

Albemarle County Planning Commission May 14, 2019

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Room 241, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were Tim Keller, Chair; Daphne Spain; Pam Riley, Karen Firehock; and JenNie More.

Members absent: Julian Bivins, Bruce Dotson, and Luis Carrazana.

Other officials present were Rebecca Ragsdale, Rachel Falkenstein, David Hannah, Cameron Langille, Andrew Knuppel, Michaela Accardi, Lea Brumfield, Andy Herrick, David Benish, Carolyn Shaffer, and Sharon Taylor.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

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

The meeting moved to the next agenda item.

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 said the meeting would move to the next item.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes - April 9, 2019

Ms. Firehock **moved** to defer a vote on the consent agenda until the next meeting. Ms. More **seconded** the motion, which passed 5:0.

Public Hearing Items

CPA201800007 Biodiversity Action Plan

Mr. Hannah stated that they would be considering proposed revisions to the Comp Plan and would incorporate strategies for conserving biodiversity in the County, and they had covered this material in two previous work sessions. He said stated that he would review the background information and actions taken to date, and staff was seeking adoption of a resolution to recommend approval of the CPA, as shown in Attachment B of the materials.

Mr. Hannah reported that the Comp Plan currently had as Objective 4 in the Natural Resource Chapter to protect the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the County in both the rural and development areas. He said that the first strategy under that objective was that a development action plan for biodiversity to protect significant areas of biological importance, which was accomplished when the Biodiversity Action Plan was completed in June 2018. He noted that the intent has been to have this become part of the Comp Plan, and this hearing would be the last step before the public hearing by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Hannah reviewed the actions on this item taken to date, noting that the Board had not made any recommendations for changes at the April 2019 work session, so the version they had tonight was the version final to this point. He stated that he felt they had done a good job soliciting input from a wide variety of people, and he said that the format for revising the Comp Plan is very simple and straightforward – and all revisions recommended are under Objective 4 of the Natural Resources Chapter of the Comp Plan. He emphasized that the purpose of this exercise was not to review or rewrite the entire chapter, but was an exercise to try to incorporate strategies for preserving biological diversity in the existing chapter. He added that they tried to retain as many of the existing strategies, wording, and narrative as possible.

Mr. Hannah reported that there were now 13 strategies under Objective 4 and detailed information about them as Attachment C, with the number of strategies increasing from 8 to 13, with 6 new strategies added and 1 dropped because it was duplicative of a strategy already in the RA chapter. He said that there were some minor wording changes but no major content changes. He said that if the Commission chose to entertain the resolution, as staff recommends, to recommend approval, he had suggested wording as shown.

The Chair opened the public hearing.

Mr. Sean Tubbs of the PEC urged adoption of the CPA, adding that it is crucial for the community's future. He said that climate change was perhaps well underway, with wildlife habitat threatened across the world. He stated that this plan has been under development for 30 years, and he was glad the dedicated scientists in this community worked to update language and stay on top of necessary changes. Mr. Tubbs said the revisions to the Comp Plan language were succinct and clear, and he read two sentences from the revised Objective 4 of the Natural Resources Chapter of the Comp Plan. He mentioned students from the Tandem Friends School who had come before the Board and demanded that they do something locally to address climate change.

Mr. Williamson thanked staff for their work and said the language was acceptable, with one significant change in terms of retaining a County staff member with expertise in conservation biology. He asked that the Commission rework it because it seemed wrong in a Comprehensive Plan to tell the Board how many positions the County should be adding.

Ms. Firehock complimented staff on their revisions and for the work it took to solicit significant public input. She stated that the County wasn't just supporting biodiversity for its own sake, but it ensured that the water and air were clean and vistas and landscaped were preserved, and nature had a balance. She said that not many other counties had a biodiversity action plan, and while most of the actions were voluntary, the plan provided a way for the County to continue to educate. She noted that there were other parts of the Comp Plan that addressed staffing, and this was just a recognition that they needed expertise within the County.

Mr. Hannah said he wanted to clarify that Mr. Williamson had made similar comments related to staffing at a Board of Supervisors work session. Mr. Hannah said the Board had decided to keep the language as is.

Ms. Riley thanked staff for all of the time they have worked on the plan.

Ms. Spain thanked staff for their patience with all of the changes suggested by the Commission.

Ms. Firehock **moved** to adopt the resolution recommending approval of CPA201800007 to the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan, which is Attachment B. Ms. More **seconded** the motion, which was adopted by vote of 5:0 (Dotson/Bivins absent).

Mr. Hannah thanked the Commission for improving the product with their comments.

Mr. Keller said he hoped Mr. Hannah and staff would share their work with area students.

Adjournment.

At 7:25 p.m., the Commission adjourned to May 21, 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 by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards, transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date:
Initials: