

**Albemarle County Planning Commission**  
**FINAL Minutes Regular Meeting**  
**May 24, 2022**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending: Karen Firehock, Chair; Corey Clayborne, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Fred Missel; and Daniel Bailey.

Members absent: Luis Carrazana

Other officials present were Charles Rapp, Deputy Director Community Development - Operations; Candice Perkins, Director of Planning; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; Scott Clark; Kevin McDermott; David Benish; Jodie Filardo; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

**Call to Order and Establish Quorum**

Ms. Firehock called the May 24, 2022, meeting of the Albemarle Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Ms. Firehock established a quorum.

**Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

**Planning Commission Rules of Procedure Amendment**

Ms. Firehock said the Planning Commission Rules of Procedure Amendment addressed allowances for attending meetings in absentia.

Mr. Andy Herrick, Deputy County Attorney, said his office had been asked to prepare proposed amendments to the rules of procedure. He noted the Commission lacked rules for remote participation while the Board had rules for remote participation. He said the office drafted a rule, rule 7 of the rules of procedure, that mirrored the rules of the Board. He explained that under state law, unlimited remote participation was not permitted, and there had to be a certain reason and there was a limit on how many times it could be invoked.

Mr. Herrick said part of the hesitancy in bringing the rule change sooner was because state law was anticipated to change on September 1, 2022. He said the office was working with the Board of Supervisors to amend its rules. He said after the Board's rules were amended, additional rule amendments would be brought back before the Commission. He said he could review the rules. He said copies were provided in the informational packets. He said he was also able to answer any questions.

Ms. Firehock noted the rule stated one of the reasons permitted to participate remotely was for a personal reason. She asked what a personal reason would be.

Mr. Herrick said a personal reason could be a family emergency, and it had to be cited as such. He said it was not entirely clear how much specificity needed to be provided. He said commissioners were limited in invoking that reason twice a year or for 25% of the total meetings. He noted all-virtual meetings were not allowed for the Commission or Board except in the case of an emergency.

Mr. Missel noted section A.3 stated, “the quorum of the Commission must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location.” He asked if that section meant that the remote commissioner would not vote.

Mr. Herrick said the remote commissioner could still vote, but there needed to be at least four commissioners present at the central location before any commissioner could participate remotely.

Mr. Bivins moved to adopt the amendment to the rules of procedure. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0). (Mr. Carrazana was absent)

### **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Firehock noted there were a few minutes on the consent agenda.

Mr. Clayborne moved to adopt the consent agenda. Mr. Missel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0). (Mr. Carrazana was absent)

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **SP202100017 Foster Forge Farm School**

Mr. Scott Clark, Senior Planner, said the proposal was a special use permit for a private school. He noted the parcel was located in the rural areas along Barracks Road. He said the proposal was for a school of up to 60 students and would focus on outdoor and nature-based education. He said there were five 14'x18' classroom buildings, an assembly and administrative building, and a bathroom and storage building along with other miscellaneous structures.

Mr. Clark said there was an 11-space parking area, a grass overflow parking area, and an activity area with a pavilion. He said there had been special exception requests submitted recently on the matter that had not been reviewed and would need to be reviewed before a site plan or during the site plan review for the use. He said the first special exception was for the disturbance of critical slopes to build a walking trail, and the second was to remove the requirement for curb and gutter on the driveways and parking area—a typical request for the rural areas. He said the special exception requests could be dealt with more appropriately during the site planning.

Mr. Clark provided an arial view of the site to give context. He indicated that the neighboring parcel was the site of the Field School—a recently approved but not yet built private school for 150 students. He said the Colthurst subdivision was to the southwest, and the Montvue subdivision was to the northeast—both were within view of the subject site and would be potentially impacted by activity. He noted the location of the new entrance. He noted the location of an old pond that

would be renovated to use for stormwater management.

Mr. Clark provided an image of an overview of the conceptual plan of the use. He noted the location of Barracks Road at the top of the image and the location of the new entrance. He said the top right area was the main activity area with the small proposed classroom structures and the parking area within the northeast corner. He said at the top left was a fenced pasture area with a small barn and farm animals, and at the back was an additional activity area with a pavilion, one classroom, and a restroom.

Mr. Clark noted where the trail would cross the critical slopes which generated the need for the special exception. He said it was a relatively small area. He provided a more detailed image of the plan for the area with the majority of the classroom activity. He said the parking was located closer to the road. He provided an image of the parking area and noted there was an embankment of several feet at the edge of the road. He said locating parking at the edge of the embankment reduced visibility of the parking.

Mr. Clark said the proposal was reviewed against criteria. He said there were no concerns regarding noise or visual impacts because of the location of the use and recommended conditions. He said one area where staff received feedback was in regard to safety and traffic concerns along Barracks Road. He said there were a few issues regarding traffic. He said the posted speeds began at 45 MPH and went up to 50 MPH. He said residents in the area reported the speed limits were regularly exceeded. He said there was a site distance issue.

Mr. Clark said driving west along Barracks Road, the site was completely obscured by a hill about 750 feet from the proposed entrance. He provided an image from Google Maps street view. He said if there were to be a line of cars waiting to turn into the site during the drop off or pickup hour, then they would not be able to be seen. He said the view was very limited. He said at Montvue Drive, about 520 feet from the entrance, there was a line of site. He said the site distance was limited given the speeds driven were closer to 60 MPH rather than the posted 45 MPH.

Mr. Clark said five years of reports were reviewed with regard to accident history along Barracks Road from Colthurst Drive west of the site to Burgoyne Road east of the site. He said there had been 18 accidents in the five-year period, and most were related to turning movements at intersections and access points, which is why the concern was raised higher regarding visibility of the site and the speeds driven on the road. He said VDOT may not require turn lanes be built because of the posted speeds. He said the particular situation had an existing speed problem and visibility problem that needed to be mitigated. He said if the use were to be approved, turn lanes would be necessary to get the waiting traffic outside of the main line of traffic.

Mr. Clark said the positive factors included the scale of the proposed use and the limited physical impacts on the site. He said it was a good use of screening and parking placement to reduce visual impacts. He said the site was located on a major collector road with proximity to the development area. He said there was less traffic impact on the rural areas overall. He said the use would provide the opportunity for natural resource-based education.

Mr. Clark said the negative factors related to the intensity of use which was more than the by-right uses. He said traffic generation was a negative factor along with the existing high traffic volumes and speeds above the posted limits—prompting the recommendation for turn lanes. He said there were several recommended conditions for approval. He said he would answer any questions.

Mr. Clayborne noted the nine recommended conditions. He noted the fourth condition, which stipulated parameters on the uses of the school and crowd sizes. He asked how the County would monitor or enforce the condition. He asked how the County would know how many events the school held.

Mr. Clark said it would be difficult to monitor. He said it would require staff to constantly be on site. He said typically, issues arising from the condition were monitored by complaints from neighbors or other parties. He said staff would verify the complaints. He said in rare cases, staff had requested large event holders to notify staff in advance of the event schedule—events of 500 to 1000 people.

Mr. Clayborne noted the traffic speed issue on Barracks Road. He asked if a school zone speed limit reduction could be imposed.

Mr. Clark said one of the neighboring landowners raised a similar question. He said he reviewed the question with VDOT, and they stated it was unlikely they would do school zone postings in an area where there was no pedestrian access. He said school zone postings were typically done in an area where cars approached crosswalks and students were crossing the street. He said there would not be pedestrian access to the school, so he believed VDOT would not implement school zone signage.

Mr. Missel noted the third condition, that classroom instruction shall not begin before 8:30 a.m. and shall not continue past 5:30 p.m. He noted classes were not to be held on Saturdays or Sundays. He asked if the condition specifically applied to classes or classes and events. He asked if events were limited in some other way. He asked if it was a request of the applicant or the County.

Mr. Clark said it was a condition that was used previously, such as at the Field School, adjacent to the site. He said the intent was to limit the overall impacts. He said over the course of the year, regular arrivals and departures would only occur five days a week for the regular business of the school. He said the condition did not apply to events which could be held on weekends.

Mr. Missel noted the traffic issue. He said speed limits were an objective measure—it was being exceeded or not being policed. He said it was out of control of the landowner or applicant, and it was the responsibility of VDOT or the police. He asked if there was precedent for the County to limit the use of the facility based on an adjacent speed limit. He said the issue seemed outside of the applicants control.

Mr. Clark said for the standards that applied for a by-right site plan, it would be evaluated based on formulas and existing posted speeds. He said with a legislative approval, where one of the main factors to consider was public safety, coupled with a known safety issue, staff recommended the additional step of safety requirements. He noted there would be additional expenses for the applicant to install those safety measures. He emphasized the measures were to ameliorate the existing safety situation. He said it was not a by-right use, and it was a more intense use for the rural area. He said they had to work to offset the impacts, just as for any other safety issue.

Ms. Firehock asked if Mr. Clark could review the traffic numbers generated by the site.

Mr. Clark said he could provide an answer, but the applicant would be able to provide a more complete answer, and they were preparing to address the Commission.

Ms. Firehock said that was fine.

Mr. Bivins noted the second condition set the maximum enrollment at 60 students. He asked how the County would know the school did not exceed the capacity.

Mr. Clark said if there was a complaint, then the County would request the operator provide the enrollment information.

Mr. Bivins asked if the school would be Pre-K through 5th grade or another variation.

Mr. Clark responded the school was a middle school.

Mr. Bivins asked what grades specifically because there were different definitions of middle school.

Mr. Clark said it was either 5th or 6th through 8th grade. He said the applicant would confirm.

Mr. Bivins said he was concerned about when the County took a position on a school option for residents in the County that would be natural resource-based, and the proposal would provide an additional school option. He said it was not the County's role, and it was not the role of the Commission to provide an additional school option.

Mr. Bivins said he did not know of the quality of the instructors that would be at the school. He said private schools did not have to follow the same standards as public schools. He said when the County was putting in over \$200 M worth of budget allocation for the school system, it was not the Commission's role to determine when an additional private school was needed. He said it was for the market to determine if the school was good or bad.

Ms. Firehock said the applicant would present.

Ms. Anne Wachtmeister, Founder and Head of Foster Forge School, said the school was a unique and dynamic private, co-ed middle school. She said the pedagogy revolved around farm- and forest-based education and being outside as much as possible. She said many students were coming out of the pandemic disengaged and disconnected, showed a resistance to going back to school.

Ms. Wachtmeister said her background was in law and education, and she went to Harvard Graduate School of Education. She said she studied positive risk taking and adolescent development. She said she was an Outward-Bound instructor, and she created and experiential learning program in Saint Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands that hosted student and teacher teams that came from all over the world to engage. She noted the formatting on her presentation had been corrupted.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she was experienced in working with children. She said students were coming to the school from various learning perspectives. She said incorporating agriculture- and nature-based education would fill a niche in the County. She said the Albemarle Public Schools did not have a working relationship with the Future Farmers Association group, and the agricultural program had diminished. She said it was the one county out of the surrounding counties that had decreased its agricultural focus.

Ms. Wachtmeister said relationships with animals, knowing where the food comes from, having opportunities to travel globally, and having those experiences-built confidence and fostered growth. She noted Mr. Bivins' point regarding the role of the Commission. She said the school's vision was to be inclusive and supportive of families from different income backgrounds and diverse backgrounds. She said Mr. Anthony Eshleman from Terra Engineering would discuss the concept plan and address the questions regarding traffic. She said she would be available to answer further questions.

Mr. Anthony Eshleman, Terra Engineering, said the firm was engaged by the Foster Forge Farm School to assist with the planning, engineering, and surveying for the project. He said the planned school was small, private, and for middle schoolers. He said the land use required a special use permit in the rural area zoning district. He said Foster Forge Farm School was unique in its teaching curriculum and taught environmental stewardship and outdoor learning, and desired to employ environmentally friendly methods in development of the parcel.

Mr. Eshleman said special events and activities were limited apart from the daily school activities. He said the school would have limited staff as opposed to a traditional school. He said the school proposed to use a bus to minimize transportation and trips in and out of the site during the day. He said because the site was located on Barracks Road, final site plan work was performed at the concept plan level, and the commercial entrance was positioned so that the site distance from the east and west were adequate for the posted speed limits. He said the information was included in the third sheet of the concept plan.

Mr. Eshleman said a full turn lane and traffic study analysis was prepared. He said the analysis showed the turn lanes were not warranted. He noted the analysis was performed early on in the concept and planning stages and was subject to VDOT approval. He said the applicant was prepared to work with VDOT to achieve an adequate solution for the entrance. He noted that for the safety of the entrance, school signs could be posted, or the speed limit could be changed west of the school entrance.

Mr. Eshleman said the concept plan had gone through County staff and regulatory review, and it had been revised to address all comments. He said as part of the special use permit procedure, a community meeting was held via Zoom, and comment responses were prepared. He said a majority of the comments stemmed from traffic. He said the concept plan was revised to eliminate as many special exceptions as possible.

Mr. Eshleman said the remaining special exceptions were the critical slopes and the waiver of curb and gutter requirements. He said the critical slope disturbance applied to one isolated trail area and within the existing storm water basin. He said the stormwater basin would need to be upgraded to comply with stormwater regulations. He said in regard to the curb and gutter, it was the opinion of the applicant that it was environmentally better to allow stormwater to sheet flow rather than force it into concentrated flow using curb and storm drain pipes. He said grass swales and cover pipes were planned.

Mr. Eshleman said special event parking would be designated to the proposed parking area. He said there was event parking as needed that would remain grass. He said a study would be done as to whether reinforcement was needed in the area. He said a geotechnical study was planned for the site, including borings in the dam to confirm an adequate foundation for the planned driveway across the dam. He said an alternate wastewater system was desired and permitted by

the VDH policy, and an alternate drain field was available in the area at the rear of the property. He said the drain field was previously approved by the County so the land could be subdivided from the parcel. He said the development of the site was proposed to be at or close to the existing grade to minimize any required earth work, and visual landscaping. He said visual buffers from the street would be provided and placed in areas designated by County staff.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there was a cafeteria on site.

Ms. Wachtmeister said there was not a formal cafeteria on site. She said there would be a small kitchen set up in the science building for curriculum purposes and to warm up lunches. She said the students were expected to bring lunch to school.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there would be any grease traps or similar kitchen needs.

Ms. Wachtmeister responded no.

Mr. Clayborne asked the applicant to elaborate on the material that would be used during construction. He noted sustainability had been mentioned in the application narrative. He said he wanted a better understanding of what the applicant planned to do with the site in terms of sustainability.

Ms. Wachtmeister said in phase one, the buildings were prefabricated and small. She said the whole point of developing the school was to make it as sustainable as possible. She said solar energy, wind energy, an incinerator, and composting toilets. She said the buildings would be up to international building code and would satisfy the occupancy requirements for the purposes of a school. She said there would be a proposed pavilion and outdoor space for activities and engage in educational activities outdoors.

Mr. Missel noted that a bus would be used. He asked if the use of the bus was factored into the trip generation numbers.

Ms. Wachtmeister said the bus was included in the trip generation numbers.

Mr. Missel asked what the frequency of the bus was and the number of absorptions.

Ms. Wachtmeister said the bus would hold 15 to 16 students, and it ran essentially four times a day—arriving and departing in the morning, and arriving and departing in the afternoon.

Mr. Missel said the site line distances were calculated and were adequate. He said he was wondering how the applicant decided to position the entrance. He asked if the entrance was positioned due to site distances.

Mr. Eshleman said that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked if the grades worked for the site distances, and all other aspects were appropriate.

Mr. Eshleman said yes.

Mr. Missel asked if VDOT had been involved in the conversations.

Mr. Eshleman said there had been back and forth conversations with VDOT on the traffic studies. He said it was an ongoing discussion.

Mr. Missel noted a question was raised regarding turn lanes. He said turn lanes were not mentioned in the presentation. He asked if the applicant had a position on the matter.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she agreed with the need for increased safety on the particular stretch of Barracks Road. She said some of the responsibility fell with VDOT about what the applicant could do to mitigate the higher speeds. She said a right-hand turn lane had been discussed which would be conducive to mitigating the traffic issue. She noted they were well below the numbers. She said once VDOT had time to delve deeper into the traffic warrant, there would be a better sense of flushing that out. She said there was flexibility, and they wanted the neighbors to be safe.

Mr. Missel asked for the timeline for the existing traffic data. He asked how the traffic counts were acquired. He asked if the study was done earlier than the spring of 2020.

Mr. Eshleman said the study reviewed the data for a five-year period.

Mr. Bivins noted the applicant said it would be helpful to have a school sign on Barracks Road westbound. He wanted to know why a sign was not recommended for both sides.

Mr. Eshleman said it would be helpful to move the place where the speed limit changed. He said the speed limit dropped from 50 MPH to 45 MPH east of the proposed site entrance. He explained if the speed limit change was moved west, it would help with traffic speed and safety.

Mr. Bivins said the proposal was to essentially extend the 45 MPH zone.

Mr. Eshleman said that was correct.

Mr. Bivins noted Ms. Wachtmeister said classroom occupancy standards were used to determine the type of buildings. He asked for more information regarding the standards and where to find them. He said he wanted to know how the applicant chose the sizes for the proposed structures.

Ms. Wachtmeister said a County staff member was instructive in regards to occupancy and the allowable number of students per building. She said that although the school intended to spend most of the time outdoors, they had to take into consideration that in the case of emergency, there had to be a place to seek shelter. She said factoring in the square footage of the barn, the buildings on the concept plan, 60 students along with the anticipated staff was a total of 74 people. She said that was how they determined the occupancy for adequate shelter. She noted most of the classes were taking place outside.

Mr. Bivins asked what would happen in the case of inclement weather. He asked for a sense of how the classroom units would be used and integrated into the space. He said he did not see where class or learning would take place outside of the classrooms.

Ms. Wachtmeister said learning could happen anywhere outside of the classrooms.

Mr. Bivins said he understood, but he did not want the high-level information. He said he wanted to know what the children would be doing. He asked the applicant to display the site plan.



Ms. Wachtmeister said on the site plan were walking trails and the outdoor pavilion which could be used for outdoor classroom space and shelter. She noted the wooded forest section where they would incorporate an obstacle course. She said there was a lot of open green space and open green space with large trees that provided a canopy. She said she could see the students and teachers congregating around the trees. She said it was a spontaneous, in-the-moment experience as to where the class wanted to be on any particular day. She said there would be a pond in the middle of the property that was part of an old dump site. She said the intention was to bring the land back. She said there were many opportunities for outdoor learning.

Mr. Bivins said the pond, which had a water management sign, would be an active pond.

Ms. Wachtmeister said it would be part of the stormwater management.

Mr. Bivins asked if water was anticipated to fill the pond during dry periods.

Ms. Wachtmeister said it was a matter of working with the dam. She said there was a culvert pipe. She said there were infringing trees that had grown in the area that were draining water. She said there had to be some management of the pond to bring it back.

Mr. Bivins noted the paddock in the front of the property. He asked what type of animals were anticipated to be housed in the paddock. He said he did not see a full description.

Ms. Wachtmeister said they intended to have pygmy goats, chickens, rabbits, donkeys, and more manageable livestock. She said they intended to also be a member of 4H so if students wished to participate in 4H activities, they would be able. She said they were not raising pigs or running cattle because the space was not conducive. She said it was conducive to livestock that would still provide the students experiences with regard to care.

Mr. Bivins noted that on Page 6 of the proposal, it stated, "our activities and presentation would be in keeping with the spiritual and educational institutions already located in the area, such as the pending Field School and the nearby St. David's Anglican Church. He asked for the applicant to elaborate on that statement.

Ms. Wachtmeister said they had not had an opportunity to speak directly with the church or the Field School. She said they were discussing the openness for when they would be on the site and the Field School opened, they looked to do collaborative educational opportunities.

Mr. Bivins asked if they would engage in similar activities with the Anglican church.

Ms. Wachtmeister said yes. She said she saw it as a community engagement.

Mr. Bivins asked how the other neighbors would be engaged.

Ms. Wachtmeister said engaging with the neighbors was the school potentially educating the children in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Bivins asked if there would be a vegetable garden and other similar things.

Ms. Wachtmeister said yes.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the smells from the animals would be a disturbance to the neighboring properties such as the Field School.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she had not heard about any concerns from the neighbors regarding the smell. She said the school would incorporate responsible farm management in regard to maintaining waste and removing waste appropriately. She said the teaching of raising livestock and engaging in agricultural studies was about being a steward to the land. She said the school would address any complaints in short order.

Ms. Firehock asked if there would be a caretaker to care for the animals during the weekends.

Ms. Wachtmeister said there would be someone available on the weekends.

Ms. Firehock said the neighbors should be notified of who the caretaker was. She said if an animal got lose, the neighbors should know who to contact on the weekend when the school was not in session.

Ms. Wachtmeister said with open communication, she was looking forward to working with the neighbors.

Mr. Missel said on page 11 of the project proposal, it stated, "in addition, Foster Forge Farm School had the potential additional benefit of providing the neighbor, the Field School, and its parents an opportunity for other children not enrolled at Foster Forge Farm School a dual location for student drop off, reducing the amount of driving time and places where parents would be required to bring their children for school." He asked if there had been conversations with the Field School regarding the dual drop off location.

Ms. Wachtmeister said they were hoping the Field School would be open to the opportunity, and she thought there was the possibility a family had a child at the Field School and a child at the Foster Forge Farm School. She said the community was small.

Mr. Missel asked if any traffic absorption was anticipated from the dual drop off location and sharing rides.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she did not see it as being a large part of the traffic going in and out of the site.

Ms. Firehock said the applicant was requesting a 60-person school. She asked if the applicant was certain 60 was the right number of students. She wanted to know if the applicant anticipated the school to grow to 80 or 100 students in the future. She said schools like the one proposed were often successful. She wanted to get a sense of the applicant's business plans.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she was comfortable with the 60-student maximum, and that related to the size of the property. She said the site was less than 6.5 acres. She said in keeping the property sustainable, it had to be sustainable to the student population and livestock and agricultural population. She said a student body beyond 60 would be too much. She said if the school was in the position to grow larger, then they would likely look for a different site. She said the site fit what the school wanted to do for the next five to 10 years.

Ms. Firehock said they would open the meeting for public comment. She noted there were two speakers signed up for comment. She said if a member of the public did not sign up, they would still have a chance to comment. She said comments would be limited to three minutes, and she asked that people not voice their opinions from the gallery during public hearings. She said attendees in the gallery could raise their hands in support of comments.

Mr. Jeep Newman said he lived at 2805 Barracks Road, across from the proposed site. He requested the Commission to pause the proposal to allow more time to discuss the matter. He said he had discussed the issue with Ms. Wachtmeister. He said the school should not be at the site. He said the Field School should not be built. He said the schools should not be there because of the traffic safety concerns. He said VDOT did not really understand the issue. He said the stretch of road was about a mile long straight away.

Mr. Newman said people intentionally went fast on the road because it was a straight away. He said he constantly heard deer accidents. He said no cars stopped going eastbound on Barracks Road from Montvue Drive to Colthurst between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. during school day mornings. He said maybe 1% of cars stopped. He said westbound, in the evenings, nobody stopped between Montvue Drive and Colthurst. He said he owned three driveway entrances across the street, and he knew nobody was using them. He said there was a house or two on the lower parts of Barracks Road. He said the Field School and Foster Forge Farm School would have people stopped right at the highest speed to turn in and out of the site. He said the road would only get busier due to construction along Ivy Road. He requested the applicant withdraw the application.

Mr. Saunders Midyette said he lived in the Colthurst Farm neighborhood. He said he had lived there since 1991. He said he was expressing his opposition to the Foster Forge Farm School. He said he opposed the project because the proposed entrance was in close proximity to the top of the eastern hill. He said at the hilltop, fast-moving westbound vehicles could not see along the curve, which had a 50 MPH speed limit, and traffic could result in severe rear-end collisions with vehicles waiting to enter the school and collisions with vehicles leaving the school.

Mr. Midyette said another reason for opposing the project was that the school planned three classrooms in prefabricated trailers, and an assembly hall pre-fabricated trailer. He said there would be no concrete foundations. He said in the event of a tornado, hurricane, or severe windstorm, students and staff in those trailers could be exposed to significant injury or loss of life. He said the County could be included as a defendant in the subsequent lawsuits resulting from such disasters. He said apart from opposing the application, he was aware that the school placed three different types of prefabricated classroom trailers on the site earlier in the year without first obtaining approval from the County.

Mr. Midyette said it was his understanding the County ordered the removal of the structures, for which the school complied. He said a website for the school which was updated in February indicated the school would be opening for co-ed 5th through 8th grade education. He said the announcement was surprising. He noted the County had not yet acted upon the Foster Forge Farm school application. He said he recommended denial. He said he submitted a letter to the Commission which detailed other reasons he proposed the project. He said he was concerned about the 24/7 animal noise.

Ms. Firehock asked if there were speakers wishing to make comments virtually.

Ms. Shafer said there were no virtual speakers.

Ms. Firehock said the applicant was welcome to respond to any of the comments or provide information they were unable to earlier.

Ms. Wachtmeister said there were other people who were wishing to speak that did not sign up.

Ms. Firehock said she had asked for further speakers.

Mr. Tyler Sewell said he lived at 1545 Old Ballard Road. He said the school was loosely based on a school he and Ms. Wachtmeister attended as children. He said it profoundly changed his life. He said he was a C and D student in the Virginia Beach public school system. He said had he not gone to a similar school, he would be in a different place. He said he was able to attend UVA because his teachers helped with his ADD and changed his life.

Mr. Sule said the school was focused on unleashing the excellence of every kid. He said he believed in the school. He said he understood the issues regarding traffic. He questioned whether it was up to the applicant to address the traffic issue. He said it was an issue related to the road. He said there could be ways to mitigate the speeding. He said the school could foster slower speeds. He said there already was a large school approved for the neighboring parcel.

Ms. Firehock noted there were no further speakers from the public. She invited the applicant to respond to any of the comments or to provide further comment.

Ms. Wachtmeister said she would address the issue that the school would be placing trailers on the property. She said prefabricated buildings that would be secured pursuant to international building codes. She said the wind-shears would be appropriate, and it would be presented when the final site plan was submitted. She said the buildings temporarily placed were not on wheels and were set on concrete blocks to keep them off the ground and to get a sense of placement on the site. She said the structures were in storage in Harrisonburg. She said she did not want anyone to be sued over whether the buildings were sufficient to keep children safe.

Ms. Firehock said the matter was back before the Commission for discussion.

Mr. Bivins said he was not focused on the traffic. He said he was focused on whether or not the proposed use was right and proper for the site. He said the idea being presented was a fine idea. He said it was not the right idea for the location. He said he had discussed earlier the idea of the "rural-suburban" nature of the area. He said the area was not like Whitehall or Scottsville. He said it was Barracks Road. He questioned if it was the appropriate place to have farm animals even though it was a rural area.

Mr. Bivins said he was concerned about the farm animal issue. He noted there was an emerging human-animal set of illnesses. He said he was suffering from a whole series of tick diseases. He said he was concerned about how the applicant would ensure zoonotic disease transmission did not happen. He said it was an inappropriate location to have animals because the site was too small. He said he was focused on public health, safety, and general welfare.

Mr. Bivins said he was concerned with classrooms that would be 240 square feet. He noted there would be six or seven. He noted the public-school standards did not apply to private schools. He said if the school were to be a public school, the classroom size would have to be 900 square feet

and the site would have to be larger. He said the site worked for an elementary school size, but not a middle school. He said he did not think the applicant proposal was a fair use for the area. He said it did not meet the minimum standards that a public school would have to meet.

Mr. Bivins said he struggled to understand how the space would be ADA compliant and did not know how the site would offer accommodations to students. He said the Field School was not relevant to the discussion. He noted the proposal had smaller classrooms than a public school—all the classrooms could fit in the paddock. He said the paddock was larger than all of the school classrooms. He said the chance of zoonotic transmission of disease was alarming to him. He said he was not in support of the proposal because it was not the right function for the site.

Mr. Missel said he would focus on the traffic issue. He said the site was in the rural area, the traffic controls on the adjacent major collector road were failing, an adjacent school had been approved, there was a committed staff, the school was private, the buildings were required to meet public safety and health and building code standards. He said he trusted the operators to define and program the uses on the site. He said he took the risks identified by neighboring landowners seriously. He asked Mr. McDermott to elaborate on the traffic issues. He said there were concerns the traffic speeds were not regulated on the road. He said the Commission had discussed mitigating methods.

Mr. Kevin McDermott, Planning Manager, said he reviewed the proposal and traffic assessment. He said he worked with Mr. Clark on addressing the conditions, primarily the condition for the turn lanes which were not in the initial proposal. He said VDOT was reviewing the turn lane warrant analysis. He said the public had correctly identified the section of Barracks Road as a section with fast moving traffic. He said because of the site distance issues, the turn lanes should be implemented. He said he thought measures such as flashing signs had been used before, and they did appear to work to reduce speeds to some degree.

Mr. McDermott said measures such as reducing the speed limit or extending the lower speed limit section were not going to work because people were ignoring the speed limit. He said the County did not have the resources to station police on the road often enough to address the problem. He said the police did go out to the road sometimes to address the speeding, but it was not enough to keep the speed down. He said if the turn lanes were to be implemented, then it would address the safety issue of the road related to the applicant's proposal. He said a school zone was possible but unlikely, and the other mitigation measures could help more, but they cost money.

Mr. Missel confirmed that 18 accidents had been recorded on the stretch of road adjacent to the site.

Mr. McDermott said the stretch of road did not just include the straight away in front of the site. He said it included the intersections and that was where they were seeing problems. He said the proposal was to construct a new commercial entrance, which was like an intersection, in the middle of the straight away. He said appropriate turn lanes could mitigate the impact.

Mr. Missel asked if Mr. McDermott was aware of any signal warrant analyses that had been done that might change the flow of traffic and any of the intersections.

Mr. McDermott said he doubted if the intersections would need any signal warrant analysis to install a signal throughout the site. He said there was not enough traffic on the minor street approaches compared to the major street. He said a signal would not be appropriate.

Mr. Bailey noted adding two turn lanes would dramatically increase the width of the road. He asked if the condition was physically possible. He asked what the mechanism was for the condition to be feasible—he asked if easements were required or if VDOT had to pay for the construction.

Mr. McDermott said it would fall on the applicant to be able to construct the turn lanes. He said the lanes would be reviewed by VDOT. He said he had discussed the item with VDOT. He said because the warrant had not been finished, VDOT was unsure if the warrants had been met, but they still supported the proposal of turn lanes because of the prevailing conditions. He said the turn lanes would be approved by VDOT, but the applicant would have to acquire the right of way or be able to shift the road to accommodate the turn lanes.

Mr. Missel asked if the applicant would have to acquire the right-of-way to install the turn lanes or if the turn lanes could be installed in the right-of-way.

Mr. McDermott said he had not evaluated the right-of-way. He said if the turn lanes could not fit within the existing right-of-way, it would be the applicant's responsibility to acquire right-of-way on the opposite side or find a way to shift the road. He said it was difficult with VDOT standards, such as the curvature of the road.

Mr. Missel asked if turn and taper distance had been reviewed.

Mr. McDermott explained the VDOT requirements were typically 200-foot turn lanes and 200-foot taper, so 400 feet on each side.

Mr. Missel said he was getting into the weeds.

Mr. McDermott said the distance requirements could be reduced if the applicant submitted a waiver stating the turning traffic would be at a lower volume.

Mr. Clayborne said he had concerns about the location of the proposal. He said the placement of different elements within the site and the placement along Barracks Road. He said the traffic safety issues were concerning. He said he was not in support of the proposal as presented.

Ms. Firehock said much had been raised. She said the traffic speeds were concerning. She said once the schools were established, the commuters would learn they would have to slow down on that section of road because of the vehicles waiting to turn into the school. She noted the Commission denied an application for a summer camp with a traffic volume of 10 cars per day because the road was too narrow and rural.

Ms. Firehock said Barracks Road was well maintained and designed—in fact, over designed. She said people drove at the designed speed. She said VDOT often overdesigned roads so that vehicles were able to go 1/3 faster than the posted speed limit. She said she would not allow the traffic issue to influence her decision on the proposal. She said the classrooms were on the small side. She said the school was not in Florida and noted the winter was very rough. She said the students would have been required to be inside quite often. She said the applicant was trailering in buildings.

Ms. Firehock said the County public schools had children in trailers, so it was an acceptable

standard to the County. She said if the students complained about space, then the applicant would likely have to get larger buildings. She said the problem would make itself known and was easily solvable. She said the site was appealing because the footprint was light on the land. She said when she considered taking a rural property to be used for a more intensive use, the proposed use was not as intensive.

Ms. Firehock said there were proposals for camps with tennis courts, swimming pools, cafeterias, and other facilities. She said if the applicant's school were to fail or change use, it would be easy to turn over the land to a different use because dramatic changes were not proposed to the land. She said noted she lived on a farm as a child. She said many kids in the County returned home to take care of donkeys or chickens or other animals.

Ms. Firehock said she lived in a rural area, and many people had an animal or two on their property. She said allowing children to have a relationship with the animals and landscape was a gift. She said she wrote curricula and taught outdoor camps for years. She said she was leaning in support of the proposal because it was a light footprint, it would be easy to adapt the site, there were parents looking for alternate education methods. She said there were fewer opportunities for children to get outside and fewer fieldtrip experiences.

Ms. Firehock said the market would determine if the school model would be successful. She said with the conditions outlined in the staff report, including the turn lane requirement. She said there were further details to work out with the site plan. She said she was not concerned about the curb and gutter requirement waiver because it would maintain the rural aesthetic of the site and allow stormwater to sheet flow into the woods. She said people would get used to needing to slow down on the stretch of Barracks Road. She said across the County, most of the roads were not up to standard. She said the traffic issues were solvable for the site.

Mr. Bailey said the site was in a transition area rather than a rural area. He said the applicant would still have to follow the ordinances for caring for animals in the rural areas because the site was in the rural area. He said if other neighbors were allowed to have animals, he did not have concerns about animals being on the site. He said he had concerns about the road related to the location to the curve. He said it did not take a lot for a vehicle to cause an accident taking the curve too fast.

Mr. Bailey said he would be supportive of the project provided the turn lane and mitigating factors in the conditions remain. He said he did not know where the students were coming from, so he did not know if the eastbound or westbound lane would be backed up. He said it only took one car to cause a backup. He said he would have a hard time supporting the proposal unless the conditions were met.

Ms. Firehock said the recommended staff conditions included the turn lanes. She said it was not up to the Commission to design the road or determine what was feasible.

Mr. Bailey said his recommendation was that it would take a right and left turn lane to facilitate traffic movement at the site.

Ms. Firehock said the staff recommendation was for right and left turn lanes that met VDOT standards as a mandatory condition. She said if the applicant was unable to satisfy the VDOT requirements, then the project could not move forward.

Mr. Missel said he was supportive of the proposal as presented by staff.

Ms. Firehock said the applicant was seeking two special exceptions. She said one was the steep slope waiver for the trail crossing, and the other was the waiver of the curb and gutter requirement. She asked if the Commission would have to add those exceptions if they were willing to grant them.

Mr. Clark said the special exceptions were not on the agenda. He said they were recently received and had not been fully reviewed by staff. He said the special exceptions would be addressed during the final site plan review. He said the exceptions did not raise any issues staff thought would need to be resolved before the special use permit because they were appropriate and minor in scale.

Ms. Firehock said the exceptions were being flagged that they needed to be addressed, and if they were concerned about the exceptions, they could discuss.

Mr. Bivins said he had a concern regarding the lack of sidewalk and gutter. He said if the activity was outside of the shelters or classrooms, then there needed to be a context that prevented the children from running into the road.

Ms. Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager, said the applicant recently submitted the special exception applications. She said staff recommended the applicant defer the applications to be handled during the site planning stage. She said the request would have to come from the applicant. She said in the ordinance, the County was required to act on the application within 90 days. She said in general, staff was okay with the special exceptions, and the Commission could provide comment for the record. She said the pedestrian issue would be covered by the site plan ordinance. She said the applicant provided a trail instead of a sidewalk. She said the full list of waivers had not been addressed. She said other issues were recommended to be addressed at the site plan.

Ms. Firehock said the applicant would have to come forward with a proposal to be addressed at the site planning stage. She said the school could accommodate children with various disabilities. She said there was an Outward-Bound course in the County for children with disabilities.

Mr. Bivins said he was uncomfortable hypothesizing what the site could be if the applicant's use failed or moved. He said the issue before the Commission was the plan before them. He said he did not support the proposal. He said the community near the site only had one house with horse, and the covenant of the neighborhood did not allow farm animals. He said neighbors would not have farm animal as well.

Ms. Firehock said had the applicant planned to put cattle, horses, or other large, hooved animal, then the site would have been too small and inappropriate. She said the applicant mentioned goats, a donkey, and chickens, and that did not raise her concern level. She said many people had those animals in their yards.

Mr. Bivins said the animals were the applicant's speculation.

Ms. Firehock said a condition could be added stipulating no large, hooved animals.

Mr. Bivins said he would not add a condition because he did not support the proposal.



Mr. Clayborne said he was supportive of the proposal after hearing the discussion. He said he would like to see a condition about no large animals on the site. He said he did not know how much detail was needed in the condition.

Mr. Herrick asked if Mr. Clayborne could specify the size of animal he wanted to restrict on a property.

Mr. Clayborne said things that would be on a dairy farm, like cows, or other large animals.

Ms. Firehock said Mr. Clayborne could explicitly state cows or horses. She suggested using "livestock." She said staff could draft the condition.

Mr. Herrick said the condition from the Commission be staff draft a condition on acceptable livestock before the hearing before the Board.

Mr. Clayborne said that was fair enough.

Ms. Firehock said the condition could state, "no large animals." She said staff could work out the details. She noted Mr. Clark was the rural planner, so he should enjoy the exercise.

Mr. Clark said he had seen a horse before.

Mr. Missel said he did not think there should be a limitation on the type of animal that was allowable on the site—it would be outside the Commission's role, which was land use oversight.

Mr. Missel moved the Commission to recommend approval of SP202100017 Foster Forge Farm School with the conditions listed in the staff report. Ms. Firehock seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-2. (Ms. Firehock, Mr. Missel, and Mr. Bailey for; Mr. Clayborne and Mr. Bivins nay; Mr. Carrazana was absent)

### **Rio Road Corridor Plan**

Mr. David Benish, Development Process Manager, said he was the manager of the project for County staff. He said the Board directed staff to undertake a corridor study of Rio Road from east of the Rio29 small area plan area to the city limits at Melbourne Road. He said the goal of the project was to develop a community vision and plan that would guide the future design and improvements to the Rio Road corridor. He said Line and Grade Civil Engineering was contracted to undertake the project. He said Daniel Hyer was the principal planner with Line and Grade and would be presenting to the Board.

Mr. Benish said the corridor plan process began in the spring of 2021. He said the consultant had completed work on the two phases of the total project and was before the Commission for review and comment. He noted the document was at a planning level, and as noted in the goals statement, established a vision for improvements along the corridor with sufficient level of analysis and conceptual design work to understand whether the project concepts and recommendations could address existing and future conditions and could be constructed to meet VDOT and other relevant engineering and planning standards.

Mr. Benish said the concepts in the document were not final designed projects ready for

construction. He said the recommendations from the plan would need to be prioritized for funding and implementation by the Board along with other projects within the County. He said once funded, the projects would be subject to further study and final design work. He said page 6 of the plan provided the public input processes used and the feedback received during the plan development process. He said the public input effort had been guided by the Community and Public Engagement Office.

Mr. Benish said comments were received on the corridor issues and the proposed concepts. He noted that due to the complexity of the issues and the concepts in the phase 1 portion of the project, from Route 29 East to the John Warner Parkway, there was an update and input to the Board on October 13, 2021. He said the report was before the Commission for review and comment. He said those comments provided would be forwarded to the Board during its review. He said staff recommended for the Board to accept and endorse the corridor study and refer it back to staff for consideration and adoption in the upcoming review and update of the Comprehensive Plan, the AC44 process.

Mr. Daniel Hyer, Line and Grade Civil Engineering, said he was joined by two colleagues, Kendra Patrick and Ryan Cheney. He said the presentation would summarize about 18 months of work. He said the presentation would cover the approach, the methodology and implementation of the approach, the findings by phase, and a summary of the recommendations for implementation.

Mr. Hyer said the approach was a four-phased process. He said the first step was to engage the citizens in the corridor itself, to walk the corridor, breathe in the exhaust, to feel unsafe, and to watch and learn. He said the consultant listened and asked questions of the community. He said the consultant tried to understand and organize the community feedback. He said they prioritized the feedback based on the project goals. He said the project took place during the pandemic. He said they had to analyze, rank, and model the input they received to see if there were trends in the data. He said they integrated the findings with their intentions—how to make a safe corridor, how to improve environmental and public spaces along the corridor, how to keep traffic moving optimally and effectively, and how to make access equitable for all who used the corridor. He said the process was iterative for both phases.

Mr. Hyer said the methodology was to assess and analyze more deeply. He said the corridor was reviewed in two phases. He said the project originally encompassed Phase 1 when the consultant worked with staff to scope the study. He said Phase 1 was from the John Warner Parkway intersection to the small area plan. He said as the project developed, a second phase was warranted to continue the study to the city line. He said the division was logical for each phase. He said the Phase 1 part of the road and the Phase 2 part of the road did not share many qualities in common other than a name. He said the phasing supported the goal of creating cohesion along Rio Road and honoring the current state of each portion.

Mr. Hyer said within the phases were specific areas of focus. He said within Phase 1, the focus was on nodal points and intersections, and the corridor intersection. He said within Phase 2, the corridor itself became the focus. He said within the assessment the insights were qualitative and quantitative. He said there needed to be some form of data collected to provide a foundation for certain recommendations. He said work was done to understand corridor safety from a quantitative standpoint—what types of accidents were happening, where they were happening—and that information informed the recommendations.

Mr. Hyer said the recommendations were not strictly quantitative. He noted a quoted statement

from the 1965 Highway Research Board which stated roadways were designed for the quality of the experience. He said metrics were designed to analyze the corridors from a qualitative standpoint, such as the temperature, the site lines, and the safety. He said the qualitative aspects were then quantified.

Mr. Hyer said because the portion of the County was becoming increasingly urban, it was important to understand the oncoming increased traffic. He said there were anticipated increases in traffic where Phase 1 and Phase 2 connected, and the understanding of the corridor needed to account for the traffic.

Mr. Hyer said Hillsdale Drive was the highest topographic point in the corridor. He said there was the opportunity for a context shift at that point for cars exiting the Route 29 Corridor and the small area plan area. He said the two intersections were so close together they effectively operated as one. He said they did not operate well, and the intersection was the most accident prone in the corridor. He said 89% of the accidents involved a left-hand turn.

Ms. Firehock asked if the accidents were for a specific direction.

Mr. Hyer said the accidents were regardless of direction. He noted the turn lanes did not have enough queuing space for vehicles. He said there were eight left hand turns to be made at the two-way intersection. He noted there were 24 accidents resulting in rear-ends and 22 accidents resulting in angled collisions. He said the accidents over the last six years resulted in \$1.5 M to \$2 M in damages. He said three different options were presented in the report to make the intersection better. He said the intersection volume could be reduced by encouraging alternative routes. He said some of the left-hand turns could be removed, but off-road connections would have to be established which would encumber private property.

Mr. Hyer said the recommended solution was to remove all left-hand turns. He said shown on the slide was what was called a peanut- or bean-shaped roundabout. He said it basically was a roundabout except shaped as shown. He said it capitalized on that opportunity, this was a high point in the corridor and there was a context shift. He said all of the movements had now been made into yield-controlled movements. He said they could read through this or refamiliarize themselves, but it offered additional resiliency and much safer accommodations for all vehicles using the corridor.

Mr. Hyer said it was effectively a roundabout, and roundabouts were spoken about a lot these days, and some people liked them, and some people hated them. He said he knew what the people along this corridor thought about them, but he would not say it. He said most of the stakeholders involved in this discussion, VDOT in particular and County staff, had been very supportive of this concept, so they kept it as the recommendation in the study.

Mr. Bivins said on page 12, they had alternative 3, and the arrow that went between North Field and Old Brook. He asked if that property was available.

Mr. Hyer said no, not currently. He said they would need to buy a house and take it down.

Mr. Bivins said okay.

Mr. Hyer said someone might want to sell a house because it might be helpful to connect the dots.

Mr. Bivins said that was an inexpensive option for an area that lost lives almost once a month.

Mr. Hyer said he would not disagree with that at all.

Mr. Missel asked how much land acquisition the peanut required.

Mr. Hyer said it did not take an entire property. He said the house seen on the righthand side of the image, that house could be seen today. He said it had probably 60 feet of setback from the existing corridor. He said they did encroach toward it substantially, so it was a substantial impact on that parcel, and it would not necessarily be inadvisable to acquire that entire property as well. He said it also affected the property on the other side. He said for all intents and purposes, it was not much wider than the existing road, and was relatively compact given what it was accomplishing.

Mr. Hyer said he would continue onto Belvedere Boulevard. He said Belvedere had its own challenges. He said one of the most prominent challenges of this intersection was the peak hour delays for people turning left out of Belvedere. He said that would only get worse as Belvedere continued to develop and may also get worse as the John Warner Intersection was overhauled, and they would talk about that in a moment. He said this was close enough to the John Warner intersection that they needed to be thought of together instead of apart. He said there was also lacking safe infrastructure for pedestrians, and the document expounded upon that a little more, but the curb ramps pointed people into traffic as opposed to parallel to traffic, so there were some basic safety and traffic improvements needed as well. He said they could see the accidents compared to what they saw on Hillsdale were way down. He said there was one very costly bicycle accident some years ago, so there was a recorded history of a lack of safety of bicyclists along the corridor.

Mr. Hyer said there they considered two different options. He said one of them had already been conceived prior to them even beginning this study, and that was published in a VDOT study about Belvedere and John Warner, and that was the image seen on the top righthand side of the image, which was called a Restricted Crossing U-Turn, or RCUT. He said RCUTs felt like the best option when there was no option in many cases, but they were not usually very thoughtful and were forcing people into a U-turn. He said they worked diligently to identify another solution that might fit with the corridor's aesthetic and character a little more specifically and still bring some of the improvements that were wanted.

Mr. Hyer said they actually recommended what was called a Continuous Green-T. He said going between the two slides, the white circles on the first were representing specific conflict points. He said they went from five to three, which was a 40% reduction. He said it was not perfect, but substantial. He said the trick there was how many cars would be crossed when making that left-hand turn and how many movements were they watching for. He said the Continuous Green T accomplished much of what the RCUT did but did not force every car to go into a U-turn movement, and if cars did want to make a U-turn, they could use the roundabout at the John Warner intersection instead of the private street Greenbriar Terrace, which was very clearly a small, residential street.

Mr. Hyer said they felt this accomplished the purposes and allowed them to continue to promote the typical section they would like to see in the corridor, they could improve traffic safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. He said it showed the changed entrance to City Church as well, which may or may not be what resulted from their pending site plan and what VDOT might recommend.

He said they did have two entrances currently and they were very close together. He said those entrances that were so close to each other ultimately caused a lot of safety issues.

Mr. Bivins said at one point the church came to the Commission and discussed going behind CATEC to get to the circle. He asked if they were taking them in front of CATEC on this one.

Mr. Hyer said if they were to zoom out of the image more, it could be seen that they actually had both of those options schematically laid in. He said as the viewport here showed, they would basically be recommending some sort of inter-parcel easement to get them to the roundabout so that if they wanted to make a left-hand turn, they would do it through the roundabout as opposed to here. He said they could also just go out of their entrance and make a U-turn in the roundabout. He said there were a few options there. He said in reality, he did not know that they would lose both of their entrances but having a commercial entrance in the middle of an intersection was generally ill-advisable. He said they worked with them, and they were good people to work with in that they were open minded and understood what was going on. He said he did not quite know what that played out to be.

Mr. Bivins said the other thing across the street was three sort of conflict points there. He said as the Center became more established and as they continued to age in this community, it was a complicated intersection for people of a certain age, although he personally liked it.

Mr. Hyer said Mr. Bivins was not wrong. He said he thought the current delays were upwards of five minutes and anticipated of up to eight minutes. He said it was debilitating.

Mr. Bivins said it was a complicated intersection.

Mr. Hyer said it was complicated and challenging. He said when and if that did happen, there had been some concern and some public feedback about putting a traffic signal there. He said unlike the RCUT example, the Green-T could incorporate a traffic signal, so when and if that was warranted, a traffic signal could be installed within that geometry, which was a nice variable to have.

Mr. Bailey said he lived in the area and pulled out of that intersection every day. He thanked Daniel and the team for their patience and engaging the community, working with the CAC, and incorporating feedback from the citizens, both in and outside of the CAC. He said a concern he had with this was right now to get out, people timed it. He said looking right, the light down at Hillsdale stopped, so the traffic, especially if it was a left-hand turn across, to get across safely and time the light at John Warner, which also had a righthand turn light for people coming out of the school or wherever else up Rio. He said it felt dangerous to go out. He said while the traffic accidents did not air it out, per se, it was a very strange thing.

Ms. Firehock said there were close calls a lot of the time.

Mr. Bailey said if they took out the two signals there, that now created some gaps for people getting out there, and he would like to know what that meant.

Ms. Firehock asked if he meant they would be flowing more regularly, so it would be difficult to ever get out.

Mr. Bailey said exactly. He said the main pattern was going into Charlottesville and north of town, and if taking the proposed traffic circle at the Hillsdale and Old Brook area and had the approved traffic circle going in at CATEC, the dominant flow of traffic, especially in the mornings, was going east to west into Charlottesville, which meant there was no light or break to get across.

Mr. Bivins asked if they were talking about getting rid of the Greenbrier Road light.

Mr. Hyer said the Greenbrier signal would still be there.

Mr. Bivins said there was still a signal. He said there was good Nepalese food at one of those gas stations.

Mr. Hyer said there was at the Exxon right there.

Mr. Bailey said it used to be a Subway.

Mr. Bivins said that got to the point of how did they manage that, particularly if they were coming east. He said if they were coming west, it was easy.

Mr. Bailey said it was to be borne out. He said this was a complicated road.

Mr. Hyer said he thought it was worth noting that the traffic signal may be an important consideration once they saw how the John Warner roundabout operated. He said he thought the roundabout would provide more gaps, but it was hard to predict how those gaps would play out depending on who was occupying the roundabout at any given moment. He said it was certainly possible and a concern.

Mr. Bailey said his wife was from South Bend, Indiana, where they loved roundabouts, and there were multiple in front of her parents' house. He said in the morning with the amount of traffic, they did not leave enough space in traffic to let anyone in.

Ms. Firehock said it seemed these things worked best when they were all roundabouts. She said in other words, if this section was all roundabouts, everyone would have to pause and let people in, but with this not being a roundabout, she shared that concern that it could be tricky.

Mr. Hyer said they could put a roundabout here.

Ms. Firehock said good.

Mr. Bailey said it would be way more expensive.

Mr. Bivins said they would never get any money to do it. He said they needed to move forward.

Mr. Bailey said he appreciated not just putting it in an RCUT here. He said in general, the movements were complicated here.

Mr. Hyer said it was complicated and would continue to be complicated, but it could definitely be improved.

Mr. Bivins asked what road Belvedere led to.

Mr. Bailey said going over the old one lane bridge to Huntingdon and came out there.

Mr. Bivins said okay.

Mr. Hyer said they considered inter-parcel and off-grade connections, but in this case, they did not recommend any at this time. He continued to say the John Warner intersection was slated to become a roundabout and had been funded. He said what they were thinking of with this intersection in particular was that they anticipated the pedestrian activity would substantially increase here, and that was an important consideration for whatever improvements were made. He said the intersection operated at a poor level of service during the peak hours, and they knew it would get worse without the improvement project, but it was happening, which was good. He said interestingly, half of the accidents that happened here were "rear-ends." He said 20% of them involved a merging maneuver.

Ms. Firehock asked if the rear-ending happened when people stopped for the traffic light.

Mr. Hyer said they did not know the exact cause. He said compared to Hillsdale, 10% of the accidents here were left-hand turns.

Ms. Firehock said she had seen people run the red light at the intersection.

Mr. Hyer said in the picture shown, there were two lanes going down Rio the whole way, and at this intersection one lane became a left-hand turn lane, and people either had to merge quickly or rear-end someone. He said the two types of prominent accidents were rear-ends and merging conflicts. He said they thought that was a result of the two lanes becoming one at a turn lane. He said the roundabout should alleviate some of that because it was a dual-lane roundabout.

Mr. Hyer said the conceptual solutions at this intersection were first to drop a roundabout on top of the existing intersection, which was what VDOT was intending to do. He said a result of the staff's look at this, they proposed a different location of the roundabout, which was option 2. He said they proposed it in a location that was a little more at the crossroads at a macroscopic level, and also removed some of what they were calling redundant infrastructure. He said he believed it still was that, but there could also be a purpose to that extra infrastructure. He said they presented these two options to the Board and were advised to explore a third hybrid option, which was also researched. He showed on the screen the two design solutions, on the left was the VDOT concept and the right was their original interpretation of how to simplify and center that roundabout.

Mr. Hyer said it did move the intersection closer to Dunlora. He said it was still an alternative and not a recommendation.

Mr. Bivins said if they preserved the wildflowers, they might get away with that.

Mr. Hyer asked if there were wildflowers there.

Mr. Bivins said yes.

Mr. Bailey said there was also a plaque.

Ms. Firehock asked Mr. Bailey to repeat himself.

Mr. Bailey said there was a plaque there.

Mr. Bivins said they should visit the site.

Mr. Hyer said both would be a substantial improvement, and he believed that was relatively clear. He said it was the VDOT roundabout that was preferred. He said in short summary, to clarify what was happening with the VDOT one was that the traffic signal would be replaced with a dual-lane roundabout. He said the northbound Rio or coming from Rio Phase 2 to the corridor would be what was called a non-yielding right hand turn lane. He said it bypassed the roundabout.

Mr. Bivins said that was there now.

Mr. Hyer said not really, no.

Mr. Bivins said there was a path there.

Mr. Hyer said that was Dunlora Drive. He indicated that road on the map. He said they could see the CATEC entrance was modified, but in a good way. He said partial access median restriction for left-hand turn movements, which meant that the left-hand turn off Dunlora could not make the left turn anymore, so they had to go into the roundabout. He said if someone lived in Dunlora and wanted to go south on Rio, they went through the roundabout. He said that was not uncommon to use the roundabout as a slingshot to get going in the direction of travel. He said the flower meadow was being proposed to be turned into a stormwater basin on the VDOT option. He said the additional northbound turn lane would actually continue almost all the way to Belvedere, further complicating what they wanted to do at Belvedere as well. He said those were things that may not necessarily be explicit at a first glance, and that was why they brought those to attention.

Mr. Hyer said they felt like it could be improved for all movements, and that was how they ended up with the option on the right. He said he did not know that it was a good thing, but what they had conceived was that Rio Road would actually follow the original Rio Road alignment and come into the intersection near Dunlora. He said, going back the previous slide, they could see with the magenta lines how they had simplified the movements. He said they looked at this a lot, and it became relatively excitable for people to talk about these two options. He said he respected the position that was not moving it closer to their homes, because no one would want that, himself included. He said he fully respected their position as citizens to express their thoughts there. He said those were the two competing interests here, because they were trying to handle the peak hour traffic. He said the left-hand turns were not really the problem, but the peak hour was.

Mr. Hyer said in summary, the VDOT option was the preferred solution for this intersection based on them listening to all the stakeholders. He said that was what they believed was the appropriate recommendation at this time given all they had heard and listened to. He said finally, the corridor itself actually had a large number of accidents along it, not specifically at an intersection. He said it was easy to target what that was about, which was the access management standards along the corridor were almost entirely lacking for most of it. He said what he meant by that was that by access management, VDOT would recommend in terms of spacing of entrances and how those entrances were designed. He said the gas station where they could get the Nepalese food was a great example of numerous commercial entrances stacked directly adjacent to each other, where pedestrians were supposed to exist was ambiguous and it was unsafe.



Mr. Hyer said the recommendation for this area was, as these parcels along the corridor redevelop, to strictly enforce access management standards as designed by VDOT, and that would substantially alleviate a lot of these access management accidents, rear-endings and angles. He said they were recommending a continuous dual left-hand turn lane, or as he heard it called where he grew up, the suicide lane, be replaced with a raised median where they had identified it could be installed, and the study included those locations, but there was a lot of real estate to be gained back along the corridor that could be a raised median instead of just a turn.

Ms. Firehock said VDOT had made her aware of the term “suicide lane” as well.

Mr. Hyer said there was a reason for that word, and the accidents along the corridor supported it. He asked if there were questions or if he should continue presenting.

Mr. Bivins said they must go on record to say the County must have a Public Works Department. He said when they put raised medians in, that meant they would put flora in them, and VDOT would not manage it. He said there was an intersection farther up the road where there was a bridge going up Route 29, and the pots there once had lovely plants and now only had overgrown and noxious weeds. He said if they were going to do these kinds of things, they had to move towards someone who would take care of it. He said otherwise, they should stick with the suicide lines because they could at least maintain that space.

Mr. Hyer said there were a number of citizens who agreed with Mr. Bivins’ remarks and that was documented in the study. He said he agreed with him as well.

Mr. Bailey asked to see the slide with the proposed roundabout area. He gestured to the green area on the south side.

Ms. Firehock asked if he was referring to the VDOT roundabout.

Mr. Bailey said he was referring to the VDOT solution. He said that also led into what was in the pedestrian trail that ran beside it, which was increasingly more used, and likely would be used even more with all the additional housing coming in there. He said that was one of the major considerations as to how pedestrians moved across this. He said he wanted to make sure they understood that when they talked about multi-modal traffic, that was a significant multi-modal access point to bike to work or get into town.

Ms. Firehock said that was all the green lines on the left image.

Mr. Bivins asked if the brown lines on the right image were that path.

Mr. Hyer said yes, that was a shared-use path.

Mr. Bailey said the shared-use path connected into the existing streets.

Ms. Firehock said they had to cross a lot of streets around that roundabout.

Mr. Missel asked why the right-turn bypass was necessary. He asked if it was to reduce volumes to reduce them on the actual roundabout.

Mr. Hyer said that was one of the highest movements in the corridor, so they were giving preferential treatment to keeping the traffic moving. He said all the cars turning right was one of the current problem areas.

Mr. Missel said it felt like that intersection with Dunlora, when coming out of there and turning right, it would be confusing.

Mr. Hyer said when reviewing the VDOT study, they left that open-ended. He said they acknowledged that Dunlora Drive did not meet access management standards, and that should be considered during the design phase.

Mr. Bivins asked which road was stated.

Ms. Firehock said Dunlora Drive.

Mr. Hyer said the location of this road in relation to this intersection did not comply with any sort of access management criteria.

Ms. Firehock said it was too close.

Mr. Hyer said it was a result of putting one intersection on top of the other by using the roundabout as an immediate solution to the issue. He said the roundabout did solve the problem, but one of the insularly things it created as a problem was this situation, and the report stated they did not have a solution; thus, the solution was to leave it.

Mr. Missel said it was to create chaos.

Mr. Hyer said potentially.

Mr. Missel said he had seen millions of slides in his life, but they put together the best slides.

Mr. Hyer thanked Mr. Missel for his comment. He said the option on the right, although it was not preferred, what it effectively did was take the wildflower garden and made it accessible public space by joining it to the proffer from the Rio Point development, so they ended up with a much broader public space. He said they felt like that was a warranted way to integrate the two projects. He said he could demonstrate that better when they got to Phase 2. He said the other thing they did was actually reduce impervious areas and impervious conflict points, and they tried to think outside of the box, and that was what they came up with. He said he would now move onto Phase 2.

Mr. Hyer said they would no longer focus on specific intersections and instead would focus on chunks of the corridor that had some commonality. He said the first was from John Warner Parkway to Pen Park. He said this was a really interesting portion of the corridor, as the image on the left showed, specifically because it was the last bit of the corridor that represents what it once was, which was a rural road.

Ms. Firehock said she remembered it.

Mr. Hyer said before long, it would not look like this. He said they felt it presented the County with the unique opportunity to let these developments help promote what the study recommended in

terms of how to incorporate all this development in a thoughtful and creative way. He said interestingly, in this portion of the road, most of the accidents were with something off the road, such as trees, which he thought would get better now that the County had installed their sidewalk project on this portion of the road and would go away as the development happened. He said it was something that they saw a lot as development density increased but the roadway did not and still had trees and poles and other objects next to the road.

Mr. Hyer said they kept with the recommendation of integrating a median into this portion on the corridor, and they showed on the bottom of the slide what it would look like to have a raised or painted median adjacent to both the Rio Point development and the Rio Commons development, which if taken together, effectively gave them the opportunity to work towards this plan of implementation for almost 80% of this portion of the road, and it could be done for them as these developments came online. He said it got a shared-use path for all these residents to the John Warner greenway trail, which was huge. He said this would be a much-improved condition as development happened, and they thought it should look like this. He said again, landscaping and trees required maintenance, but it also created character and made roads more enjoyable to walk along, and in some ways promoted safety of vehicles driving along it a little more slowly.

Mr. Missel asked if the Rio Point and Rio Commons developments massing was based on a real plan.

Mr. Hyer said yes, this data was from them. He said they took their documents and laid them in. He said he did not take any credit for them, they just dropped it on.

Mr. Bivins said he did not believe the Commission had seen Rio Commons.

Mr. Hyer said that it was a by-right development.

Mr. Benish said they had not actually seen it, and it was approved administratively.

Ms. Firehock said to Mr. Bivins they did not do that one.

Mr. Bivins said they did the other one. He said it did not look like that when it came to them.

Mr. Hyer said what they were proposing was that these developments provide the shared-use path on their frontage, as recommended here. He said it would leave about 180 to 200 feet of shared-use path remaining to get it to Pen Park, which would be an amazing connection for the County to try to see through. He said basically, they will have locked a shared-use path to Pen Park Road, which again, had no sidewalks or anything along it, but they were getting that much closer to another major park coming online to an off-road connection, which promoted people using these multi-modal options. He said as they transitioned to the central portion of this part of the corridor on the next part of the slide, he wanted to draw their attention to that the shared-use path would cross Rio Road here and the shared-use path would end up on the other side of the road.

Mr. Hyer said the central portion of Phase 2, Pen Park Road to Stonehenge, was noteworthy in its own right. He said what they had the opportunity to do, if money was no object, was to begin to unite the central and northern portions with the common aesthetic, which was entirely lacking right now and sort of at-hock at best. He said they thought there was an opportunity to bring unity to the corridor at large. He said also, interestingly was that there were a lot of safety concerns in

this portion of the roadway. He said one was the Waldorf School's turn lanes, where the left-hand turn lane from northbound Rio was deficient, and 50% of the accidents there were rear-end accidents.

Mr. Hyer said the left-hand turn for Town Lane was entirely lacking, and there was a bunch of accidents there he would show them in a moment. He said there was actually sufficient width to provide a turn lane, so they should provide one. He said intersection site triangles were obstructed at Penfield Lane, and they could see in the document why that was. He showed the road on the upper right corner of the image on the slide and said the triangles on the site were obstructed from view. He said the vertical curvature of the roadway, again, stemming from the original rural road, the vertical curvature of the roadway at Penfield Lane did not provide sufficient site distance at that intersection, which was an opportunity to post the speed lower. He said he thought that case could be made to VDOT. He said he did not know if they received the appendix, but [Ryan Cheney] had an evaluation on that curve, and it was in the appendix under their engineering evaluation. He said he thought that stood to promote having a discussion about a reposted speed limit.

Mr. Hyer showed an aerial image and said the data came from the statistical software that Mr. Cheney was working with. He showed Town Lane on the image and that there were six rear-end accidents at Town Lane. He said there was no left-turn lane, but there was sufficient width for it, so they needed to get one in. He said it was also interesting that there was a parcel access entrance that was right-in, right-out, that people did not actually honor. He said even though it was trying to push them, they basically used it as a slingshot and went the other way. He actually saw this at the new Wawa on Route 250 the other day too. He said what was needed was a median to reinforce that movement, which they were recommending.

Mr. Hyer said also in this portion of the corridor, if they did not count for the DUI or young drivers speeding on the road, all the accidents at Stonehenge were rear-end accidents, and the left-hand turn was lacking. He said they had a recommendation for that he would show in a moment. He said the typical section here looked largely the same as the northern portion. He said again, they thought it was an opportunity to blend all the way from John Warner to Stonehenge and make a consistent looking roadway. He said they could see that Town Lane had been given a left-hand turn lane. He said what they had currently was a bunch of lane widths that were inconsistent, some 14 feet, some 10 feet, a bus stop where one was not needed, and it was a bunch of infrastructure that could be reallocated to a consistent use, which was what could be seen here in their proposed plan.

Mr. Hyer said in addition to that, and they may have an opportunity in the future when Eco-Village redevelops, to break off Rockwood from Stonehenge and separate them, because it was a really bad condition currently, with two entrances jumbled together. He said the report showed a picture of that specifically. He said Stonehenge to the City was where the roadway looked like it was from a different planet. He said going south of Stonehenge and it was a winding road with steep topography and a lot of vegetation, guardrails everywhere, an ambiguous shoulder that was unclear about whether it was a shoulder or ditch.

Mr. Hyer said the image on the slide showed a red truck getting around a car waiting to turn, and cars had to pull far forward to see. He said the site distance on these curves were a challenge, and there was not sufficient stopping sight distance. He said interestingly, in this portion of the roadway, nearly half of all accidents were single vehicle, so it was a car that lost control because they were not doing something properly.

Mr. Hyer said they broke away from their pattern of recommendations and gave the County, and presumably the city as a partner, because of Agnese Street in the City boundary, recommendations of a safety improvement plan, like bringing the guardrail up to standard and maybe revising the intersection geometry to be a little safer. He said to actually allow the critical slopes on Eco-Village to be impacted, because in doing that, those turns had low visibility because of the critical slope, and if they gave the developer at Eco-Village the chance to diminish those critical slopes, as bad as it sounded, it basically gave the site distance that was needed along those curves.

Mr. Hyer said also promoting pedestrian connectivity and finding ways to get people over to the John Warner Parkway Trail was shown in the image on the right. He said trying to promote any kind of pedestrian connectivity on this stretch of Rio Road was almost an entire study in itself. He said it was very complicated there; the creek was eroding and coming close to eroding the roadbed and was an entirely different conversation and not worth trying to build a sidewalk there right now. He said there were other more applicable projects for them to pursue.

Mr. Hyer said he would briefly discuss implementation, and there were further details on this in the report. He said as currently conceived, and he was still personally struggling with this, John Warner intersection was first because the funding was secured, so they should get it done. He said he struggled to recommend improving Belvedere Boulevard before Hillsdale in their order of recommendations. He said he somewhat felt that Hillsdale should be first because it was the least safe and worst performing intersection, with a lot of opportunity to make safety a lot better.

Mr. Hyer said as currently conceived, John Warner was the first recommendation, Belvedere second, because they were basically unified, and Hillsdale after that, with infill improvements over time as parcel redeveloped. He said their recommendation on the proposed typical section was to extend the shared-use path all the way along this portion of the road, all the way along this portion of the road, up to the small area plan, basically creating the north town trail connection that was lacking. He said that was accomplished by taking the bike lanes off the road and putting them on the shared-use path.

Mr. Hyer said for Phase 2, they should focus on working with developers in the near term to get that shared-use path built for the northern section, implement safety improvements in the southern portion along Agnese as soon as they could find money for that, and then the infill intersection improvements at Town Lane and Penfield Lane where there were easy re-striping efforts to get turn lanes, or reposting the speed to get the vertical curvature under control, and then continued infill improvements like they were seeing with the County sidewalk projects that happened there. He said that concluded his presentation.

Mr. Clayborne said as an architect, he thought those were some great slides. He said one question he had was for his own knowledge. He asked what threshold or metric did they use or had to hit before they said the left turn was not the right call at the intersection. He said for example, the Belvedere one looked pretty messy coming out of Belvedere and taking in account the comment about the age of the residents there, when did they say no left turns. He would like to know Mr. Hyer's opinion on that. He asked Ryan Cheney to join him to answer this question. He said he thought because of the way it operated currently, there were not a lot of accidents there. He said the accident data at that intersection was very low, and he thought it was because it felt so unsafe that drivers had that much more focus.

Mr. Bailey said the other thing to note right now was that a lot of people he knew avoided it because they could go through Dunlora and go through the light going north out because it was so hard, or they went through Huntingdon if they were going north or something and got away from that intersection. He said there was a lot of movement from the Belvedere neighborhood, SOCA was there, and how that progressed as it built out, he did not know, but there was a lot of ways to find not go to that intersection. He said how that would change if it was more functional and people felt they could get through it, it might be good. He said if Google Maps routed you, it would take you that way to get to the Center at Belvedere.

Mr. Cheney said to address his question, whenever they eliminated movement and said no left turns, they had to think about there being some group of people who had to still go in a certain direction, so what was the impact of that? He said with an RCUT, which they were doing, they were saying no left turn, but they were really not, and what they were doing was changing the left-turn into a U-turn and moving it away from the intersection. He said an RCUT could be really effective if they had a much safer area down the road where they could make that U-turn. He said in this case, their opinion was that this did not really exist on this corridor.

Mr. Bailey said three gas stations was where that would be in front of.

Mr. Cheney said their evaluation was that they should leave the left turn, but what were the safety improvements they could implement right there? He said one of the things the Continuous Green-T did was, as Mr. Hyer mentioned, reduce conflict points, and instead of having all those lanes right on top of each other that they had to cross, it spread out the conflict points, so psychologically, they still had five conflict points, but they were not crossing conflict points.

Mr. Cheney said a crossing was when they were crossing a lane of traffic. He said it was inherently different, and different safety-wise, than a merging movement. He said it was much easier to merge into traffic than it was to cross into a lane of traffic. He said what it did was take two of those crossing conflict points and changed them into merging conflict points. He said what they were saying was that the left turn would be made halfway into their own lane, then they accelerated and further down the road had to manage a merge. He said they thought that was much safer than doing all of those movements within an intersection, if that made sense.

Mr. Clayborne said it did. He said with the set of recommendations they had, it said they could put a traffic light there in the future. He asked if they could repurpose a traffic light, such as the ones they were taking down for the VDOT roundabout. He asked if they could repurpose traffic lights to move to another intersection.

Mr. Cheney said he did not know if they wanted to do that for that particular light, and it depended. He said the newer lights were much more energy-efficient, and traffic lights actually took a lot of energy to run. He said when they were discussing future projections, one of the things they did not have to worry about with a roundabout was that it still worked when the power went out, they did not have a power bill or all that infrastructure there. He said that was another thing they considered with all these improvements.

Mr. Cheney said one thing to note about this specific intersection with the traffic light was if it was warranted and they did put a signal there, it would be more efficient than a traditional four-legged signal, because the southbound traffic here was not included in that signal, so that was why it was called a Continuous Green-T. He said they did not have to stop, and it reduced that cycle time from four to three, so they got a 25% bonus that was 25% faster than a normal signal would be.

Mr. Clayborne said he agreed with the phasing of the implementation, where numbers 2 and 3 would rotate, so the peanut would be first. He said he agreed with that because it at least provided some safety from Belvedere, and if someone felt it was unsafe, they could go down and use the peanut to go back up. He said he was not sure if people would do that, but it seemed to be a reasonable approach to that.

Mr. Cheney said from here, the peanut was quite a ways' away.

Mr. Bailey said instead of going to the peanut, they would go to the traffic circle, which was closer to this. He said the peanut was up by the mall.

Mr. Clayborne said he understood.

Mr. Firehock asked if he still liked the peanut.

Mr. Clayborne said he thought it was a clever solution. He said he had no further questions.

Mr. Bailey said he had spent plenty of time with this.

Mr. Bivins said he had a question for Mr. McDermott. He asked what the North Point was. He asked if it was this.

Ms. Firehock asked if he was asking about the solutions for North Point.

Mr. McDermott asked if he was referring to the new ones on Route 29 at North Point. He said those were RCUTs, not Green-T's.

Mr. Bivins asked if the one everyone gave a lot of pushback over on Fray's Mill.

Mr. McDermott said on Fray's Mill it was going to be an RCUT as well, and as Mr. Hyer pointed out, there was an RCUT proposed at this location, and it was not well-received by the public. He said they were going to make a Smart Scale application for that RCUT in the last round and decided to pull that and focus instead on the roundabout at John Warner Parkway instead, because they wanted to do a little more evaluation, which was provided from this study.

Ms. Firehock said she had seen their work before on Avon Street, and it was excellent. She said she was not here to redesign their intersections, and she thought they had done a great job. She said she liked their roundabout solution better than the VDOT one that they said they were going to go with due to public comment. She said she wanted to suggest that this could be considered: instead of raised tree lawns that they used this opportunity to put in bioswales. She said VDOT only had to treat stormwater from lanes that were new, so if there was an existing road that did not have stormwater treatment, it was still going untreated into their local creeks, and if they wanted to know what was wrong with a creek, only look at the road network and the incredible amount of impermeable surface area.

Ms. Firehock said out by Rio, where they did the form-based code earlier, something she worked with staff on was to change the illustrations to be recessed bioswales. She said she believed it would require some regrading of the road, because the road was currently crowned. She said she knew her request was not inexpensive, but she thought if they were going to bother to do that, it

was not that much more to necessarily recess and treat stormwater. She said she would like to suggest complete green streets, which included low-impact development best management practices integrated into there, not just tree lots.

Mr. Hyer said he agreed with her and would like to further discuss this. He said it was their experience that it was better to not place them in the median, but to place them in negative spaces along the margins.

Ms. Firehock said they could do that too.

Mr. Hyer said whether introducing a turn lane or not, a lot of times, they had negative space on the margins that could be repurposed, and they found that was a much more effective way to do what she was doing instead of recrowning the road.

Ms. Firehock said it was definitely less expensive when they had an already-crowned road. She said she had seen biofiltration in roundabouts.

Mr. Hyer said yes.

Ms. Firehock said there would be a lot of grading going on to put in a roundabout in the first place, and a lot of times in some lazy places, there were just boring lawns and they had done nothing with that space, and it was an opportunity to do something besides having more turf grass, which was the number one crop in the Chesapeake Bay drainage.

Mr. Hyer said he agreed with her.

Mr. Missel said if the biofilters were done correctly, they would require less maintenance than a lawn.

Ms. Firehock said it would not have to be mowed every week, and many could be planted with native species.

Mr. Hyer said a good example would be where the shared-use path could bend and create a field pocket. He said the firm had done a number of roundabout designs similarly in the past. He said they ended up doing the infiltration at the margins in the pockets of the negative space. He said the corridor was full of those pockets.

Ms. Firehock said when the report was brought before the Board, it should be emphasized that improving the road would help stabilize property values. She said the more the road degraded, the more it felt inaccessible and like a highway. She said stabilizing and beautifying the corridor would stabilize the property values. She said noted the cost of the project. She said SMART scale grants only went so far. She said she was told to live on Rio Road when she first moved to the area because it was like the countryside. She said the area had lost a lot of charm.

Mr. Bivins asked how much the corridor plan projects would cost.

Mr. Hyer said the initial charge for the report was to create character in the corridor where there was none. He said the character was evident in the recommendations as a whole.

Ms. Firehock said it was a highway cutting through, and it was designed for speed.



Mr. Hyer said there would be improvement as the parcels redeveloped and the projects came online. He said improvement would be incremental but evident.

Ms. Firehock said it was good to have a vision. She said vegetation created visual stimuli and slowed down drivers. She said she would like to create vegetative visual stimuli. She noted there was a lot of untreated storm water.

Mr. Bivins asked how much the project would cost.

Mr. Hyer said the costs were broken down into chunks. He said the John Warner roundabout was estimated to be about \$8 M. He said Hillsdale improvements would likely be a lower cost estimate. He said it still required further study.

Mr. Bivins asked if \$25 M would cover the entire cost.

Mr. Hyer said it would probably cover the costs, likely more.

Mr. Bivins said soon they would be talking about a bond referendum.

Mr. Hyer said that was possible. He said he was excited about the northern portion of Phase 2. He noted two developments were planned for that section. He said staff had to be aware in order to implement the project as redevelopment happened.

Ms. Firehock said when the presentation was given to the Board, the infill and safe corridors should be emphasized. She said if people wanted to keep living in the dense environment, it had to be made nice in order to protect the rural area.

Mr. Bailey said the corridor fell under the Rio Form Based Code Area that was supposed to be the new downtown. He said it was a challenge when they were trying to build character where there was none.

Ms. Firehock said the study and projects should have been done long ago.

Mr. Herrick asked Mr. Benish if he was looking for an action or motion from the Commission.

Mr. Benish said an action was not needed. He said it would be helpful, but the minutes from the meeting would be forwarded to the Board with the comments from the Commission and the public.

Mr. Hyer said Mr. Benish provided a slide that summarized what staff was moving forward.

Mr. Benish said the Commission did not have to make a motion.

### **Committee Reports**

Mr. Bivins said he was at a meeting where Mr. Gabe Dayley, Climate Protection Program Manager, gave a presentation. He requested the Chair organize that presentation to be given before the Commission. He noted Mr. Dayley had given the presentation to other CACs.

Mr. Clayborne said he had heard the presentation as well.

Ms. Firehock said her Historic Preservation Committee meeting was canceled due to a lack of a quorum.

**Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting – May 18, 2022**

Ms. Candice Perkins, Planning Director, said the Board met on May 18, and there were no public hearings for planning development applications.

**Old Business/New Business**

Mr. Bivins asked if they would receive a new meeting schedule. He said he did not have a June meeting schedule.

Ms. Firehock said the master schedule for the year had been provided.

Mr. Bivins said the schedule had been changed.

Ms. Firehock said the master schedule with the new dates had been provided. She said she had put them in her calendar. She said they would make sure Mr. Bivins received another copy.

Mr. Missel said he would not be at the next Commission meeting.

**Adjournment**

At 8:57 p.m. the Commission adjourned to June 14, 2022, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.

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Candice Perkins, Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: