

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
Final Minutes Work Session and Regular Meeting
November 12, 2024**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Members attending were Fred Missel, Chair; Luis Carrazana, Vice-Chair; Corey Clayborne; Karen Firehock (arrived late); Lonnie Murray; and Nathan Moore.

Members absent: Julian Bivins

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; Tori Kanellopoulos, Cameron Langille, Kevin McDermott; and Vivian Groeschel.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Groeschel called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ZMA202300014 Archer North Development

Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning, said that he was here to present the rezoning application for ZMA202300014 Archer North redevelopment. He said that before he began, he would like to mention that he had placed a document at each of their places. He said that the document they were reviewing was an updated version of the affordable housing evaluation, which superseded the older version included in the packet.

Mr. McDermott said that the updated evaluation had the same assessment as the original assessment, but with a revised unit count. He said that the numbers had changed slightly due to the updated unit count, but the overall outcome remained the same. He said that he would now proceed with the rezoning application for the Archer North redevelopment.

Mr. McDermott said that on the aerial view, they could see the outline parcels in yellow. He said that the trailer homes that were previously on the property had been removed. He said that he had included an updated aerial view in the packet for their reference. He said that the area was bordered to the west by US Route 29, to the south by Ashwood Boulevard, and was surrounded by the Brookhill development to the south, Forest Lakes residential development to the east, and the proposed Holly Hills development to the north, which was currently in the site plan stage.

Mr. McDermott said that the current zoning of this property was Planned Residential District (PRD), which was intended for residential use. He said that the proposal was to maintain this zoning designation, but it was necessary for the applicant to rezone the property to update the application plan. He said that he would provide more details on that shortly.

Mr. McDermott said that they could see the two tax map parcels being considered, which were surrounded by this property. He said that the zoning included rural areas across Highway 29 to

the south, where Brookhill was located. He said that they could also see the neighborhood model development zoning planned unit development surrounding it, with the light green color indicating that area. He said that there were a few R1 residential zoning districts on some parcels just to the north of this property.

Mr. McDermott said that the comprehensive plan recommended urban density residential, allowing for residential densities of six to 34 units per acre, and also permitted other uses such as religious institutions, schools, and small-scale commercial office and retail. He said that additionally, surrounding this property was zoning for urban density residential, neighborhood density residential, rural areas, private open space, and institutional zoning that encompassed a stormwater pond.

Mr. McDermott said that the applicant was proposing to utilize the stormwater pond, although this was not discussed in the application narrative. He said that there was nothing in the rezoning that would prevent this from happening, and it would be something that they would address in the site plan stage. He said that the applicant may discuss this further during their presentation.

Mr. McDermott said that the proposal for this project included a mix of single-family attached multi-family condominiums and multi-family apartments, broken up into two phases. He said that the first phase, being developed under the by-right zoning, included 78 units and was currently in the site plan stage. He said that the portion being redeveloped was phase two, which included 224 units, all located in this area adjacent to Route 29. He said that the density was 15.48 units per acre gross and 16.24 units per acre net, which was close to the middle of the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

Mr. McDermott said that the affordable housing proposal in the comprehensive plan recommendation was for 15% of the total units, with eight units in phase one and the remaining seven in phase two. He said that they had stated that there would be no cash in lieu option for this affordable housing, and instead, they planned to build it on-site. He said that the application plan was included in the rezoning, which was why they were present today. He said that during the site plan stage, these elements would be held to. He said that the transportation aspects of this proposal included extending Archer Avenue north through the property, which would connect to the Holly Hills development and serve as one of the primary access points.

Mr. McDermott said that a secondary public road would connect from Archer Avenue north to Route 29, with a right-in, right-out configuration. He said that a 10-foot shared use path was proposed, with existing paths along Route 29 and Ashwood Boulevard in front of the property. He said that the applicants had also proposed future transit stops, with up to two locations to be determined during the site plan stage. He said that these would include shelters and benches. He said that currently, the area was not served by fixed-route transit, but these stops would be available if transit service was established in the future.

Mr. McDermott said that it was worth noting that this rezoning did not require a traffic impact analysis, whereas a previous rezoning with additional units had a traffic impact analysis performed, which found no significant transportation consequences. He said that the Holly Hills development also conducted a traffic impact analysis, which showed that most of the traffic would be directed down Archer Avenue and connecting to Ashwood, with the build-out of Archer North, and did not reveal any significant impacts. He said that the site included open space and amenities as required, and he had presented this information for their consideration.

Mr. McDermott said that staff had reviewed the existing by-right application plans, and he would like to ensure everyone understood the differences. He said that what had been approved with the RST development, located along Ashwood Boulevard on the south side and Route 29 along another side, included 17 units, with a gross density of 17.02 units per acre and a net density of 17.85 units per acre. He said that the affordable housing in this proposal included 75% of the total units for rent, targeting those earning between 30% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Mr. McDermott said that in this proposal, all internal roadways were private, but they did include 10-foot shared use paths and future transit stops. He said that the positive aspects of this proposal were that it was consistent with the uses and density recommendations in the Places 29 Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan Neighborhood Model Principles, which had also been analyzed in their packet. He said that the request provided new public transportation improvements, including Archer Avenue, multi-use paths, and connections along Route 29 and Ashwood Boulevard, as well as throughout the development.

Mr. McDermott said that the proposed buildings were more consistent with the character of the surrounding areas, with a maximum height of four stories in the central area, compared to five stories allowed under the RST development. He said that the main concern of staff was that the approval of this request would reduce the number of required affordable housing units from 191 approved under the RST residences to 45. He said that overall, staff recommended approval of the ZMA, as the positive aspects outweighed the concerns.

Mr. Carrazana asked if the first phase was currently in site plan review.

Mr. McDermott said that yes, that was correct.

Mr. Missel asked if the phase in site plan review was not held to the percentage of affordable housing for that particular phase, so they could not look at 75% affordable for that phase.

Mr. McDermott said that no, when they initially began building phase one under the RST approval, the affordable housing was intended to be included in future phases. He said that therefore, it was not initially included in the first phase. He said that the applicant had since stated that they planned to provide up to eight units to meet the 15% requirement for the overall site.

Mr. Clayborne said that he wanted to confirm that the maximum number of units was indeed 302, as he had previously read it was 280; he simply wished to clarify this point.

Mr. McDermott said that 302 was the correct number of units; it had been updated from the previous submission of 280 units.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the total number of affordable units was 45, or if it was 42 as stated in Dr. Pethia's report.

Mr. McDermott said that the updated document he provided showed that 45 was accurate for the 302 units. He said that the 42 units was in reference to the previous submission of 280 units.

Mr. Moore asked where the affordable units would be located if they were not included at all in phase one.

Mr. McDermott said that initially, phase one was not intended to include affordable units, but the developers had since agreed to provide eight affordable units in phase one. He said that to meet the 15% requirement, the remaining affordable units would be included in phase two, although their exact locations had not been specified. He said that according to the developers, there would be a variety of housing options throughout the overall site, including eight affordable units in this phase. He said that if the project was completed at its maximum capacity, it was likely that the remaining 37 affordable units would be distributed throughout the rest of the site.

Mr. Moore asked why the proposal shifted so much in terms of the number of affordable units.

Mr. McDermott said that the applicant would have to explain that reasoning.

Mr. Clayborne said that according to Dr. Pethia's report, they needed approximately 297 units per year to meet their housing goal by 2040. He said that he was curious to know how they were tracking this year, specifically in 2024. He said that while this was primarily Dr. Pethia's area of expertise, he wondered if this information was commonly known within the County.

Mr. McDermott said that he was unaware, but he could provide that information as a follow-up.

Mr. Missel asked how many trailers were on the site that had been demolished.

Mr. McDermott said that he did not have a specific number available, but his recollection was between 60 and 70 trailers.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing. He asked if the applicant had a report.

Ashley Davies said that she was with Riverbend Development and representing the applicant. She said that she was joined by Alan Taylor of Riverbend Development, Scott Collins of Collins Engineering, and Chris Schooley of Greenwood Homes, the home builder for this property. She said that on this first slide, they could see some of their other communities that are currently under development and being built by Greenwood Homes. She said that tonight, she would like to focus on their housing plans, which are a key component of their comprehensive plan. She said that they had heard from several speakers about the importance of addressing housing shortages in Albemarle County. She said that Riverbend Development was proud to say that they are committed to creating new neighborhoods to help alleviate these issues.

Ms. Davies said that the location of this site was particularly interesting, as it was situated between the existing neighborhood of Forest Lakes South, the up-and-coming neighborhood of Brookhill, and the future Holly Hills. She said that when she first arrived, she was a bit nervous about the large turnout, but upon reviewing the sign-up sheet, she noticed that everyone was there to discuss the other public hearing. She said that this spoke to their company's values of transparency and collaboration. She said that since taking on the Archer North project, they had worked closely with the Forest Lakes HOA and Board members to ensure that their designs were consistent with the existing community and met their needs.

Ms. Davies said that they were committed to bringing a high-quality product to the neighborhood, one that will be a positive addition to the area. She said that they will be working closely with the Ashland Townhomes project, which will be adjacent to this site, to ensure a cohesive and consistent look. She said that that this was really important to them, and she would also like to note that she hoped each of the Commissioners have had the opportunity to drive through the

Brookhill neighborhood. She said that there had been significant construction activity, and the neighborhood was really coming together.

Ms. Davies said that when considering this project as a whole, she preferred to think of it as a tapestry, because they see that in the Brookhill neighborhood, they already have a number of apartment buildings constructed, including senior living options, a range of residences at different price points, and the town center was set to start construction soon, along with additional apartments that meet an affordable level. She said that she would like to revisit their application plan. She said that regarding the Archer North neighborhood, they had a two-phased approach. She said that phase one aligned with their original design, featuring amenity spaces and unit types that they would have built anyway. She said that due to the previous rezoning, affordability was not shown in that area.

Ms. Davies said that they wanted to include affordability in both phases, spacing it throughout the neighborhood. She said that therefore, both phases would include affordable units. She said that this approach was crucial to them. She said that she believed that their new plan provided much-needed public roads, including Archer Avenue and a road connecting to Route 29 North, which set up a great network for connecting neighborhoods. She said that they were also providing better amenity spaces that were evenly spaced throughout the development, and they were dedicating 40% of the space to open areas.

Ms. Davies said that their sister company, Greenwood Homes, was doing well in Albemarle County, and they were taking a similar approach to address housing needs. She said that in their Brookhill development, they were already providing a significant amount of affordability through the apartment complexes. She said that for-sale affordable units were a crucial factor in addressing issues in Albemarle County, and she did not see other places effectively incorporating this into the market. She said that as a result, they had taken a distinct approach, which was different from what was seen with RST, but they were providing all for-sale product.

Ms. Davies said that they were proud to be building these units and had a strong marketing team that she believed would be able to sell them easily. She said that she thought they could assist in addressing the County's housing needs. She said that she did not think there was a single approach to this issue. She said that they were happy about that. She said that she would like to focus on her work in affordable housing, which she did every day. She said that she believed there was a significant reason why the previous rezoning did not come to fruition.

Ms. Davies said that once they delved into the realm of 75% affordability, it took them into the world of tax credits, which often required nonprofit or semi-governmental status. She said that this could limit access to capital, and even with subsidies, there could be a significant funding gap of up to \$10 million. She said that as a result, she believed that the previous rezoning was ultimately unsuccessful because it entered the tax credit realm, which was highly competitive and came with significant costs. She said that many people were hesitant to pursue tax credits because of the associated costs.

Ms. Davies said that balancing the tax credit with the increasing cost of the credit, as well as the construction costs and subsidies required, was a challenging task. She said that from her perspective, she understood that he would have liked to see a different outcome, but she did not think it was a realistic scenario in this market. She said that instead, they were focusing on creating a great neighborhood with for-sale opportunities that aligned with the surrounding areas.

She said that she knew that Mr. Collins had planned to discuss stormwater management, but they were running low on time.

Scott Collins said that he would like to briefly discuss their stormwater management approach on this property. He said that it was a unique approach, but one they had successfully implemented on two other sites. He said that on the first site, VDOT built stormwater management facilities along Route 29 and on Berkmar Drive, enclosing them with chain link fence to minimize maintenance.

Mr. Collins said that they had seen these facilities numerous times while driving by. He said that they took this as a challenge and incorporated one of these facilities into the overall development on the Brookhill property, enhancing it with landscaping, decorative fencing, and blending it into the surroundings. He said that this approach worked well, and the facility was now functional and visually appealing.

Mr. Collins said that they were applying the same approach to the Holly Hills development, incorporating a pond into the overall design to serve as a stormwater management facility for both the site and the VDOT roadway. He said that they were also planning to enhance the facility and make it blend in with the community. He said that on the County property, they had a third pond that, although existing, was in need of improvement.

Mr. Collins said that it was currently enclosed with chain link fence but appeared neglected and was easily visible. He said that their goal was to send their stormwater management approach to this facility, enhancing it and making it a more attractive and functional part of the community. He said that to summarize, their goal was to integrate the existing facility with stormwater management from their site, rather than relying on underground pipes and releasing treated water into the environment.

Mr. Collins said that they proposed enhancing the existing pond to improve drainage and incorporate it into the facility, rather than over-designing it with VDOT standards. He said that this approach would also allow them to incorporate landscaping and maintenance into their development, reducing the need for costly nutrient credits and underground infrastructure. He said that by handling stormwater management in-house, they could achieve better water quality outcomes and avoid the complexity and expense of buying credits.

Mr. Murray asked if it would be a wet pond or a dry pond.

Mr. Collins said that it would be a wet pond.

Mr. Murray said that there was a great opportunity to utilize excellent native plants such as American lotus, swamp rose, and hibiscus. He said that he looked forward to seeing what they did with the pond.

Mr. Collins said that he agreed it was a great opportunity to do that.

Mr. Moore said that he understood there were complex factors and multiple layers of capital involved in creating deeply affordable or 75% affordable units. He said that it was a challenging process. He said that he was wondering if they could provide more information about Riverbend's experience and role in the Crescent Hall project and the City's public housing initiatives.

Ms. Davies said that she worked on that on a daily basis. She said that it was about six years ago that they became the pro bono development partner of the Housing Authority, working to bring those resident-led redevelopments to fruition. She said that these projects relied heavily on private donations and match grant funding from the City. She said that when she said a lot, she meant it was essentially an additional \$10 million in funding on top of the other sources, such as Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) funding. She said that this created a complex capital stack.

M. Davies said that even with all these funding sources, it was challenging to pull off. She brought this up because she thought it highlighted why private developers may struggle to create deeply affordable housing. She said that since they started this work, it had become increasingly competitive. She said that many organizations, including local groups beyond the Housing Authority, were now vying for the same tax credits on a statewide basis. She said that the availability of these credits could change from year to year, and even then, there were limited credits available. She said that as a result, it was extremely difficult to pull off.

Mr. Moore said that everyone he had spoken to who had worked on these projects had told him it was extremely challenging. He said that he had inquired about this because, from what he had read and understood, the developer had connections with nonprofit developers and potentially could pursue some of those opportunities or gain a better position than some of the others who passed through there. He said that he was trying to find out more about the decision-making process behind not being able to support that approach for this project.

Ms. Davies said that the work they were doing in affordable housing was actually quite extensive. She said that they had multiple phases planned, which were essentially stacked up for at least the next decade. She said that they were looking to add anywhere from 500 to 600 new units beyond the existing Housing Authority stock. She said that hundreds of new units were already coming online throughout Charlottesville. She said that what they were creating was a significant number of units, but it was not happening at this particular site, because it did not make sense in this context.

Mr. Moore said that he also wanted to inquire if the company had considered voluntarily opting into the 20% affordability requirement under the new ordinance. He said that this would involve providing a 20% property tax credit to make up for the difference.

Ms. Davies said that thus far, they had been working under the existing policy when they applied, similar to other zoning applications at the time. She said that their goal was to focus on promoting home ownership, and she believed it was essential to note that their site plan approval for phase one, construction was scheduled for early 2025, with affordable units expected to be available for sale by the end of the year. She said that she emphasized this because she thought it was crucial that they begin construction as soon as possible, as the problems were compounding, and she believed Greenwood had a real strength in addressing this.

Ms. Davies said that as a project team, they could provide a comprehensive solution, from design to deployment, and successfully deploy these units, resulting in a beautiful new neighborhood. She said that in contrast, the previous rezoning approval had been unable to move forward, and the property had ultimately been unloaded, leaving them back at this point. She said that she believed they had a unique opportunity to build a new neighborhood with for-sale affordable units, which would help people get into their new homes.

Mr. Moore said that he strongly agreed about the need for affordable housing, which had been referred to as an emergency-level issue. He said that he appreciated the earlier comments about increasing the supply. He said that although there had been no new housing developments in the area for several years, the fact that there were available units was a positive step. He said that he understood that the goal was to increase the supply and make housing more accessible. He said that he would like to ask about the applicant's plans to ensure that affordable housing developments were sold at the affordable rate, rather than being sold at market rate after the initial 90-day window.

Ms. Davies said that as someone who worked on affordable housing every day, she had often been frustrated by policies that did not result in people getting into units. She said that she believed Greenwood's approach was unique in its ability to effectively communicate with and market to a wide variety of people. She said that their company ethos was centered around maintaining affordability, and they were absolutely committed to getting families into these units.

Ms. Davies said that she did not know if Mr. Schooley had any insights on this, but she wanted to share her perspective. She said that recently, she had interacted with Greenwood's company and website, and she was impressed by their helpfulness and dedication to getting people into homes. She said that she believed they had the tools and marketing capabilities to effectively reach the people who needed these units. She said that they were willing to work together to make that a reality.

Chris Schooley, with Greenwood Homes, said that he would like to make a comment regarding their previous discussion about the 297 units. He said that he had done some quick math and was expecting to deliver over 180 units in 2025, with 34 units in the city and the remaining 146 units split between Glenbrook and Crozet. He said that he hoped their South First Street project downtown would be a success. He said that Belvedere had 16 units, and Victoria Heights had eight. He said that when they added these up, Greenwood Homes was one of the primary developers delivering Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the market. He said that they were pleased with this situation because their ADUs were for sale, not rental.

Mr. Schooley said that unlike a couple of other developers, Greenwood Homes was building and selling their ADUs, and they also offered a rental program. He said that they liked to offer a diverse range of product types, including the two-over-one unit, which was a nice size for a two-bedroom apartment, as well as the two-over-two unit, which was a two-story with a garage, and their 16-foot-wide townhouse. He said that Greenwood Homes strived to offer a broad range of products that met their sustainability criteria. He said that all of their agreements, including the ADUs, met the same criteria, so he was confident that any agreement would be consistent with their standards.

Mr. Missel said that for the sake of time, he would like to stay on the topic of affordable components. He said that as part of a deeper dive, he would like to address the term of affordability. He said that the applicant wanted to provide for-sale units, which was a great approach to building wealth. He said that however, they did not specifically address the duration of affordability.

Mr. Missel said that when going to the Board of Supervisors, who had strong feelings about affordable housing, the applicant should be prepared to think through some alternatives in order to actually do better in terms of the basic minimums. He asked how long an affordable unit would be considered affordable. He said that for example, if he purchased a for-sale affordable unit,

could he sell it the following year for a market rate? He said that he wanted to know what measures were in place to prevent him from doing so and were there any stop-gaps to ensure that affordability was maintained.

Ms. Davies said that they were exploring ways to address this issue internally, as they were aware that it could be a concern. She said that while it was true that wealth building was important, it was often a short-term gain for one individual. She said that she believed there were alternative approaches they could take to handle this.

Ms. Davies said that for instance, they could utilize deed restrictions for a certain number of years to maintain affordability. She said that they had begun conversations with the Community Land Trust to gauge their interest and potentially purchase units, which would allow them to keep them affordable indefinitely in their portfolio. She said that by thinking creatively, she thought they could find ways to retain affordability, which she believed was a crucial element in this discussion.

Mr. Missel said that according to the new housing policy in Albemarle, rental properties were required to be affordable for 30 years. He said that he did not know the specific requirements for properties sold. He said that it may only apply to rental properties.

Ms. Firehock sometimes nonprofit housing providers had the right of first refusal, which meant they had the opportunity to purchase the property before it was offered to others. She said that this was usually the standard procedure, although this may not have been set up to handle the process.

Mr. Missel asked where the affordable homes would be located on the concept plan.

Ms. Davies said that to clarify, all products would be for sale in the development, so there would be no rental units. She said that the affordable units would be dispersed throughout the site.

Mr. Missel said that he understood the developer had many partnerships in the community, which could help close the gap. He said that Ms. Davies had mentioned \$10 million as a gap. He asked if they had looked at partnering with other nonprofits to bring a higher level of affordability to this development.

Ms. Davies said that thus far, they had not. She said that it was solely a Greenwood Homes development because they felt it was the best place for that type of neighborhood.

Mr. Missel said that it perhaps was not the best way to pursue affordable levels.

Ms. Davies said that honestly, what was proposed in the previous rezoning was unreasonable. She said that it had set a weird precedent that was attached to this property versus anything else coming across their desks. She said that they were all working through that as a group. She said that as Mr. Schooley said, they were very supportive of providing affordable housing, which they were doing all over the County and more so than other developers or homebuilders. She said that they were always looking for creative solutions and suggestions. She said that they obviously were in compliance with the policy but were open to conversations about what they wanted to see here.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to revisit the affordability question and make a brief comment. She said that there were alternative methods to make housing more affordable, such as purchasing down the housing price. She said that for instance, affordable housing providers had successfully implemented this approach by reducing the price by \$20,000 or \$30,000. She said that she had personal experience with this.

Ms. Firehock said that she would appreciate it if the applicant could provide an abbreviated timeline. She said that she understood they had mentioned that creating these units was challenging, and they preferred to focus on for-sale units rather than rentals. She said that she would like to understand how they transitioned from the initial proposal to the current scenario. She said that they could please provide a concise timeline to clarify the process of how they could not afford to do the previous proposal due to the zoning and how they arrived at this point.

Ms. Davies said that she could outline the basic sequence of events. She said that the property was rezoned under a previous applicant, and following that, the applicant realized they would not be able to proceed with the development due to various factors. She said that she was focusing on this aspect. She said that she believed the rezoning was done in a way that required a tax credit deal, which ultimately proved to be unsustainable.

Ms. Davies said that over time, rising interest rates, increasing construction costs, and decreasing availability of tax credits created a perfect storm that made the project unviable for the previous applicant. She said that as a result, they put the property on the market, and that was when they began exploring the opportunity.

Ms. Davies said that they spent considerable time with the Forest Lakes neighborhood, trying to understand what would be harmonious with the surrounding areas and what could be brought to the market that would be valuable and viable. She said that this led them to pivot and consider the property as a neighborhood for-sale product that better aligned with the surrounding area and complemented the affordable rentals available at Brookhill, where they have hundreds of units. She said that this offering provides a diverse range of housing types.

Ms. Firehock said that was very helpful, and she thought it was a good way to summarize everything. She said that otherwise, they were relying on everyone knowing their recollection of the previous applications. She said that it might be beneficial for the Board as well. She said that she just wanted to make a comment, as she was not planning to ask you to revise their application at this late stage. She said that they mentioned keeping it in character with the surrounding area.

Ms. Firehock said that however, the County's goal was about densifying the urban ring and promoting taller buildings with more stories. She said that she was not convinced that limiting the building to four stories was the right approach. She said that she would prefer to see a taller building with affordable condos on the first floor, which would not only increase density but also provide more opportunities for affordable housing.

Ms. Firehock said that she understood that elevators and other expensive components could be a challenge, but she believed that was a necessary investment for the future. She said that she appreciated the extra green space they had managed to incorporate, and she thought the stormwater management could be improved further, such as incorporating permeable pavement, so the pond was not as necessary. She said that she thought it was helpful to have this kind of history encapsulation, and she understood the challenges faced by developers in the current market.

Ms. Davies said that it was challenging, and she hoped that everyone would recall Ms. Firehock's comments when they returned in a few months for the Brookhill project, where they would be adding 300 additional units to the heart of that town center.

Mr. Clayborne said that he appreciated the opportunity to discuss affordable housing. He said that he was less familiar with the for-sale market because they often focused on rentals. He said that to provide context for their conversations on comprehensive planning, he would appreciate if Ms. Davies could please share the price range for an affordable housing for-sale unit. He said that he was interested in understanding the high and low end of that price range.

Ms. Davies said that the County maximum for their development would be \$308,000 for a for-sale affordable unit. She said that depending on unit type and size, it could go down from that number.

Mr. Clayborne asked if \$308,000 was the maximum.

Ms. Davies said that that was correct.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the applicant could share more about the proposed recreational amenities.

Ms. Davies said that they were currently working through the design options, and they had a great landscape architect on Mr. Collins' team. She said that he may be more familiar with those ideas, but since they had multiple options, she wanted to mention that one area was envisioned as a dog park, while other areas would likely be more focused on playgrounds and fire pits.

Mr. Collins said that they would be incorporating a variety of recreational amenities, including a proposed pickleball court. He said that this development was quite interesting. He said that it would tie in with the Brookhill HOA, forming a single conglomerate HOA that would allow for the use of Brookhill amenities, which would be beneficial. He said that they were building courts, playgrounds such as a dog park, and pavilions, which all worked together to create a sense of community. He said that this was in contrast to Brookhill, which already had a pool, clubhouse, and larger recreational areas, including a newly constructed sports court. He said that overall, this development offered a range of amenities, enhancing the community.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak on this item. Seeing none, he closed the public hearing, and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Carrazana asked if staff could provide more information regarding the process of selling affordable housing units.

Mr. McDermott said that he did not know the process for housing. He said that they did not have the relevant staff attending the meeting to explain that.

Mr. Clayborne said that it was indeed a beautiful project, and there was no question about its quality. He said that he must admit that he was initially very excited about the affordable housing aspect, but he had come to realize that it may be overly optimistic. He said that as they returned to reality, he was eager to find a project that could serve as a best practice.

Mr. Clayborne said that unfortunately, it felt like they were stuck in a rut and could not seem to push the envelope. He said that he was in support of this project, but he believed they should aim

higher, like the 20% of affordable dwelling units proposed in the new policy. He said that instead of settling for the standard, he was disappointed that this project did not live up to its innovative potential.

Mr. Clayborne said that he understood that the finances may not work, but he was concerned about the 90-day turnaround period. He said that there was a lack of success with this approach, as Dr. Pethia often highlighted. He said that he was unsure what this project was truly solving in the affordable housing space. He said that while he had confidence in the team's efforts to improve the project, he worried that the 90-day deadline may not be realistic and may ultimately lead to failure.

Mr. Carrazana said that he believed it would be beneficial to receive an update on the housing stock. He said that they had previously discussed the AC44 housing policies, but he thought it would be helpful to get an update on the current state of their housing stock before that. He said that he would like to know if progress had been made on the website and marketing efforts. He said that his understanding was that the affordable housing stock should not be solely in the hands of the other developers. He said that in fact, some developers had stated that it was more of a County-level initiative, with the County handling the website and marketing efforts.

Mr. Barnes said that they should discuss this and do it before their housing discussion. He said that he needed to reach out to Dr. Pethia via email to talk about another project, but she was unavailable this week. He said that he would speak with her next week and revisit the conversation.

Ms. Firehock said that part of the reason for this issue was the lack of a central location where individuals seeking affordable housing could find information about available developments. She said that previously, the County had a staff member who acted as a matchmaker, but that position was eliminated.

Ms. Firehock said that they had fought to reinstate it, and eventually, Dr. Pethia was appointed. She said that despite having a website, she was unsure if it was effectively reaching potential homebuyers. She said that this was the problem. She said that it was essential to have a clear understanding that these resources were available. She said that the presence of a nonprofit housing provider, with their established clientele, served as a valuable matchmaker.

Mr. Murray said that there were previously mobile homes on this site, which were certainly affordable. He said that they did not have a zoning designation to protect mobile homes, so those were often converted. He said that he was certain no one was paying \$300,000 for a mobile home. He said that he was concerned about where they were starting and where they ended up with this development. He said that he did not know how to solve that.

Ms. Firehock said that that was part of the rationale for approving the mobile home's transition into the rental project. She said that something worth knowing was how many of those mobile home residents could afford the for-sale units here. She said that the answer was likely zero. She said that there was essentially zero likelihood that anyone from that mobile home park could return.

Mr. Missel said that it was a net loss, not only to the affordable housing stock, but it also resulted in people being unhoused due to the removal of mobile homes.

Ms. Firehock said that they said they would work on helping those residents relocate, but there was no proof that that was successful.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed. He said that it was possible that the application may be viewed more favorably if it had been the first one proposed rather than the previous one which offered 75% affordability. He said that it felt a bit like boiling a frog. He said that they first gave a little bit of hope, and now there was less, but it still appeared acceptable.

Mr. Clayborne said that the first time this topic arose, he thought Habitat for Humanity was involved and possibly spoke on it. He said that he was unsure if they remained a relevant party or if the applicant wished to discuss it further. He said that it appeared that they were no longer a factor, as they were not present tonight. He said that therefore, he believed that answered the question. He said that nevertheless, it spoke to the aspect of connecting people and other relevant factors.

Mr. Missel said that he had the utmost respect for the applicant, who was indeed doing outstanding work in the community. He said that it was clear that the applicant was meeting the necessary housing policy requirements. He said that he would offer his perspective, as he had been in similar situations himself. He said that when preparing for the Board of Supervisors, he would advise the applicant to consider the possibility of achieving 20% affordable housing for a longer period of time. He said that having this in their back pocket could be a valuable asset when presenting to the Board, as he believed it would be a challenging sell as currently presented.

Mr. Clayborne said that he agreed with Mr. Missel's well-stated points. He said that he had forgotten about the displacement of 60 mobile homes.

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Commission recommend approval of the Zoning Map Amendment ZMA202300014 Archer North Development project, as stated in the staff report. He said that he wished to ensure that any notes or appendices provided by Chair Missel were taken into consideration if the motion passed and moved forward. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion.

Mr. Missel said that when discussing incentives, they often discussed ways to increase affordability levels in Albemarle County. He said that under the best circumstances, even collaborative efforts had resulted in something that was insufficient. He said that if there were key points that could be made to the Board of Supervisors regarding ways developers could potentially increase affordability, he believed it would be valuable information to share with them. He said that as they were aware, the developer had not been able to make this work, and the 75% had proven to be untenable. He said that if they continued to pursue this as a County, they were losing affordable housing, which was a genuine shame.

Ms. Firehock said that to further emphasize that point, she wanted to say that if this proposal had been presented to them directly to replace the trailer park, she would not have voted in favor of it. She said that it was not fair and not equitable to what they were promised, and she understood that the current proposers were not the original ones. She said that despite the good work they did in the community for affordable housing, she must admit that she was reluctantly in support of this proposal.

Mr. Clayborne said that he felt the same way, and it was located within his own district.

Mr. Moore said that it was one of those situations where now, today, it was a choice between building nothing versus building something with a 15% affordability.

Mr. Missel called the vote on the recommendation of approval of ZMA202300014 Archer North Development.

The motion passed unanimously (6-0). (Mr. Bivins was absent.)

Adjournment

At 9:05 p.m., the Commission adjourned to Tuesday, November 19, 2024, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.



Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 11/26/24
Initials: CSS