

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
DRAFT Minutes November 19, 2019**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Lane Auditorium, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were Tim Keller, Chair; Daphne Spain, Vice-Chair; Jennie More; Bruce Dotson; Julian Bivins; Pam Riley; and Luis Carrazana, UVA representative.

Members absent: Karen Firehock.

Other officials present were David Benish, Planning Director; Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission; Tori Kanellopoulos; Bill Fritz; Andrew Knuppel; Lori Allshouse; and Andy Herrick.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Mr. Keller called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

From the Public: Matters Not Listed for Public Hearing on the Agenda

Mr. Keller invited comment from the public on other matters not listed on the agenda. Hearing none, he moved on to the Consent Agenda.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Keller said there were no consent agenda items.

Work Sessions

Crozet Master Plan

Mr. Andrew Knuppel (Community Development) said this was a work session on the Crozet Master Plan update. He said this work session would focus more on information sharing to serve more as a check-in with the Commission about the progress on the ongoing update.

Mr. Knuppel said he would present a recap of the Master Plan update process thus far, a recap of the engagement efforts that staff has done so far on Phase I of the Master Plan update, presentation of plans on how to build the Master Plan and the guiding principles and goals outlined in the staff report, and a brief discussion of the proposed Phase II and the next steps for the Commission and the community engagement process.

Mr. Knuppel presented a timeline of how staff is generally approaching the Master Plan process. He said they tried to scope it out into a couple of phases to reflect how the County has developed these plans in the past. He said staff started the scoping work in the summer, then began the first stakeholder meetings and collected data. He said Phase I was the "Community Visioning" phase with goals that include facilitating a community visioning process; helping to build understanding of the importance of the Master Plan (noting that staff acknowledges Crozet is a community that has changed significantly since the Master Plan was adopted in 2010); and most importantly, identify and affirm the Master Plan's guiding principles.

Mr. Knuppel said that Phase II would be an opportunity for the focus area input and design strategies, where staff will come up with the recommendations, draw the land use maps, and decide the projects and how to pursue from there. He said in the Summer 2020, they would move into the plan refinement, endorsements, drafting the plan, and bring it back to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for review and adoption in Fall 2020, with an anticipated December 2020 completion date.

Mr. Knuppel said he would briefly run through some of the information and events staff held as part of Phase I, which started in September. He said staff received direction from the Board at their September 4 meeting to initiate the Master Plan update process. He said they included the summary from these meetings in the staff report for the Commission's information.

Mr. Knuppel said he would walk through a couple of the workshops staff held, noting that it had been a good process thus far with a significant turnout. He said the first workshop was on September 9 at Western Albemarle High School with a turnout of over 120 community members. He said they had four stations there and discussed with them why they chose to move to Crozet and what makes them stay; themes from values as a community; an exercise focused around hopes and concerns, recognizing that the Crozet community is changing; a station focused on reviewing the 2010 Master Plan and its vision and guiding principles to check back in on how it has changed, how community values have shifted over time, and how the County was doing on their objectives.

Mr. Knuppel said there was also a mapping exercise that was focused on one thing that a community member would change today. He said throughout the process, staff focused on trying to collect input through a number of different methods and felt that they received a great deal of good input.

Mr. Knuppel said the second workshop tried to respond to some of the concerns staff heard from the first workshop. He said because this was a visioning phase, staff is trying to start high-level without focusing on the solutions yet, but instead focusing on interests, values, and offer a better understanding. He said many of the questions in the workshop talked about the importance of a small-town feel (which a recurring theme from the first workshop with a vision was of what the community wants to be), and as staff writes the plan, they have a critical question about what small-town feel is and how they start to define this.

Mr. Knuppel said that through a number of exercises, staff included an exercise focused on visual characteristics of small-town feel, including what neighborhoods, commercial centers, rural edges and landscape, gathering spaces would look like. He said they held a discussion about the centers and connections in Crozet as far as gathering places, shopping and services, recreation, etc.

Mr. Knuppel said they discussed housing affordability and choice in the workshop, which had been a major theme from the first workshop and a major concern in Crozet. He said staff began to broach the conversation about housing choice, the missing middle, and how they reconcile this with their desired small-town character, building on themes about visual preference and understanding context.

Mr. Knuppel said that local jobs and businesses are a concern in Crozet and determining the type of economic development that is appropriate in Crozet, what is consistent with what the community feels it needs, and how to eventually development recommendations that reflect that.

Mr. Knuppel said he didn't have a picture from the third workshop yet, but what the Commission had in their packets reflects the outcome of that. He said staff also held a couple other pop-up events throughout the process thus far, including coffee talks in Crozet as a chance to make staff available to the community and have discussions in a more face-to-face setting. He said there was a pop-up event at the Crozet Trails Crew 5K and brought out the large map from the second workshop to get more feedback from other members of the community who may not have attended.

Mr. Knuppel said staff also conducted a series of character and connectivity tours as well, including the Crozet Connect bus and Crozet Trolley drive the tours that focused on themes regarding history, character, and connectivity. He presented a picture from the connectivity tour where they had talked about the trail connection for the Crozet Connector Trail under Eastern Avenue and how trails and shared-use paths are a part of the connectivity network and how they consider bike-ped throughout the process.

Mr. Knuppel said that over the past couple months, the process had been fun for staff and that they had received a great deal of good input thus far.

Mr. Knuppel reiterated that Phase I was the visioning process that has focused on values and where Crozet is heading next. He said staff tried to make sure that they designed the process to respond to what they have heard from the community. He said they now have to do the work of actually building out the Master Plan.

Mr. Knuppel said Phase II, which is anticipated to start in January (as there will be a break in December to give staff a chance to regroup), will be about designing policies and projects with the community. He said this would be where they start to develop a land use map, new transportation network, and a new future conservation plan. He said it would be a chance to workshop focus areas that need more attention on specific topics as well as to figure out how they want to implement the Master Plan as far as how to get it done and the strategies they need.

Mr. Knuppel said staff anticipates Phase II will run January through May and will build upon the work staff has been doing in the first phase.

Mr. Knuppel said that the guiding principles were the main outcome from Phase I. He said staff has been trying to establish consistency and clarity in their Master Plans and most recently, the plans have been reformatted. He said a concern staff had heard from the Crozet community was about clarity in the Master Plan between the math and text and internally, within the text, understanding what the priorities are and how to resolve when there is a lack of clarity.

Mr. Knuppel said as part of that, staff looked at the current principles and recommendations in the 2010 Master Plan, incorporated the community feedback they heard through the process as well from the 2017 community survey, and drafted a series of the proposed guiding principles (with one aligning with each chapter of the plan) and a series of goals which they will continue to explore and develop throughout the rest of the process.

Mr. Knuppel presented the structure for how staff will develop the recommendations. He said they would likely design their workshops in the future to help the community understand how staff is building out their Master Plan.

Mr. Knuppel said the guiding principles were the vision statements and aspirations for connectivity, character, conservation, implementation, etc. He said from there, staff identified goals that are the topics and strategies that help to achieve the guiding principles and that in the next phase, they will start to develop the “what” and “where,” which are the recommendations. He presented a graphic that reflected how Phase I was about refining the guiding principles and identifying the goal focus areas. He said in Phase II, they will continue to refine the principles, turn the goals into more substantive statements, and determine what the recommendations are to get there.

Mr. Knuppel said staff is trying to bring the Master Plan in line with the recent plans to establish consistency across the County’s Master Plans and planning efforts, and to acknowledge some of the overlaps in categories they have had before. He said the four chapters staff was proposing are Connectivity, Character, Conservation, and Implementation. He said he would briefly walk through the guiding principles and goals for each.

Mr. Knuppel said that for Connectivity, the guiding principle is to create a multi-modal transportation network that is safe and accessible for all residents, regardless of age, race, income, and ability. He mentioned that staff would continue to refine the principles and that there is a feedback form that is currently out in the community, with over 200 responses received thus far, to understand how the community feels about the principles and if they accurately reflect their vision for the future of Crozet. He said staff would continue to refine and workshop the principles based on the feedback they hear.

Mr. Knuppel said the goal focus areas that staff would continue to develop will include network connectivity (e.g. street connections, safety and access for all users) as well as starting to address local and regional transit, which is a new dimension to the Crozet Master Plan that has not been addressed before.

Mr. Knuppel said that for Character, the guiding principle is to support Crozet’s small-town character through development that is compatible in scale and design, offers housing choice, and respects its history. He said the goals for this include housing variety and choice, appropriate design and scale, mixed-use activity centers, rural areas, and addressing place-making arts and culture as a part of the small-town character.

Mr. Knuppel said that for Conservation, the current guiding principle, as brought to the community the week before, is to enhance Crozet’s natural beauty in the surrounding rural areas with an integrated network of parks and gathering spaces, trails and greenways that support outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation. He said the goal focus areas identified include community parks, outdoor recreation opportunities, trail and greenway connectivity, access to rural and regional amenities, and natural resource conservation and sustainability.

Mr. Knuppel said that for Implementation, the guiding principle is to provide strategic and timely support for community partnerships, local economic development, policy changes, and capital investments to support a changing Crozet. He said some of the goals and focus areas they will continue to explore include community partnerships, economic development initiatives, zoning and policy updates, capital improvements, and project prioritization.

Mr. Knuppel said the high-level information was included in the staff report and that Attachment 4 included the posters staff brought out at the third workshop, which talked more about how staff developed the principle, how they brought on the 2010 Master Plan, and the community feedback.

Mr. Knuppel said this was what staff had done thus far and that they would continue to develop it throughout the entire process. He said staff wanted to bring this to the Commission before moving forward to check in about whether or not the proposed guiding principles and goals were consistent with the community feedback staff received and had summarized in the staff report, and more broadly, the Comprehensive Plan policies. He said the Master Plan is the venue for how the Comprehensive Plan is implemented at the community level and since this is done through a community process, staff wants to make sure they are aligning those two topics.

Mr. Knuppel asked the Commission to identify any topics that were missing that they would like staff to explore so that they could be taken into consideration and included.

Mr. Keller asked if there were members in the audience who cared to speak on the matter. Hearing none, he brought the matter back for questions and comments.

Ms. Riley thanked Mr. Knuppel for all his work. She said in general, the proposed guiding principles and goals were consistent with the community feedback. She noted that in looking at a number of statements that were presented on the attachments, which were the workshop summaries, there is significant concern about affordability. She said she also appreciated staff saying that they want to have consistency across Master Plans in terms of the general sections.

Ms. Riley personally wondered if the County was at a point where, given that they are updating their housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and specifically engaging in a staff and community input process of identifying new policy, new plan, and new strategies, that it might make sense that in the Master Plans, there is also a housing section. She said it may not necessarily need to be called a chapter. She expressed that it was important to consider doing this because the general principles and goals did not really get at the issue.

Ms. Riley said that they are imbedded in the Character area as best as one could do in this situation, but was wondering at this point if a new section needed to be lifted up for housing. She said some of the compelling reason for doing so was that it is a critical issue that is of growing concern by residents, staff, and elected officials and is reflected in residents' comments in the workshops.

Ms. Riley said she didn't believe it fit within Character as a place that allows the County to get at the issue. She said that by identifying it as a separate section and having it be consistent with the types of goals and strategies that are found in the Comprehensive Plan, the County will have a better chance at really affecting the problem and being able to establish the metrics by which the problem is measured in order to address the problem and provide better housing. She said something more explicit was needed at that point. She said she didn't know if it would be a separate chapter or section, but that it needed to be lifted up.

Ms. Spain commended staff for their good work, noting that from the pictures taken, many of the staff members were present at every meeting. She suggested an addition to the Connectivity page that said, "making it accessible for all residents regardless of age, race, income, and ability." She said there, she would add "sex" or "gender," whichever term staff wanted to use. She said when she looked at the tunnel as part of the connectivity, she thought that she wouldn't feel safe going in it when it was totally dark, and that this was one of the same issues that came up in discussions about Places29 connectivity under Route 29. She said it was worth adding as something that staff will pay attention to. She said that though safety implies for everyone, sex and gender needed to be added.

Mr. Carrazana said that his comment was more about the timeline. He said one of the points Mr. Knuppel brought up in his deliverables was capital improvement. He said as far as where this exactly falls into the timeline, his comment was broad and about the policies in particular. He said currently, the County is seeing development that is impacting Crozet and the character impacts in every component. He said the capital improvement was already lagging behind. He asked where the deliverables would come in and how the Master Plan update process would start to inform the CIP.

Mr. Bivins thanked Mr. Knuppel, noting he had some questions, as well as comments about the lack of diversity in the presented photographs. He said this was concerning to him because he believed this would go to one of the things people have heard him speak to about “Old Crozet” versus “New Crozet,” and the Freetown area Crozet versus Old Trails Crozet, or Corey Farms Crozet, or Wickham Crozet.

Mr. Bivins suggested that staff spending some of their community engagement time not only at coffee shops, but at Blue Ridge Lumber, Legacy Markets, or Great Value where people in that community might find themselves going. He gave a number of examples of those places because there is a tremendous trades person community in Old Crozet, and when he looked at the photographs, he didn’t see that population represented. He acknowledged that this was only a few photos, but that he was very concerned that the process doesn’t get driven by newly-arrived Crozet.

Mr. Bivins said he was particularly concerned because one of the Crozet’s 2010 visions and guiding principles was about connecting neighborhoods and making sure that all parts of Crozet are walkable and bikeable. He said he also remembered hearing when he first became a Planning Commissioner that a lot of the new communities did not want their cul-de-sacs broken through. He said, in fact, they resisted having those connections made. He said when he goes to Old Trail, he is struck how, without GPS, he would be wandering around there like on the MTA in Boston. He asked that staff does not encourage communities that have people wandering within but more so, are boundaries from without. He said those conversations could be cleverly structured to get people thinking about that because that is how they wrestle with those terms as staff is coming with the Master Plan.

Mr. Bivins asked staff to give some consideration on page 4 that, under Character, talks about one of the preliminary feedbacks was that the mountain views should be acknowledged. He said he wondered if mountain views should not actually be acknowledged under “Conservation” because when he hears people speak about Crozet, they speak about that piece of it as far as how to preserve or keep place. He recommended testing this again with the people staff is engaging with in this process.

Mr. Bivins said he didn’t know how staff does it, but he would ask that they think creatively about the four areas and how they push the community to think about the others who are not at those conversations, which was one reason why he mentioned Great Value, Blue Ridge, and Legacy Market. He added Far Downers to the list. He said perhaps going to places where people come, where they see smiling faces, may compel them to talk about their concerns about how the community is evolving and how they hope it will evolve.

Mr. Bivins said that many of the Commissioners have been receiving photographs from people who are in the Breezy Hill part of the community showing the miles of backup there. He said he knew from experience and from speaking to his colleagues that Barracks Road, 250, and I-64 have now become alternate ways of getting people in and out of Crozet, and that this must be figured out. He said this was not a long-term solution for the community for use of resources and quality of life.

Mr. Bivins said when he sees that one of the pieces of the plan was about live-work, he didn't know what this meant in the general scope of things. He referenced a tower that someone moving to the area so they could remote work. He said he hoped they would look beyond that and not simply be concerned about whether someone has a 1 TB line that comes to their house and allows them to do their work there. He said in thinking about how to build community, they should consider how this could be done in a way that strengthens the entire place as opposed to a few well-connected people.

Mr. Dotson said his comments pick up on Mr. Bivins' comments. He said he understood the need to bring all the participants up to a common base because many of the people participating weren't there in 2004, when the first plan was adopted, nor in 2010 when the plan was last updated. He said there was a mixed population of people who are long-term residents and participants along with curious newcomers. He said part of the challenge is holding on to their interests. He said he was glad that staff was about to move into Phase II and become more specific and concrete.

Mr. Dotson said in that regard, one of his thoughts about Phase II when reading the guiding principle for Connectivity was that this could apply to any place in the County, perhaps even the world. He said it doesn't feel like Crozet, per se, and wondered if it was even possible to have a guiding principle that fits all of Crozet because as Mr. Bivins mentioned, there is Old Crozet, the older subdivisions on the east, those on the west, and Old Trail. He suggested that as staff goes forward into Phase II, they should start talking about subareas and creating neighborhoods or "character areas" in Crozet that are treated differently. He said then, more specific ideas will come up that will more easily get traction with the participants, and perhaps this was what staff's plan was.

Mr. Dotson said he didn't think that he saw "historic" under Conservation, but that this is where it would fit. He said that under the heading of "Implementation," he suggested keeping it lean. He said if there is a long wish list, it is not going to happen, and citizens will be disappointed and perhaps irritated. He said a lot of attention needs to go into prioritizing and asking some tough questions about the things that are truly essential and achievable versus things that perhaps aren't timely now, but will be in the six- to ten-year period. He said other things could be worth noting, but that there is no commitment that they will happen.

Mr. Dotson said the Commission would have a discussion about the CIP and the Planning Commission's role that evening, but the fact that Crozet's Master Plan was being updated will give them a chance to test some of their own ideas about how they go about addressing public improvements in a rapidly-developing area.

Ms. More thanked staff, noting that the first meeting in particular was exciting in seeing many people from the community and Community Development, at many levels, participate. She said the best information they received was out of the first meeting, and that in the second meeting, perhaps staff was able to dig into this more. She said she wanted to be positive in that the community is excited to have this happen, and that she appreciated all the work and energy.

Ms. More said to be clear, to build on what Mr. Dotson said about the principles, with the exception of a few words, most of them could apply to just about anywhere. She said she couldn't imagine a community that wouldn't support those goals. She said because staff asked the questions they asked, they received some easy answers. She said to her, the principles were a bit like "dry toast" and staff needs to figure out how to dig into it and make it Crozet's.

Ms. More said some of the themes that emerged out of the meetings are about the vibrant downtown. She said at this point, she would think that in a guiding principle, they could see some version of this having already emerged out of three meetings as one of the most important centers. She said with the County's agreement with the former Barnes Lumber property and all that is happening on that property, moving forward, she would like to see this as an opportunity to engage the community. She said almost every principle outlined could be achieved with the Barnes Lumber property and beyond, but this was an education piece for the community.

Ms. More said when staff shows the community images of different types of housing and asking them what they respond to more favorably, there is an honesty piece that the County has to have with them that this may not be what builds. She said moving forward, there are some people in the community who are anxious about the development of the former Barnes property because it is supposed to be dense in nature and this is scary to people who are worried about transportation. She said the reason it is supposed to be that dense is because of its location and because the County is allowing dense developments to happen around a walkable area. She said this should have already emerged in something that would be very specific to Crozet as a guiding principle.

Ms. More thanked Mr. Knuppel for incorporating the data from the survey because the hope in doing the survey was, because it was a random sample, they were able to collect information from people who might not have time to show up to a meeting. She said the intention was to get a representative sample. She said that if staff feels doing the pop-up coffee talks is successful, she would encourage them to continue to do this.

Ms. More said the biggest feedback she was receiving from the community is that they really want to get into the meat of the plan when they don't have the time to come to so many meetings. She said there was a drop in numbers from the first meeting to the second, and then to the third. She said staff sees those same faces who will hang on with them, and she was thinking about creative ways to re-engage some people that they may have lost, or people who had checked out awhile back and think, why bother to show up. She said those people could still be reached, and some will not come, which is okay.

Ms. More said she thinks there needs to be an element of honesty when talking about infrastructure and "concurrent infrastructure." She said there is language that talks about protecting historic neighborhoods and they need to be honest with the community about what the reality is about the County's ability to do this. She said this could be a goal that the community has, but staff needs to be honest with them about what that can look at and the control the County has and does not have over that. She said the same applied to the project priorities and a realistic timeline for implementation.

Ms. More said that because she has read the Crozet Master Plan many times, she felt as if the entire Phase I had neglected to educate on the fact that Crozet has a plan that they are trying to update and that they are not starting from scratch. She said she would like to see how creative and energetic staff will be in the next phase about pulling forward the goals they already have and working them into what they have before the Commission.

Ms. More said the answer to the question was that she believed the principles were consistent with the community's feedback, but she felt like it was the safe way to play it because it was high level. She said staff had received much from the community that is more detailed that they could already start putting into the principles to make it "Crozet" without making assumptions about what people want to prioritize or not prioritize.

Ms. More said that the principles were aligned with the goals, but that there was still much work to be done to give it the Crozet identity.

Ms. Spain said the Commission's concern with the generic nature of the principles was that it didn't have to be a concern as much as it is acknowledging that this is what all people want everywhere. She asked what would make it Crozet. She mentioned the former Barnes Lumber site and the apple and peach orchards as opposed to the natural beauty of the mountains, noting that these were specific examples of what Ms. More thinks since she was the resident who is involved the most.

Ms. More said if they wanted to have high-level guiding principles, the vibrant downtown has been the principle in the previous plan and the focus of a huge amount of work that much of Crozet has focused on. She said it was not to say that Crozet doesn't have other centers that are important because they have identified ways in which they need to better connect people to those centers. She said the most important center is Downtown Crozet and she would have hoped to see this worked into the guiding principles, having seen the process that the former Barnes Lumber property is going through to engage the community on what they would like to see come out of that project.

Ms. More said when talking about edges and boundaries, this is an anxiety that people have concerning their fear that the County will try to make Crozet get bigger, referencing the capacity analysis. She said there was a section in the existing plan about the protection along 250, which was part of confusion in the past where the County needed to get language and maps together where 250 was talked about in two separate chapters, one referencing the interchange at I-64 and 250 (which is outside of the growth area), and that which is along the whole stretch that is the boundary (one side being rural and the other side being the growth area). She said in one application, there was the question of if this should be less dense as it goes towards the edge.

Ms. More said these were themes that have been seen, but she didn't see it in the guiding principles.

Ms. Spain asked staff if this helped them with specifics. She pointed out how fortunate the Commission was about what was missing from this, which is that people are not saying not to build a prison in the area, or that they didn't want a chicken rendering plant there. She said for the most part, for the new Crozetians, it was a fairly affluent community with concerns, but not the kind of serious concerns (e.g. about the crime rate, needing a meth clinic, etc.). She said even though the principles are general and needs some specifics, the Commission should also keep in mind what isn't there and remember that many are lucky in the County while many others are not. She said this was part of the Commission's concern to include all those people from the community.

Ms. More agreed that they were very fortunate. She said the other thing that was pointed out in the Implementation principle was working with the existing community partnerships. She said in Crozet, they are fortunate (particularly around connectivity) to have the trails crew that works in conjunction with the County and has done so successfully for years. She said they were very fortunate to continue to enhance and foster that relationship because they can get some of the eastern neighborhoods connected towards Downtown.

Ms. More said this related back to what they were hearing from the community about walkability and where they want to get to, but that they currently can't. She said sometimes the trails crew is the missing puzzle piece that can result in having huge neighborhoods that can bike or walk safely down to Downtown.

Ms. More said staff has received much of this detailed information that they need to figure out how to manage without ending up with a long list of Crozet's wants and desires. She said this may be where there is some benefit into breaking it into sections because everyone will prioritize their neighborhood section, particularly when they are vying for trails or walkability. She said perhaps this was a good way to approach how to prioritize some of those projects, by breaking them out to say who is lacking the most in connections to Downtown. She said this is where they could begin to prioritize and look at some of the projects they already know are coming.

Mr. Bivins said they were already starting to experience some of this pushback. He said there was recently some concern about the mill and whether or not the mill was making too much noise.

Ms. More said it was.

Mr. Bivins said he understood this, but the mill had been there for a long time.

Ms. More said there was a faulty part that was fixed.

Mr. Bivins said he believed they were starting to see those tensions between those with means and who expect a bucolic country retreat versus those without means who have lived there. He said there was some rubbing taking place that he was aware of.

Ms. Spain said that this could be a good catalyst for change.

Mr. Bivins agreed.

Mr. Keller thanked staff for getting them to this point. He said the fact that it was as well done as it was would allow them to go to the next level and perhaps given some of the careers that a number of the Commissioners have had is part of determining ways that the principles could be better.

Mr. Keller said that since they have both the historical and the future of the leadership represented with Wayne, Ms. Filardo, and Mr. Benish in the audience, and Ms. Falkenstein and Mr. Knuppel representing the more detailed work, he would like to take the opportunity to take a quick jump beyond the guiding principles. He said in the relatively recent past, there is the 29 North planning experience, Pantops planning experience, Southwood, and 5th and Avon. He said they were starting to see how staff is growing with each of those and adding new pieces which are beyond what the Commission sees coming out of a lot of planning departments around the state and country. He said he saw it as positive that there is a synergy and staff is building, and the Growth Management Plan annual report

Mr. Keller encouraged staff to look at the Comprehensive Plan outline. He said he knew it was a year for minor changes, but in light of what staff is doing with the Small Area Plans, they should think about what that outline is. He asked if in the Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Plan, they should be using the same outline.

Mr. Keller said he understood that Ms. Filardo is very interested in datasets and when he thinks about the comment that was made about the workforce in Crozet by several Commissioners, they have the data they have seen at the regional level for how many people out-commute and in-commute to different areas. He asked if they were almost to the point in each of the area plans where they ought to be having that kind of data set that is there, which would allow them to see years later how the data has changed.

Mr. Keller said when he heard the comment from Mr. Fritz earlier about not being able to get the data on how many lots there are that pre-date 1984, he didn't buy that. He said Mr. Knuppel was a guru with dashboards and data and that there were many pieces of interesting information, such as how many people are at 80% AMI in Crozet versus Pantops, etc. He asked how this will tie in with the affordable housing plan so instead of this being a Countywide piece, they can talk about where they really can add affordable housing because it fits with workforce in an area.

Mr. Keller said it seems as though all these things are interrelated and clarified that he didn't mean to make light of the guiding principles. He said if it was really a plan, it seemed that they need to get to the next level that is more sophisticated in the wish list that comes from the community of what they would like to see that is then prioritized based on the amount of input. He said this was great for Pantops and was such a step forward than what was done a decade earlier. He said he was in no way criticizing this, but hoped that each principle would continue to build, adding that he had every confidence that staff will do it. He encouraged them to think about his points.

Mr. Keller said they had the annual report that was really staff's report, but was technically something that the Commission needs to provide to the Supervisors. He said they also had the Growth Management Plan. He said soon, after they have the housing policy, they will have an affordable housing plan, but it was much more than an affordable housing plan because it is really looking at all segments of housing, and that this was important in terms of the tax base.

Mr. Keller said that then, there is economic development and that, in the past, there has been a disconnect between the future land use and then what is really happening in the area plans. He asked if they would go so far as to earmarking the areas in each of the plans and have some sort of consensus from the community where Light Industrial, Commercial, and Office are going to go.

Mr. Keller said that in his mind, this was a great step forward, but that he hoped that each of the plans in the future will get that much closer to the grain of what the real issues are for planning for those areas.

Ms. More asked if staff would ask the Commission Question 2.

Mr. Knuppel said he would still ask it.

Ms. More said that to add to Mr. Keller's point, there was a lot of work that went into the Crozet survey and produced data sets. She said a scientific survey was conducted, and then the same survey was given to a group that could self-select in. She said those data sets were compared to look for anything that was unusual and that they lined up with a margin of error expected, but they have been kept separate.

Ms. More said that like many of the questions staff is asking, they have the answers to now, acknowledging the data was about two years old. She said this data indicates how many people leave Crozet to go to work and how far (e.g. Waynesboro), where people go to shop and how many times a week, if they are leaving to go to Charlottesville or over the mountain (unless there is a wreck). She said there was tons of data there and it can be pulled apart to get to what is wanted in the future. She said she hoped this would be used for other purposes in addition to helping inform the process.

Mr. Knuppel said that to recap some of the things he heard to make sure he correctly understood, having a greater emphasis on the housing section was recommended as well as incorporating the housing policy that was underway. He said they should make sure it is clear what the County's housing priorities are and make sure it is well defined within whatever chapter it might be appropriate to fall into.

Mr. Knuppel said he heard about connectivity and recommended tweaks into the language, which he would definitely bring into consideration. He said capital projects and timing are a concern and they have had some conversations about the CIP to make sure they are planning appropriately, being realistic about the limitations of the CIP of the County's fiscal capacity, and thinking critically about how they implement the projects.

Mr. Knuppel said that diversity was a concern that he heard throughout the process, especially as it relates to affordable housing and the variety of people that are able to live in Crozet.

Mr. Knuppel said that communities in connectivity and mountain views was included in some comments that they heard at the workshops, and that they have about two weeks of survey response data that they will hopefully be able to use to inform it. He said, for example, at Pantops, they put the mountain views, viewsheds, vistas, and view corridors into the Conservation chapter. He said this was a comment they heard at the workshops, so staff put it in, but they could find the appropriate place to consider what the correct strategies are to account for mountain views.

Mr. Knuppel said they heard about community building, community organizations, and connectivity regionally, bridging the gap between New and Old Crozet, and the need for subarea representation in looking at the nuances between different neighborhoods and land use categories. He said he heard the Commissioners wanted to make sure that this was appreciated and accounted for. He said staff knew that there are some neighborhoods that need specific attention, such as the Saint George Avenue corridor because it does have a Historic District designation and on the National Register. He said there were potential tools staff can explore and that this planning process is a time to explore what would be appropriate, and the tradeoffs involved for the community. He said history is a major part of Crozet's identity, and finding the appropriate place to incorporate this is important.

Mr. Knuppel said that as far as the principles and the language used, this was drafted by staff with the intent to establish clarity in the process and how the recommendations are developed. He said this was something they recognized from the Crozet Master Plan experience with map versus text and understanding where the priorities really are. He said that for staff, as they are

coming off the Pantops Master Plan process, after they got through the public engagement period, they came to plan endorsements and realized they never talked about vision and principles, what they mean, and how they are actually evaluating the plan with the land use colors on the map that they put forward. He said this was generic at the moment, but had a lot of value for staff.

Mr. Knuppel said staff would dig deep into some of the issues and bring forward everything they have heard to help inform how they structure their activities and recommendations in the coming months. He clarified that staff started with visioning based on the processes. He said they knew that there was not a perfect community engagement process and they would never have the perfectly representative population at the table.

Mr. Knuppel mentioned members of the Steering Committee (White Hall District Supervisor, Planning Commissioner, Community Advisory Committee chair, and president of the Crozet Community Association), explaining that staff hoped they would have some assistance in getting the word out. He said the first workshop, from staff's internal metrics and looking at social media, they had the strongest reach there, but that they didn't have that with the second and third workshops. He said as far as sharing and getting the word out in the community, there was room for improvement and that they could hopefully get closer to making sure they have all the people in the room that need to be in the room because the Master Plan is about their community.

Mr. Knuppel said this was staff's comment on process so far. He said they have had a lot of good experience with this with the new team and getting a feel for what works out in Crozet. He said they will continue to make sure this stays under consideration moving forward. He expressed appreciation for the Commission's feedback and let them know if they had any other questions or comments, staff would continue to refine the update moving forward.

Ms. More said that in regard to capture information, making sure they are fair in reaching out, and giving everyone the opportunity to participate, staff should be sensitive to the situation that if a representative of a neighborhood or subset of Crozet was not present, staff is thinking about them. She said that from what she knows of a lot of neighborhoods, especially where there are older neighborhoods and new is mixed in with the old, whether it is younger residents who are more involved, they are chatting with their neighbors and bringing things to staff from those people who are not going to show up for various reasons.

Ms. More said neighbors are chatting with neighbors about the meetings, and then those people who do engage are bringing that information to staff. She said thus, staff is reaching a group of people they might not otherwise reach because of the dynamic that is within some neighborhoods, especially those around Downtown. She encouraged people to keep having those conversations with their neighbors because they may get tired of talking with the neighbor and show up to the meetings.

Mr. Knuppel said he would walk through next steps and what will happen with the rest of the process. He said Phase II was next, which would run January through May. He said they would be back out in Crozet with monthly engagement and a high staff commitment, including events and asking structured questions. He said from there, for the rest of 2020, staff will be refining the plan, drafting the plan over the summer, and come back to the Commission likely in late summer to early fall for the next work sessions.

Mr. Knuppel said they would continue to work through the update and resolve issues with the CAC initially throughout the process during the summer, and whatever is outstanding would come back to the Commission. He said tentatively in August, they would be back to talk about the character and connectivity chapters, which will include the land use map and transportation plan.

Mr. Knuppel said in September, they would talk more about conservation, parks and green systems, and implementation. He said they would have two work sessions, and then hopefully have the plan finished to present to the Commission in October for a public hearing. He noted that those dates were tentative, and that staff hopes to stay ahead on schedule. He said they wanted to get the principles and vision issues out of the way early so that they could hopefully develop the plan for the rest of the time.

Mr. Knuppel asked the Commissioners if they had any questions or concerns about their roles in developing this through the rest of 2020.

Ms. More said one thing she has noticed is that what staff has had to do is have the engagement meetings outside of the regular CAC meetings because the agendas are packed. She said the week prior, they had to rush through in trying to cover a lot of material quickly. She said they perhaps have not gotten all the time to check back in with CCAC, noting that lots of members were coming to both meetings (which was the hope), but that they were being asked to come to two meetings a month, and now there will be a break.

Ms. More said as they get more into the detail, staff should make sure they are checking back with the CAC if they can work more time into their agenda for that, as they will be getting into more detail and this is where their input will be very important. She said she was concerned about this and how the agendas tend to get packed, then staff is left with 10 minutes at the end to try to communicate. She said everyone should work together to figure out the best way to move forward, as the members could not come to all of the other community meetings.

Ms. More said she recently sat in to listen to a meeting that day about the redevelopment of Barnes Lumber, she was listening to them talk about this being Crozet's play on form-based code in the Downtown Crozet District and about recognizing that district within the context of the Master Plan. She said she listened to the developer talking about the types of buildings they want to see, and lots of the same conversations they are having about form-based code in Rio-29. She said the question was about how to give enough flexibility without stifling creativity and not ending up with an unattractive building that someone has to paint a mosaic on later to hide it.

Ms. More said they were having those same conversations, so one of those is the ARB's process of review and if there was a place there for some relaxed form of review if there is a good outline. She said there was an opportunity that she would like to see meshed together with this process, and perhaps all of this could be taken care of at the same time instead of having silos and then coming back later to ask for changes or adjustments. She said she heard lots of interest from the community of what this could look like.

At 8:03 p.m., Mr. Keller announced there would be a 5-minute break between work sessions.

At 8:09 p.m., Mr. Keller called the meeting back to order.

Adjournment

At 9:31 p.m., the Commission adjourned to December 3, 2019 Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m., Lane Auditorium, Second Floor, County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

David Benish, Interim Director of Planning

(Recorded and transcribed by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: