

## Cameron Langille

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**From:** llhdrummond@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 28, 2021 1:38 PM  
**To:** Donna Price; Diantha McKeel; Liz Palmer; Ned Gallaway; Ann Mallek; Bea LaPisto-Kirtley; Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** Rezoning request ZMA 201900008

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Board of Supervisors:

Thanks in advance for considering my concerns about the Wetsel rezoning application (ZMA201900008). The application is almost identical to the previous one from Kotarides, with the change in name to Rio Point and the elimination of the Rio Road green tee system in favor of the \$750k proffer. Therefore, the vast majority of concerns still hold as with the previous application. I will restate them here. I know you recall that your county planner advised not approving the rezoning and while the Planning Commission did vote in its favor, 2 members said they went back and forth (and if they had voted No, it would have been turned down at that point), so this wasn't a slam-dunk decision then and it should not be now.

One of the reasons the previous application was deferred was there was a sense of needing to wait for a Rio Road small area plan. That is underway, but not yet complete. I understand that this fall there will be alternatives presented for the stretch of Rio Road between Pen Park and the JWP. I really question why any decision is being made before the conclusion of the Rio Corridor Study and why, all of a sudden, this is being fast-tracked through the process. Indeed, the fact that a decision is being made in August has blind-sided many people. Given the strong opposition to the previous application, should there not be another public hearing to consider the problems that remain with such a rezoning request?

### Master Plan

I believe we can all agree that the Master Plan referred to in the application is out of date and needs revised. For an approval to be based solely on this Plan would be faulty. Please note that while the density under the requested Planned Residential Development zoning falls in the Plan 6-34 range, the by-right development of approximately 170 units gets you a density of 8 net or 6 gross, also within the 6-34 range in the Plan. The fact that the parcel is priced such that 328 units (double the by-right density) is what makes it economically feasible for a buyer is not my concern, not do I believe it should factor into your decision.

In addition, this application is, in fact, not in accordance with the Plan in the following ways:

- 1. The Plan calls for a mix of housing types, as in Belvedere and Dunlora Forest, but the proposed development is 100% apartment.
- 2. The Plan calls for the parcel to include "local serving retail/service uses", and Rio Point would not. I'd prefer a coffee shop and restaurant to be the neighborhood service center feature, not the trailhead. As it is, there's no amenities or anything to walk to presently (closest shopping/food is 2 miles away).
- 3. The Plan clearly speaks to infrastructure before development—this is development without infrastructure **ever**.
- 4. The Plan clearly speaks of preserving vistas and natural beauty- quotes about this particular parcel in the precursor study to the JW Warner (Meadowcreek Parkway): "high scenic value" and "picturesque terrain". In the Plan, there are numerous mentions that development must respect and work with the terrain, that the community "values the expansive views of.... and other vistas" and these should be preserved. Additionally, the community should adopt a "strategy to identify and preserve natural and open spaces... areas of natural beauty". I understand that this parcel will be developed, but the 3-story buildings and massing to accommodate 328 apartment units will be less congruous with the landscape than, say, 170 units.
- 5. Rio Point wouldn't be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods that are almost all single family (some with acreage), townhouse and villas, and largely non-rental. One of Rio Point's neighbors would be a farmette.
- 6. I don't believe this location is within the areas designated as Priority Area, for which the Plan objective is to promote density.

## Traffic

- No matter how you try to slice it, the Wetsel parcel is locked in by 2 lane roads-- Rio Road is a 2 lane road (one lane in each direction), Melbourne is a 2 lane road, the John Warner Parkway is a 2 lane road.

Earlier in the previous application vetting process, one traffic planner was touting this as a good solution since Rio is an arterial road. An arterial road is defined as a “high capacity urban road to deliver traffic from collector roads to freeways and between urban centers.” Rio is not an arterial road- it’s a 2-lane country/suburban road, currently stressed beyond its capacity. Admittedly, development under the original zoning will stress the roads, but why double the problem by doubling the density?

Thinking that the residents of Rio Point will all magically ride bikes, walk, or take the bus to shop, work, school is really naïve. A worthy long-term goal, perhaps, but not reality in the near term. And in the interim, all who live along Rio Road and travel it will suffer.

- Using an old traffic study, rolled forward at 2% per year increase is not the right thing to make a decision on. Why not do a live traffic study on several days once traffic resumes to more normal levels (likely this fall with schools and businesses reopening). In addition, there seemed to be no consideration in the study of the volume of cars on Rio road (between JWP and Pen Park road) and the resulting slowdowns in travel—the study seems focused on wait times for turns onto and off of Rio Road. Last, when turn wait times are considered in the study, it’s only for the first car in line—what is the wait time for car #2, car #3, etc.? By the time that 4th car in line gets their turn, they may be more likely to try to make a risky turn out of frustration. It is logical that the majority of apartment residents will be making left hand turns out of the Rio Point exit to get to Route 29 or the JWP-- a risky proposition. One solution would be for Rio Point to add a second exit into the (future) traffic circle and have the Rio Road exit be a right turn only, but that would be many years after the development would be occupied—more time for more accidents on Rio Road.
- The roundabout at Rio and JWP may help there with traffic flow at that intersection and for Dunlora residents, but does nothing to help Dunlora Forest residents. Also, the roundabout which won’t be started until 2026 and this developer has indicated starting construction in 3q 2022, with occupancy in 2024 or 2025. So we’ll have several years of additional traffic problems in the interim.

There is going to be a town house community built next to the Wetsel property (about 40 town houses, by- right under the existing zoning). That development, Rio Commons, will have an entrance and exit directly across from Dunlora Forest. The Rio Point application includes a provision for an emergency/2<sup>nd</sup> exit to hook into the Rio Commons exit/entrance, likely ultimately increasing the traffic Dunlora Forest residents will face trying to get into or out of our neighborhood. There is no current provision for a light or 4 way stop sign there.

As it is now, traffic from Pen Park Road turns right on red making it hard for Dunlora Forest residents to even make a right onto Rio Road – can that light be turned into a “no right- turn on red”.

There are a number of seniors living in Dunlora Forest. If traffic backs up and there is gridlock on Rio Road, will emergency vehicles be able to enter/exit the neighborhood? It would be tragic if the answer was no.

- Last, the proposed trailhead will bring additional traffic and parking issues. There’s no parking there now and the trailhead is well used. Why add more cars to this corridor, since your goal includes getting cars off the road?

## Density

The 2018 Rio/29 Small Area Plan reflects the county’s desire to locate housing where it is easily accessible to employers, stores and other amenities—i.e. in the Core—with the following characteristics: higher density, proximity to road frontage, more mixed use, higher walkability. Rio Point is not in the Core area. It seems that the principles of the Small Area Plan imply it makes sense to maintain the areas outside the Core as more suburban/neighborhood (i.e. at the low end of the density range).

There are several high-density multi-family projects completed/in process that better meet the criteria for high density—Stonefield, Brookhill, North Point, Berkmar. In addition, it is possible that the Fashion Square Mall may be redeveloped into mixed use (including higher density dwelling units) in the future. These developments have major road proximity and proximity to shops and amenities. The proposed Rio Point does not have proximity to any major road or to any amenities and it never will.

Why are you trying to turn our section of E. Rio Road into an urban area? I’d argue that this is not and will not be an urban area even if you slam a large apartment complex in it. We have neighborhoods and subdivisions, CATEC, 2 small schools with lots of land, even a wildflower garden-- very little density presently.

I understand the need for affordable housing but wonder if the same goals could be accomplished in a lower density or ownership scenario, since mortgage rates are so low, would not a monthly payment be comparable to the rent?

Last, homeowners in certain neighborhoods made buying decisions based on the R4 zoning/lower density. It is unfair that area residents took the existing zoning at face value and thought they were buying into something at the low end of the PRD range and now this might be changed. I know of at least a handful of neighbors who may sell their properties if this rezoning is approved.

### **Aesthetics**

- The previous application had no real detail about the positioning of buildings and nature of building materials, or how they would attempt to break up large buildings with multiple units into something aesthetically pleasing and more to human scale. This leaves all of us thinking they are going to put up a bunch of shoe-box shaped red brick buildings.
- The proposed placement of the apartment buildings so near Rio Road is not aesthetically pleasing and along with traffic problems and the rental nature of the apartments, could harm the property values of surrounding neighborhoods. This application has apartments set back only 30-40 feet from Rio Road and only small trees are shown in the plans as a buffer. As a result, Dunlora Forest residents' vista will be the apartment buildings. There seems to be more visual protection offered by the developer along the John Warner Parkway (over 100 feet back and larger perimeter trees). Also, one of the comparable area apartment dwellings cited by the new developer, Belvedere apartments, are set back more like 100 feet from the road. I'd wager that there would be much less resistance from Dunlora Forest residents if they'd set the Rio Road fronting buildings further back like Belvedere.
- In the previous application, the developer would flatten the beautiful hill at the corner of Rio Road and JWP to accommodate the trail head and related parking- what a shame!
- We have been told that the western part of the county is being preserved as rural- I think all residents of Albemarle County should be entitled to enjoy the beauty of the landscape, not just those west of Route 29.

In summary, please do not approve the rezoning. It will make a bad traffic situation even worse and turn this immediate area into an anthill. Thank you, Lisa Drummond

## Cameron Langille

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**From:** Charles Dassance <chick1945@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 11, 2021 4:18 PM  
**To:** Adam Moore  
**Cc:** Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** Rio Road Traffic

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> I am writing as president of the Dunlora Forest POA in regard to the recently completed Traffic Impact Analysis relative to the proposed Rio Point 328 unit housing development at the corner of Rio Road and John Warner Parkway and the separately proposed Rio Commons development directly across the street from Dunlora Forest.  
>  
> The proposed entrance/exit road for Rio Commons is directly across from the entrance/exit road for Dunlora Forest. Assuming both developments move forward, the number of entrance/exit roads on the short stretch of road from Pen Park to John Warner Parkway will increase significantly. And that short stretch of road is already problematic in regard to heavy traffic, excessive speed and a lack of sidewalks. Moreover, the traffic analysis for Rio Point did not consider the Rio Commons development, nor does it appear that the placement of the entrance for Rio Point was done in a way that considered traffic from Rio Commons or Dunlora Forest.  
>  
> First, there needs to be an analysis of the impact both developments combined on the increased traffic on exit/entrance for Dunlora Forest. One suggestion to consider is a center lane for left-hand turns from Dunlora Forest. How this might affect the exit/entrance to Rio Commons will also need to be considered.  
>  
> Second, consider designating Rio Road from Pen Park to the John Warner Parkway as a "High Traffic" area with appropriate signage. This stretch of road is already dangerous with the speed limit being routinely ignored.

Last, there is a reference in the May 14, 2021 County Comments on "Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks" regarding, "an interconnection that will be provided at the southern boundary between Parkway Place and the adjacent parcel known at TMP 61-167A. Should that parcel be developed in future, an opportunity will be available to create a travel way/street network parallel to Rio Road." The adjacent parcel would be the planned Rio Commons development. Our community would certainly be supportive of an alternative route to relieve some of the newly generated traffic on Rio Road.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues more fully. Thank you for considering these comments.

Charles Dassance (352-427-3343)

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## Cameron Langille

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**From:** Darby Hobbs <dbh3ss@virginia.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 9:33 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Cc:** Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** Parkway Place housing project

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Hi there,

I am a law student at UVA and have been reading up on the Parkway Place apartments project the last few weeks. Post-graduate students, nurses, employees need more living options in the greater Charlottesville area. I've also noticed that Parkway Place is offering a trailhead park for the Rivanna Trail, which will encourage more citizens to bike into town. I hope you recommend this approval of this project.

Best,  
Darby

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**Darby Hobbs**  
*University of Virginia, 2022*  
School of Law  
Email: [dbh3ss@virginia.edu](mailto:dbh3ss@virginia.edu)  
Phone: 314-494-1622

## Cameron Langille

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**From:** Mary Jane Pudhorodsky <pudfam@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 10:31 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Cc:** Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** Support for Parkway Place

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Planning Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the Parkway Place community and the rezoning required for it to happen. I have lived in Dunlora for over 18 years and have seen many changes, including increased traffic and traffic patterns. Some in community are opposed to the new development. I am a strong supporter of Parkway Place as it will greatly improve traffic, a major benefit to the community.

I am impressed with the plans for Parkway Place. It includes improvements around the Rio Road and John Warner Parkway intersection. The developers have pledged \$1 million in road improvements to make the existing traffic situation along Rio Road and at the Dunlora Drive intersection better. This will directly benefit community members greatly. The plan includes widening Rio Road along the development and a protected left turn out of Dunlora to East Rio Road. This would allow traffic on Rio Road to flow much better and make left turns safer. These are significant and much needed improvements to safety and traffic flow which this community would help provide. If development is build by right, improvements are not going to happen prior to the construction beginning and not at all by the developer. It would then cost more tax payer money to make improvements while all the while traffic safety and flow would get worse.

Another reason I support this development is it's inclusion of some affordable housing. Presently, many of our teachers, firefighters, police officers and other service providers cannot afford to live in the the Charlottesville/Albemarle area where they commute to work. This would provide some much needed housing options for them. As a community we must support those who provide valuable services to us by supporting all affordable housing development.

As a community member, I can see all of the positives that Parkway Place will bring, and with their commitment to making traffic situation better for all I am strongly in support of Parkway Place.

Sincerely,  
Mary Jane Puhodordsky  
1320 River Chase Lane  
Charlottesville, VA 22901  
434-825-5649

## Cameron Langille

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**From:** matthew gillikin <matthew.t.gillikin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 12:13 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission; Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** In support of Parkway Place

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Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing in support of the Parkway Place rezoning.

I am a city resident and am excited about the opportunities for affordable housing, greenspace, and trails. I have an 8 year old who is really into riding his bike and I am certain we would take advantage of the trailhead park. I am also hopeful that due to its density this project could be a catalyst for improved transit along this part of the urban ring, which would help reduce the traffic impact of this and other developments in the works.

Thank you for your time.

Matthew Gillikin  
726 Orangedale Ave.  
Charlottesville, VA



## Cameron Langille

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**From:** Morgan Clark <morganclark0711@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 12:41 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission; Cameron Langille  
**Subject:** New Apartments

**CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.**

I'm emailing you today to voice my support for the new Parkway Place apartments. Over the years, our county has grown very fast, and traffic has been a nightmare. I spoke with the developer and they have laid out a plan to alleviate congestion by improving the road and improving the trail that people can bike on. The developer has listened to the concerns of the community and he is trying to help, which I can't say about a lot of other developers. I hope that you will support this project.

Thank you,

Morgan C.

**March 10, 2020**

Dear Planning Commission:

I am sorry that I cannot attend tonight's meeting due to a family commitment. Yet I would like to share a few thoughts about the Parkway Place project. As I noted in the February 20 [Charlottesville Tomorrow story](#), the location of this project comports well with the County's vision as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan, and it aligns well with ideas I hear frequently from County residents.

People want to live close to jobs, schools, and entertainment. They want multiple transportation options and ready access to nature. This project is situated near the core of the designated growth area and it is where we, as a community, would want for people to live. It sits astrides multiple roads, an important bus line, and the area's best multi-modal route, the John Warner Parkway, with its high quality greenway. The site is adjacent to the Rivanna trail, and it is less than a mile from McIntire Park and nearby resources. Several new bike/pedestrian infrastructure projects will be coming to the neighborhood soon, including the County's Northtown Trail and a City-County connector under the railroad tracks near Meadow Creek, which will connect residents to the 29/Hydraulic area.

I can scarcely think of a better place to locate new housing and that is why the site is slated for density.

Additionally, the developer is offering a few improvements that will benefit the entire community. The trailhead they propose will be an important gathering place where I would expect mothers and the elderly to meet up for safe, social midday and weekend walks. The road improvements on Rio will be welcome, as will the frontage sidewalk (although this should be a given) and the easement for a streamside trail.

The plans I have seen need additional work. Although the site is well connected to the region at-large, the site plan itself is oddly suburban and lacking in internal connectivity. What use for a child to live near a trail if they cannot get there from their doorstep? I hope future drafts will have a better internal sidewalk network. Similarly, architecture, landscaping, and material choices will influence whether the complex feels like a good neighbor to existing residents.

We cannot hope to meet our goals for rural conservation, health, equity, and reducing and mitigating climate change unless people have quality places to live in the urban area. From a land use perspective, this project is consistent with that. I look forward to watching, and if needed, being a resource as the project goes forward.

Thank you,

Peter Krebs





Charlottesville, Virginia 22901  
thincfree.com • 434.760.3417

Comments  
by

Timothy Hulbert  
Citizen, Resident, Entrepreneur, Neighbor

at

Albemarle County Planning Commission Public Hearing

on the

Proposed Parkway Place Neighborhood Project

Albemarle County Office Building  
Charlottesville, Virginia

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Honorable Members of the Albemarle County Planning Commissioners. It's been a while.

My name is Timothy Hulbert and I am an Albemarle citizen, a resident of the East Rio Road / John Warner Parkway neighborhood.

My wife Bonnie and I moved into the Forest Ridge neighborhood about a year and a half ago. Our address is 1610 Fowler Ridge Court.

We love our new home and our friendly new neighbors in our new neighborhood.

We also appreciate the approval of our neighborhood development in the face, at the time, of opposition from folks who are now are neighbors in nearby previously Albemarle approved neighborhood developments. Those neighborhoods too were approved in even earlier times, despite opposition from nearby neighbors. These projects are now vibrant threads in our community tapestry. Thank you.

I support approval of the Parkway Place neighborhood project across Rio Road in our beautiful area of Albemarle County.

And I am not on their payroll.

I'm one of the neighbors that think Parkway Place — with the funds for needed roadway improvements as well as several other amenities — can be an overall improvement.

I welcome the new women and men and family neighbors who will have the opportunity to rent in our area as they try to build the financial resources to access affordable homeownership or downsize to adjust to new life transitions – and everything in between.

Without private funding the Rio/Parkway road intersection probably won't see a capacity/safety project for quite a while given the lack of state and local funding.

Where on the governmental "wish list" is a Rio/Parkway project? Number 14? That can be at least a decade away.

Add in that VDOT won't improve the roadway intersection for a long time without infusion of private funds; the only accessible source of funds for a very long time. You all know that private developer funding for such projects here has been and continues to be, used in place of public funds for some time.

As for the project's scale, the revisions that were made to the project to reduce the number of units from 414 to 328 (made in part in response to our neighborhood's concerns) is more than consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. This translates to a gross density of 12 units per acre. Doesn't the Comprehensive Plan contemplate a range of 6 - 34 units per acre for the area? Correct?

Back when I used to be Tim Hulbert, I regularly asked our local public officials focused on getting more affordable housing:

*"How is it that government can make housing more affordable by making it more expensive?"*

Constricting the supply and requiring assorted regulatory trimmings makes housing more expensive. Basic economics.

Among other housing benefits, Parkway Place will offer market workforce housing. Our economy – today's and tomorrow's – demands more rental housing across the board. Technology companies such as Willow Tree, the CFA Institute, Sigora Solar and others need bright young folks.

Millennials are still paying off enormous debt and trying to save and thus are renters who just as us, want to live at or near the center of things. I know, I have four of them.

You can be confident – “DINKS” / “Double Income No KidS” – young couples or us older folk, will be the predominate renters for the one- and two-bedroom units. And some units will attract families with one or two kids.

I welcome them to our neighborhood.

Thank you.