'digest.' You didn't have to make as many proffers. We will have some proffers to guarantee some of those things that we want to have included. It gives that better guarantee in the future as well. Any change to this would require a change to the PUD.

**Ms. Creasy** – They have asked one question concerning what the church would have to do if they had development ideas that they wanted to do later. If this is rezoned to a PUD, any change to the site would have to go through a PUD process. They would have to come forward through this process again for any changes that they make to their site. It's a good awareness item at this front part of the discussion.

**Mr. Keesecker** – There's a question we will end up asking if we can have a dialogue after this meeting with staff. The church's plans will probably not come together fast enough to be included in the final PUD package. We generally know what their parameters are programmatically. We wanted to try to define a future church area without getting too specific about the exact footprint. We can most likely make some promises about how tall or how much expansion the church would do within some limits. We're working with the church on this as a separate issue. We may have to get some guidance from you on how we can include that possibility without being so specific that it is limiting to the church. They're not expected to or plan to expand their sanctuary, which drives the parking load. They're generally going to expand the preschool and provide a fellowship hall proper. They have to move their chairs out of the way to have a fellowship hall and move the chairs back to have worship service. They want to have a separate room for fellowship. We may ask for help to build that into our application.

**Commissioner Lahendro** – In fairness to the community, they should know as much as possible about what the church is planning to do now and in the future.

**Mr. Keesecker** – We mentioned it in the community meetings. We highlighted the area where the church is likely going to expand a few years from now. Their plans are far away. They're dependent on their own funding. If that ends up being a footprint we need to put down, we will try to do that as best as we can. We definitely want them to know what the plans are. We can ask the rest of our questions at a different time. These other questions related to the formality of how to register the easements for the trail crossings and how to make those connections are questions the staff can help us with.

## 2. Preliminary Discussion MACAA Site PUD

**Dannan O'Connell, City Planner** – Piedmont Housing Alliance, in partnership with BRW Architects, Timmons Group, MACAA and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, are proposing to develop the properties at 1021, 1023 and 1025 Park Street (Parcel IDs# 470008000, 470011000, and 47000710) outside the current by-right land use designation. The three parcels consist of approximately 9.3 acres with road frontage on Park Street and Route 250. The Comprehensive Land Use Map for this area calls for Low Density Residential. The applicants are proposing a rezoning to PUD to accommodate a plan for a mix of apartments, townhomes and duplexes, non-residential childcare space, and 147 parking spaces. Prior to

submitting an application to the City, PHA and partners are looking for feedback from the Planning Commission and surrounding neighborhood. On August 12, 2021 the applicants held a community meeting with adjacent property owners to receive feedback on the proposed development on this site. Concerns raised by the public included increased traffic, questions over allowed non-commercial uses, and preservation of existing landscaping and trails on-site.

**Commissioner Dowell Statement read by Ms. Creasy – I am required to disqualify myself from participating in this transaction of the Commission. The nature of my conflict of interest is the annual salary that I receive as a MACAA employee. If anybody would like to review the more detailed written disclosure statement, that has been filed with the Secretary of the Planning Commission. Ms. Dowell can participate in the Park Street application.**

**Chairman Mitchell** – There are 2 or 3 questions that I would defer to staff to answer.

**Bruce Wardell, Applicant Presentation** – The process for this proposal is very similar to the one we just reviewed. The project is significantly different. The collaboration is between Piedmont Housing Alliance, BRW Architects, Timmons Group, MACAA, and Habitat for Humanity.

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We have the same driving schedule. This project depends on a successful application for Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which is the same March submission deadline. The scheduled is generated by the reverse engineering of the entitlement process to meet that March deadline.

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This project is the current MACAA site, which is entered off of Park Street just north of the 250 bypass. It currently has some aged buildings along the crest of the slope. There's a relatively level area in the central part of the site. The slope breaks rather sharply to the west just below where the existing buildings are. There is a gentler, more manageable slope that comes down to the south towards 250. There is a long, stone wall on the north side adjacent to a residential property. The two buildings that front on Park Street are a part of this proposal.

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You can see the two houses along Park Street, MACAA Drive, and the existing conditions. There is also this old, wonderful drive and drop off path that was part of the original estate on the property and some beautiful terraced landscape gardens that go down to the southwest of the property. You can see how we have sought to incorporate those elements of the historic landscape into the proposal.

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You can see the photographs of the terraced gardens, the open greenspace, and that trail access.

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The zoning is R-1. In the proposed land use map, it is proposed to be a neighborhood mixed use node.

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This is a generic diagram of the layout. The two houses along Park Street are preserved. We are proposing to relocate MACAA Drive directly across from Davis Avenue to clean up that intersection. Right now, it is misaligned. It creates a whole series of difficult interactions along Park Street. Along the proposed new MACAA Drive, we are proposing market rate townhouses, a number of Habitat townhouses and duplexes, and two multi-family buildings that are towards the center of the site/land. You can see how they are framed around the old, historic stonewalls that are there. There's a community green in the middle of the property.

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The summary of this is that we are proposing 65 apartment units, 20 townhouses, 8 duplex units, and two existing homes. In addition to that, MACAA will continue to operate an early childhood learning center that will be no more than 7500 square feet on the property. We're proposing 147 parking spaces. You can see the mixed housing that is a mix of market rate, affordable Habitat units that are homeownership, and the rental apartment buildings that are buildings one and two.

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There are currently 85 proposed affordable units. Those are the Habitat units and the PHA units. There are 8 market rate units. That includes the two homes that face onto Park Street, which will continue to be residential homes.

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This is a conceptual section with Park Street on the right. You can see how there is a level area in the middle of the site. You can also see where the landscape transitions to the steeper slope that goes down to the Rivanna Trail and the John Warner Parkway. We have organized the site to have the single-family homes along MACAA Drive, which relates more to the scale of the existing neighborhood. The multi-family homes are planned deeper into the site where we can take advantage of the topography. We are proposing to use that break in the topography to minimize the volume of these buildings towards the neighborhood and take advantage of an extra story going down the slope.

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This is the basic layout of the proposal.

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This is a conceptual view of the duplex units and the townhomes that would be along MACAA Drive on either side. The street would be laid out with a planting strip and the sidewalk separated from the drive with front porches on all of the units. The planting strip will allow us to plant trees along MACAA Drive coming off Park Street. As you enter this site, you will see views to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

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This is an early conceptual view of that central park or central green with the townhouses on the left and on the right is the scale of 3 story buildings facing the green. That's also where the landscape and topography breaks to the west. If this drawing was a little bit wider, you would see that the slope goes down to the right. You would get a lower 4<sup>th</sup> story on these buildings facing west. Beyond the townhouses on the left, you can see the other multi-family building further down on the green.

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When we talk about building affordable housing, there are a lot of images that we have based on what was built in the 50s, 60s, and early 70s. This is affordable housing in Charlottesville. These are at Wickham Pond in Crozet. These are Habitat affordable homes. These are the kinds of homes we are proposing to introduce along MACAA Drive as you enter the property from Park Street.

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The apartment buildings will be similar to what are the proposed PHA apartment buildings that are currently under development for the entry to the Southwood community along Hickory Road. You can see that the amenities around the buildings and the buildings themselves. Eighty-five percent of the exterior of these buildings will be brick. That's just part of the LI HTC application. This is not what we imagine as our grandparents' affordable housing.

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Here are the views of the volume of the proposed development. This is the 3-3.5 story building along the west side of the property from the bypass.

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**Scott Dunn, BRW Architects** – We focused on the intersection of MACAA Drive, Davis Avenue, and Park Street. The through volumes on Park Street showed a level of service A upward. The side streets operated at a level C or D in the AM and PM peaks. We anticipate that traffic coming from the MACAA side to get a little worse with the development of this site. The volumes we counted out there were fairly low. The traffic generated by this site does warrant a northbound turn lane on Park Street. From an operational perspective, it is not required. When we look at the operations of this intersection, a northbound left turn would be a benefit. The corridor is constrained based on the limited right of way, the existing sidewalks, and rock walls on the area. That is something to consider when looking at improvements for this intersection.

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**Jonathan Showalter, BRW Architects** – We're constrained by the existing right of way and the geometry of the road and what we're able to do on the parcels. Looking at this and hearing community input and looking at ways we can make this intersection as best as possible for this project, we're looking at re-aligning MACAA Drive, in the red dashed line down below the gray shaded line. You can see that it is offset from Davis Drive. It creates a lot of conflict. We're going to realign MACAA Drive up to the north, directly across from Davis Drive. We're also going to eliminate a driveway to the north to reduce conflict points there. We're looking at removing some brush, fencing, and some other obstacles to increase the sight distance on Park Street. That's a major improvement there. There's not a lot of sight distance out of MACAA Drive. We're also looking at preserving the no left turn out of MACAA. It will basically only be a right turn out of MACAA. That will also help improve safety at the intersection and maintain that current condition.

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Here is a little more about sight distance currently looking north. If making a right hand turn, you can see there are a number of obstacles there to visibility. It shows the current view on the left and the potential improvements to increase that sight distance.

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This is a map showing the proposed site and showing what potentially could be public right of way versus what would be private area or private roads and parking lots. One thing we are looking at here is having a loop where cars can come into the site and circulate around the parking lot. We're also trying to minimize the amount of pavement. We didn't want to have both a public loop, reduce the green space, and a private parking lot there. One thing we're looking at there is the potential to having a right of way or access easement to the city. We can have a public loop through the site but minimize the asphalt and pavement.

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This is in response to what we heard in the public meeting. We talked about traffic, intersection improvements.

**Mr. Wardell** – One of the things we heard in our community meetings was the access to the Rivanna Trail and the bike and pedestrian trail that parallels the Parkway. Currently, you walk or ride your bike along Park Street to the entrance ramp onto the highway. You walk and bike along the edge of 250 until you connect to the trail. One of the things we thought could be a real benefit to this kind of connectivity to the larger neighborhood is providing an ability to walk along that tree lined street (MACAA Drive) and down along and through the green and find a path through that terraced landscape or back through that historic drive with the stone gate. You can see we're trying to make a connection down at the western edge that would allow you to connect to the trail and bypass that treacherous pedestrian way along Park Street and along the entrance ramp onto 250. When we do something like this, we want to do the best for the people who are going to be living in the proposal but also offer something back to the community. The other thing you will notice is that we're developing a screen landscape buffer along the north edge on our side of the stone wall. There is a nice stone wall along most of that edge of the property. We have configured the parking in a way that would give us a slope that we could plant a buffer to the property, which is uphill from our property, along the north side of that property. We can talk about affordability. We have addressed the non-residential uses being an early learning center. All of the property will be maintained through some kind of arrangement between MACAA and some kind of community homeowners association. The other issue was the views into the site. The development of a tree lined street from Park Street into the site is a part of that transition from the neighborhood into the property.

## **Public Comments**

**Diane Dale** – I would like to speak in support of this project. It's a great example of the type of infill housing we hope will be in consideration across the community. The scale and texture of the proposal fits well with the adjacent neighborhood. It's respectful of the environmental restrictions, the cultural pieces on the property, and is making an effort to address the issue of affordable housing. This is an example of the public process working. The initial applicant for this site came forward with something that was not a good fit. They have returned with a site plan of appropriate scale and texture. They have also brought in a local partner in Habitat for Humanity. They have demonstrated success and knowledge in the provision of affordable housing. I hope the Planning Commission will keep in mind the value of constructive public dialogue.

**Vikki Bravo** – I am speaking on behalf of IMPACT in support of this project. Neighborhoods succeed when housing is affordable. When elderly residents have a safe place to live, young people can find that first apartment, and parents and children can put down roots in a community with confidence, our whole community benefits. Today, our neighborhoods in Charlottesville and Albemarle are under pressure with over 4,000 families struggling to go month to month with their rent or mortgage. Lack of affordable housing is putting older neighbors at risk and causing families to frequently move, disrupting their lives, hurting their ability to make a living, and threatening their children success in school. Let's make more housing more affordable and our neighborhoods more successful.

**Jason Haag** – I am commenting on zoning protecting the existing properties. I caution against this a little bit. I just heard about this. It sounds like a 'smoke in the dark and ram it through' project. This time it was a letter. It took us some time to find access to this meeting here. I am worried about what is happening here. We do need more affordable housing in Charlottesville. I want to make sure, with multiple projects happening along Park Street, about the impact to the traffic and the environment.

**Tim Mohr** – This is a big improvement from what we looked at a few years ago. The city can maybe reinstate the grid and I know there are problems with that. The pressure on the Davis intersection would be different. That whole Park Street connection and 250 bypass is a mess. It would be nice if there was some way to address that. It is just compounding. Some of the benefits of the Parkway are pretty watered down because we have those exits from the bypass and the very strange condition with houses entering onto those ramps. It is a legacy of some really bad planning. This is an opportunity to create more of a center for that part of town that is walkable.

**Constance Johnson** – We did participate in the last proposal. We were caught off guard. We did participate in the public meeting a couple of weeks ago. There were a lot of questions raised. We do not feel that everything is out on the table. We are not against more diverse housing in the neighborhood. This project needs to be looked at with the zoning changes that are going to be made. This whole neighborhood is being changed to Neighborhood Mixed Use Node. We're concerned. This part of Park Street is going to be turned into a corridor leading to commercial districts. We're talking about an R-1 single-family. That's a huge change. This is a green and historic area. The amount of parking between the buildings is more than the last proposal. We want to be good neighbors. We are for this project at the opposite end of our street. I do applaud MACAA for reaching out to the community and to the city. There are still some issues. The big issue is the traffic. It seems that they are realigning that drive with Davis because they want traffic to go down Davis Avenue. The only other way in and out of there is Watson Avenue. The outlet for that is to go up the bypass ramp going to Locust. That's the other exit. I do have a question about what MACAA's footprint is going to be on the property. They have been a good neighbor. I want to know how that is going to effect the future of the commercial properties they're going to add there. I am concerned about the building that they're going to be building.

**Sarah Hanks** – I am the Executive Director of MACAA. To the neighbors, we're hopeful to partner with you moving forward and appreciate your participation in this process. When I joined MACAA, City Council had already voted against the prior proposal. I was responsible for what was next with our property. I believe this is a positive step forward for our community. We have an opportunity to blend our mission serving those who are experiencing low income and poverty, breaking cycles of generational poverty, providing opportunity for housing in an area where it does not currently exist for those who do not have financial resources and to do so in a manner that allows us to continue operating our organization and providing the critical services we do across the five localities.

## **Planning Commission Feedback/Discussion**

**Chairman Mitchell** – Maybe the public didn't understand the configuration of the partnership. There might be value for taking people through who is going to be there and what the mixed use configuration is going to be.

**Mr. Mathon** – The majority of the site will be residential. As you enter along the updated MACAA Drive, you will have the neighborhood scaled residential like you would see in any other part of the neighborhood. As you move to the back of the site, you would have the residential multi-family buildings. Currently in the plans, there would be a preschool center run by MACAA on the ground floor. That is the proposed commercial use. The funding that we (Piedmont Housing Alliance and Habitat for Humanity) have pulled together only covers residential uses. There is still work to be done on the funding stack that would support an early childhood learning center to be run by MACAA. Whether they own that space or lease that space, it is still to be determined. There are a number of financial hurdles that we have to go through before we have clarity on that. I can't speak where MACAA's permanent offices will be. Assuming this project moves forward, the permanent offices will not be on this site. The only presence they would have is the preschool center. They would be moving their office function to a different location. That is a work in progress.

**Commissioner Russell** – Did I hear that there would be no right turn onto Park Street out of the development?

**Mr. Wardell** – There would be no left turn.

**Commissioner Russell** – People would have to make a right turn as opposed to going across to Davis.

**Mr. Wardell** – There had been a concern expressed that by lining up that intersection, it makes it easier to cut through. There is a fairly robust traffic pattern that goes through between Park Street and Locust through the neighborhood. Given the current situation at that intersection, that is a very awkward intersection. Given the circumstances, the kind of scale of improvement that we can make is to align it so it becomes a more manageable and more familiar intersection. The intent is not to create a through street through Davis Avenue. The intent is to make the kind of interactions around that intersection more typical of any other 4 way intersection.

**Chairman Mitchell** – Mr. Duncan, what do you think of the new configuration?

**Mr. Duncan** – This was prepared upon my request. This was a request I made of the previous application. Any time you have that kind of offset intersection, it does create a conflict. When you have a traditional intersection, you see vehicle across from you. You know who has to go first. When you have that offset, it is in the periphery of your vision. Realigning it is more of a safety concern. That was my reasoning for it.

**Commissioner Russell** – You aren't asking the same question about whether a PUD is appropriate. It sounds like some of the office uses might be leaving this site. Why the PUD?

**Mr. Keescker** – It is the same logic that we wanted to be transparent and have a more developed plan as we presented it holds true. This site does have a mix of uses. It does cluster the homes in a way that provides for amenity and preserves a lot of the reasons that PUDs exist in the city. If it were to rezone to something different, it would be very spotty. Some could argue that a PUD is inherently spotty anyway. It is so laden with process that the tradeoffs are there. There is nothing around this site that would limit itself to be another zone. On Park Street, there are some other zones. That other zone is close. In this case, it would be on an island. That's why we decided to go with a PUD.

**Chairman Mitchell** – Ms. Russell, I would ask you to have conversations with Jody, Kurt, and Jim. That’s a great question. I am not sure we have much PUD expertise on our board. Please continue to ask those questions.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – We have a 9.3 acre site. You’re looking to build about ten units per acre, which is within the low density designation in the currently adopted comp plan. There is a lot of open surface parking on this site. Do you feel that you have maximized the use of this site? With this kind of rare mostly green filled opportunity, there aren’t too many more of these left in the city. Are we missing out on potential for affordable housing by building it in this configuration?

**Mr. Mathon** – The first versions of our sketches around the site plan included 20 to 30 more units to see what we could fit with some of the same core principles. As we got into the fine mesh, balancing open space, preserving some of the existing cultural infrastructure, and parking, this is where we landed. We ended up having to trim back the number of homes. This is a site where it really does have to manage all of the parking load on the interior. There is no neighborhood parking nearby. It is also a family site. You’re talking about some homeownership and some rental. With the homeownership parking, we had a very lengthy discussion around what Habitat buyers typically expect and need. When you include those and you look at the requirements that we expect for our residents, when they need to have visitors, this is the tightest we felt with the parking ratio. We did look at adding ten to twenty more units. It never worked. It hit critical slopes that pushed the buildings in ways that didn’t function properly. We were also doing our best to distribute and scatter the parking around the buildings as opposed to one large parking area in the middle. It is as tight and close as we could make it. We intentionally made the decision at the outset to include some homeownership. It is not just units that matter. It’s the range of affordable typologies that matter. When you blend those two together, this is the site that emerges.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Can you tell me about this historic driveway loop that you’re protecting as the centerpiece of this site? I haven’t been up to the site. When I look at it on Google Maps, it looks like a little bit of broken asphalt that doesn’t close the loop. Is that designated by the BAR as having to be protected?

**Mr. Wardell** – When you go out to the site, the broken asphalt isn’t the nicest portion of all of that. The stonewalls that parallel those paths are the historic/cultural resource that is there. It is also a reminder of the pattern that existed along the old historic 250 when it was a two lane highway. We also gave it a fairly important component in our planning. In the previous application, one of the parts of the discussion was that the previous application did not preserve it. It actually eliminated a good portion of that. Our thought was that, given the idea of trying to develop a community in there, to have that kind of linkage to a historic landscape. It is quite an extraordinary landscape in there. We felt it was important enough to become the edge of this property towards the bypass. We would keep our planning on either side of it.

**Commissioner Russell** – It was Rock Hill?

**Mr. Wardell** – It was Rock Hill Academy. Before that, it was an estate. The original home is gone.

**Commissioner Russell** – There was a section 106 review done of this area with the construction of the bypass. I found discussion about the historic landscape.

**Mr. Wardell** – There is an irony in terms of one of the schools that occupied this property was one of the schools that was developed when the integration was ordered for the public schools. To have that property reclaimed is nice historic justice.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – Is the loop in the center that isn't critical slopes between the two buildings? Is that of the same caliber?

**Mr. Wardell** – It is all part of the same system.

**Mr. Keesecker** – It has the potential to be an outdoor room. It is a little bit of a contrast of the more open gardens. It has potential. It is going to take a little work. The other thing we were trying to do is set up a series of different kinds of experiences that people might be able to enjoy as they pass through the neighborhood. MACAA Drive is going to be different from the community green which is different from this space which is different from the gardens. It ultimately leads down to the John Warner Parkway. As we invite people to travel through (pedestrian or bike), they would be able to experience different outdoor spaces that will have different purposes and makes it more robust.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – I had a design question. I have admired that drive many times. I am a regular on that greenway there. It could have been possible to use that as a regulating line in the design to make that an area that the buildings form around. That's not the case now. Can you talk about that? PUDs are weird. A part of them is about aesthetics and innovation in design. One story I could see is that it is an interesting vista. It is something you could organize buildings around. As far as I can tell, there's no relationship between the buildings and that line. It is 'floating.' Is that intentional?

**Mr. Wardell** – We placed the multi-family buildings on either side of what was historically a carriage drop off area. We imagined taking up the asphalt out of that area and making it a green space. It becomes this green between those two buildings. That's the kind of relationship between those historic walls and the new buildings. That drop off area is actually centered on the village green. That's as much of a relationship as we have. There were a number of different layouts we did. This kind of framing on either side of that space was a fairly effective way to integrate it into the daily life of the community there.

**Mr. Mathon** – One of the organizing principles of the layout is the entry along MACAA Drive. If you drive in now, you see building and trees in a way that obscures the long range view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. As you're driving in, the multi-family buildings are set as slightly to the south to have that view. One of the multi-family buildings has stunning views off the backside out beyond that. In some ways, that was the more driving organizing principle of how the site was laid out.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – With bicycles, this is the best greenway resource we have in the region. You're doing a conventional parking strategy. You're right on this incredible resource. Is there a way to better leverage that/better tell that story?

**Mr. Keesecker** – The trouble we're having is a little bit of the technical aspect of being able to connect down at the western end of the site to get through that existing stonewall that was built as part of the bypass. There are some logistics we're going to have to work out in terms of engineering and make that feasible for bike access. The easiest bike access will be down the old driveway. We have been told that's the part of the off-ramp everybody wants to avoid. We're definitely thinking about it. What is hard to tell from some of these diagrams is that the lower part of building 2 and the T shape on building 1 has that basement level. There is almost four stories facing 250. That bottom level is the one that we anticipate animating with some of the community spaces and the amenity spaces that will open out onto the gardens. It will be a perfect place for bicycle infrastructure of the kind that I imagine you have in mind. Because of that split level, we have some spaces that are going to be in the footprint of the building and along its edges that will make that access easy for support.

**Mr. Showalter** – It's definitely something we're looking into there. This is still a very initial plan. We haven't even gotten to the PUD planning items. We are looking at ways to connect from this site with a shared use path. It's a great opportunity there.

**Chairman Mitchell** – Mr. Lahendro had to join another Zoom call. He wanted to pass along his comments. His comments are no different from the comments he made when we met with you (Sunshine). He has fussed about this. He wants to see something spelled out.

The only question I have is for Mr. Duncan. There is only one place to enter and exit. With increased density, is there a requirement that we have more than one place to enter and exit?

**Mr. Duncan** – In this particular instance, I don't see how that is possible. There is limited access to 250. We can't access through that whole side of the property. The rest of the frontage of this property is bordered by single-family residences. What they have is what they have. Ideally, yes I prefer to have another access point for a development of this size. Realistically, I don't see how that would be able to work in this situation.

**Chairman Mitchell** – What is going to be the reaction from the public safety officials (fire and police) when there is only one way to get in and out?

With the telephone pole, we're moving closer to the telephone pole. Do we have to worry about that? Is that a problem to take that out?

**Mr. Showalter** – We're realigning the entrance towards the telephone pole. That would have to be relocated. That's an item we have talked about. It would have to be coordinated on the site plan. It probably wouldn't be removed. It would be realigned with the other poles.

**Commissioner Russell** – I really support the concept. I am really happy to see that affordable housing can be well designed and be beautiful, connected to the landscape, and thoughtful within the historic context of the site. I would love to see those historic features if we could get a site visit.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – It is good to see this project with badly needed affordable housing. MACAA serves such an important purpose. Early childhood education is possibly the most valuable investment we can make. Anything we can do to keep furthering that mission is very important. In terms of this plan, I would like to see more. If we can't increase the footprint here, consider more buildings over this surface parking area. Some of those townhomes could potentially be stacked townhomes, which is a new housing format. I think there is a good opportunity for it. The parking near the townhomes and duplexes is a little strange and almost institutional. It's a like parking lot. Given that these are single-family homes, I wonder if a driveway, where you fit in two spaces, makes more sense and fit more apartment spaces outside of that. That could be more effectively flexible. If we can make it more flexible, that's going to work better. This is over-parked. You're over 1.5 parking spaces per unit. It's a lot of parking, especially for one close to downtown. You can get downtown without a car. You need to get that southwestern bicycle and pedestrian connection punched through that stonewall. A playground is something you need to show in your final plans. I would assume MACAA needs one. They have one now. With that central green space in the middle of the parking lot, I would like to see that programmed in a way that makes it an inviting place to use.

Are you expecting funding from the city for this?

**Mr. Mathon** – The short answer is yes. Fundamentally, building for affordable housing requires some level of support locally. The cost of construction is so high. MACAA is looking at recouping the value of their

land to be able to support their programs. We have the land cost we have to account for. There is going to be a need for support.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – If you're able to squeeze more units in there, I would encourage you to phase it into two separate parts to get even more LI HTC funding.

**Chairman Mitchell** – It looks like Schenks Branch may be impacted by this. This is important to me. You have put together a good plan to protect it when you disturb the critical slopes. Please work with the engineers to make sure you're doing a good job of doing that. You need to clearly articulate your plan to do that. I am pretty excited about this. I was the chair of MACAA board a few years ago when we began thinking about this process. We were in the wrong location. We needed to move into someplace like Friendship Court to provide services there. We needed to sell that land and live off the annuity. I am excited about getting out of there and putting up the affordable housing. I love the idea of partnering with Habitat. Their plan is to build wealth. There are all kinds of great things. Make certain you're protecting those slopes and make sure to work with Mr. Duncan to work through the totality that you are thinking about building with Park Street Christian Church and the impact of traffic.

**Commissioner Solla-Yates** – One thing I would urge you to consider is unbundling. Instead of giving every unit the same fixed amount of parking, offer it as a separate service. It is a hassle. The scale you are working on may make operational sense. When people have to choose space to store vehicles, they often choose less. They have to make the decisions. Once that space is no longer used for storage of vehicles, it becomes available for many other things.

**Mr. Mathon** – Under LI HTC, that's extraordinarily difficult to do. It is in the market rate sector. It's not common. Under LI HTC, we have to provide the same amenities to everybody.

**Commissioner Stolzenberg** – In your PUD use matrices, I think you're going a little bit too hard in removing things and making some changes. If something is an SUP, it doesn't make sense to add more yellow when it is going to require a Special Use Permit. If you can tone that down to what is being removed, that makes more sense.

### **3. Planning Commission Final Thoughts/Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.