

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
Final Minutes Regular Meeting
October 14, 2025**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were Fred Missel, Chair; Luis Carrazana, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Corey Clayborne; Karen Firehock; Nathan Moore (via zoom); Lonnie Murray.

Other officials present were Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Jenny Tevendale, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Bart Svooda; Scott Clark; James Van Vranken; T.J. Newberry; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commissions.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Ms. Firehock motioned that the Planning Commission allow Mr. Moore to participate remotely in today's meeting due to an injury. Mr. Murray seconded the motion which carried (6-0). (Mr. Moore did not participate in the vote.)

Public Hearing.

ZMA-2025-00006 – HTC Area C

J.T. Newberry, Planner, said that he would be providing staff's presentation tonight on Hollymead Town Center Area C, ZMA-2025-00006. He said that he would like to begin with an overview of the area. He said that Area C was a section of Hollymead Town Center located behind the Target on Route 29 North. He said that it consisted of nine blocks, with boundaries outlined in red on the provided map. He said that all nine blocks were available for review in the application plan, which was Attachment 5 to the staff report. He said that six of these blocks were fully developed, two were partially developed, and the remaining two were vacant and shaded blue on the map, Block VII and Block IX.

Mr. Newberry said that at a high level, the proposal was to increase the overall number of dwelling units in Area C by 40 units, taking it from 370 units to 410 units. He said that to provide further context, the Places 29 Master Plan land use map shows Block VII and IX indicated by yellow stars in the middle of the map. He said that both of these parcels were designated for commercial mixed use, which required a primary use of retail and commercial service, with secondary uses including residential, office, research and development (R&D), or flex space.

Mr. Newberry said that the Places 29 Master Plan recognized that over time, these commercial-focused areas could eventually be converted to a more mixed-use type of development, such as residential or non-retail uses that could support adjacent centers. He said that the zoning map also showed the subject parcels with yellow stars, and both were zoned Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC). He said that tonight's rezoning proposal did not propose to change

the zoning district, but a rezoning was necessary to amend the Code of Development and the proffers.

Mr. Newberry said that specifically, the proposal would reallocate 56 units from Block VII to Block IX. He said that Block IX would then be permitted for residential uses, with a maximum of 96 units. He said that the proposal would also reduce the minimum non-residential square footage from 20,000 square feet in Block IX to zero, without removing the ability to do non-residential uses. He said that in addition to the rezoning, there were other minor changes to the Code of Development summarized on page three of the staff report.

Mr. Newberry said that an important aspect of staff's analysis was the residential rezoning related to affordable housing. He said that the proposal met the policy at the time of approval, and the 56 units proposed to move from Block VII to Block IX would be subject to their prior housing policy at the 15% level, and the new 40 additional units would be subject to the Housing Albemarle policy, which would indicate a 20% affordable requirement. He said that in conclusion, staff determined that this proposal was consistent with the Places 29 Master Plan and had the potential to result in additional affordable housing units being built. He said that at this time, staff had no concerns with the request.

Mr. Carrazana said that he had a question regarding the clarification on the 20% requirement. He said that considering this was a rezoning, he was wondering if the County had any leverage to ask for the full 96 units to be reviewed under the new Housing Albemarle policy.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that the County was not implementing the policy in that way. He said that staff was trying to follow the policy, and with a rezoning there were multiple factors that could be considered, so there may be other reasons why they did not increase or decrease that number.

Mr. Carrazana asked if an application was brought back to the County for a rezoning or other changes, they were still grandfathered under the policy it was originally reviewed under, even if changes were made in the future.

Mr. Barnes said that the way to approach this was to consider rezonings as a change that typically involved increasing square footage for commercial use or allowing more residential units above what was previously approved. He said that this was what they were focusing on. He said that the change they were examining was essentially the increase in units they were trying to apply the new policy to.

Mr. Carrazana said that in this particular case, there was a significant amount of commercial use in the area; however, they were being asked to eliminate the commercial requirement. He said that he was wondering if they should have a future conversation about how they had recently dealt with a number of requests to remove commercial space from developments, some of which would benefit from keeping that commercial zoning for future use. He said that he thought they should consider this as part of how they looked at their Housing Albemarle policy. He said that if a site had been sitting for 10 or 20 years without being developed, and then the developer returned with a new development, the County should have some leverage to use the new policy rather than falling back on the old policy.

Mr. Barnes said that each rezoning had its own distinct set of circumstances. He said that the removal of the commercial square footage was a factor in and of itself. He said that he thought

staff had primarily focused on the housing aspect and had not thoroughly assessed whether the reduction in commercial space should have a corresponding impact on the previously zoned dwelling units. He said that in essence, he was trying to say that while the policy generally worked as applied, there were individual factors in each rezoning that needed to be carefully considered by the decision-makers, the Planning Commission, and the Board when evaluating each rezoning individually.

Mr. Missel said that he thought it was a great point. He said that to consider an extreme example, one could imagine a housing development with a zoning designation that allowed for 100 dwelling units, while the remaining area was zoned for commercial use. He said that if the developers wanted to rezone the commercial area to light industrial, they would not automatically apply the new housing standards to the existing residential units. He said that that was essentially what was happening here, but the new residential development was being built with the new housing policy attached.

Mr. Barnes said that he wanted to clarify staff's interpretation of this issue. He said that they were not considering the loss of commercial space as a justification for more affordable housing. He said that while it was possible to argue that this was a valid reason, that was not their perspective when reviewing this request.

Mr. Missel said that the applicant had the right to exceed the County policy on affordability when developing housing units.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to inquire about the traffic impact due to this revised plan. He asked if this took into consideration the impact of Berkmar Drive Extended.

Mr. Newberry said that the applicant may address this in their presentation, but the expectation was that if residential uses were constructed there, there would be fewer overall vehicle trips compared to if it were developed with non-residential uses.

Mr. Barnes said that the extension of that road was actually a current Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) project that was funded, and they were working on it. He said that as for the project, he did not have information on when construction was scheduled to begin, but they were currently in the right-of-way phase. He said that they had made significant progress in the design phase.

Mr. Bivins said that for clarity, he would like to confirm that they were addressing setbacks on page three. He said that it appeared that they were attempting to equalize and modify some of the existing setbacks. He said that he would like to know how the proposed setbacks for the townhouses across the street, the townhouses on this side, and the apartments on another side would compare to the existing properties closest to the sidewalks, in terms of their overall character and feel.

Mr. Newberry said that yes, he expected so.

Mr. Murray said that he was seeking clarification on the current state of pedestrian access in these areas and the condition of the sidewalks and how they connected some of these areas to the commercial area. He said that this was particularly relevant given some of the comments made about this issue.

Mr. Newberry said that the Code of Development required sidewalks throughout Area C, and the applicant may be able to provide more information. He said that at the community meeting, concerns were raised not only within Area C but also across the street to Forest Lakes. He said that staff had taken note of the desire for enhanced pedestrian connectivity between these centers, particularly across Route 29. He said that the sidewalks would effectively fill in and continue the existing pattern of providing sidewalks adjacent to Timberwood, as well as Berkmar and Connor Drive, to connect to the shopping center area.

Mr. Missel asked if there were crosswalks across Route 29 in this area currently.

Mr. Barnes said that no, there were not.

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

Justin Shimp, Shimp Engineering, said that he was joined by his colleague Polina Andreeva, and was here representing Post Office Land Trust, a business that had been active for 97 years and had been working on projects like this for approximately 25 years. He said that he had a brief presentation and would highlight some important points. He said that he would like to start with the question regarding sidewalks. He said that there were missing sidewalks in this area because they had not been developed yet. He said that the original Code of Development required wide, 10-foot sidewalks and pedestrian accommodations. He said that they would fill in when they were developed.

Mr. Shimp said that in terms of the site layout, the parcel across the street, between Timberwood Boulevard and Connor Drive, was expected to become commercial and had undergone various site plans over time. He said that he was not involved in that particular project. He said that the rest of the blocks had developed over time, with the exception of a small area as part of Block III. He said that overall site plan drawing showed the highlighted blocks, along with the Code of Development.

Mr. Shimp said that over time, one could see the anchor development of Target in the bottom left corner, and how Block C had become predominantly residential, with a hotel, and Block I had commercial developments, including Bojangles. He said that they had also included some aerial views of the current development, which showed the urban street front and three- to four-story buildings. He said that the future residential development would be very similar to what had been developed so far in this area.

Mr. Shimp said that in to summarize changes, they were amending Blocks VII and IX. He said that they were redeveloping the site plan for Block VII, which now included 44 units, and were moving the density down to Block IX, which was previously approved. He said that the policy had been treating additions to the baseline density as part of the affordable housing policy. He said that this approach had been consistently applied as part of Housing Albemarle. He said that in this situation, one of the downsides was that going back to a developer and asking them to revisit their 1996 plans and make the units more affordable may not be an effective incentive.

Mr. Shimp said that building fewer units and creating a larger, more expensive unit might be a better option, as it would avoid crossing the higher affordability threshold. He said that this was something to consider when looking at going backwards and may even create the opposite outcome, where fewer units were built due to the increased complexity of revising the zoning and affordable rates. He said that in this case, they were following the existing zoning that allowed for

15% affordable units, and the additional 40 units would meet the 20% threshold at the applicable affordable rates, including 60% and 80% AMI for sale.

Mr. Shimp said that the main change was provided in the uses table, which illustrated the adjustments made and was brought up by the staff. He said that the table outlined the original Code of Development and had been amended several times over the years. He said that the latest amendment simply eliminated the requirement for commercial development on Block IX, allowing for residential units. He said that previously, this was not permitted, and the 96 dwelling units were only possible with this change.

Mr. Shimp said that the Albemarle County 44 Comprehensive Plan, which emphasized the need for increased housing. He said that he did not run the calculations on this, but it appeared that in areas where the Comprehensive Plan recommended 35 dwelling units per acre, but they were nowhere near that level. He said that this was due to the pattern of development, which often involved large commercial sites like Harris Teeter and Target, occupying 15-20 acres of land. He said that to achieve this density, they needed to make up for it elsewhere by building higher-density units, such as condos, which would provide an ownership opportunity for residents. He said that these units would likely be more affordable, and when combined with the existing density, they would create a more efficient land use.

Mr. Shimp said that he would like to bring up the recent AstraZeneca announcement, which he was pleased to hear about. He said that the County had secured a successful project, and he was sure it would employ a significant number of people. He said that the project was approximately three miles from this site, and one of the issues that had been a constant concern was the number of people who lived outside the County and commuted in. He said that creating housing opportunities in close proximity to numerous employment opportunities, particularly one that the County had invested in, made a lot of sense. He said that this was part of their interest in developing this residential area and it was a timely opportunity to build this location.

Mr. Murray said that there was not much being offered for parks and recreation in this area. He said that they had little tot lots and parks scattered throughout the development, so he was wondering if the developer would consider combining all the tot lots into a more significant park out of the same acreage. He said that this would be much more useful.

Mr. Shimp said that yes, this topic had been discussed with staff, and it also came up at the community meeting. He said that there was a requirement for a certain number of tot lots, and he believed they had two left to build in this development. He said that staff may not be aware, but he thought there was an opportunity for them to determine that the two could be combined, still meeting the intent of the original zoning. He said that for example, if they were built side by side, they could be combined to create more useful space while still meeting the code requirements. He said that he thought this was a viable and efficient option. He said that they had not fully calculated the costs, but unless they were told otherwise, they would likely pursue this route.

Mr. Murray said that co-locating with attractively designed bioretention stormwater facilities could potentially create a larger green space that served multiple functions, which he believed would have significant value. He said that he would certainly advocate for this approach and encourage staff to consider it as they reviewed the project.

Mr. Bivins asked if the condos would be townhouses or multifamily condos. He asked what structures they were considering for these two Blocks instead of commercial space.

Mr. Shimp said that there was an opportunity for a traditional condo building, a 32-unit building that was more like an apartment building. He said that what was commonly seen in these projects was a stacked, four-story unit, with the first two floors being owned by one person and another owner on the top two floors. He said that this was a smaller building form, more similar to a townhome, but technically a condo structure.

Mr. Bivins asked if Mr. Shimp could share, if possible, the success they had in bringing individuals or families who qualified for affordable housing to the units they had already developed there.

Mr. Shimp said that he had not been involved with that type of two-over-two product before. He said that in Block II, across the street, they had about 12 or so affordable townhomes. He said that once it got to the marketing and sale phase, he was not involved, but he could confirm they had built about 12 affordable units across the street on Timberwood.

Mr. Bivins asked if Mr. Shimp believed they were able to successfully go to market and maintain their affordable status in that process.

Mr. Shimp said that he knew they went to market as affordable housing. He said that under the old code, there was a provision that after a certain period of time, they would go back to market value. He said that he could not confirm, but he hoped they were purchased under the affordable rates.

Mr. Bivins said that he would like to ask that Mr. Shimp and the developer would consider donating units to the Land Trust in order to provide permanent affordable housing, as opposed to potentially losing their affordability at some point in the future. He said that he did not need an answer but would suggest that be taken into consideration.

Mr. Shimp said that he had worked on several projects where the Land Trust had been involved, and they may be involved in a project like this. He said that they had recently updated their model to allow for a condo-style, two-unit structure, similar to what was proposed here. He said that in the past, he had won projects where the Land Trust acquired townhomes or was donated, and he had found those to be excellent opportunities.

Mr. Bivins said that he understood that the decision to minimize commercial space was a choice, and they were not obligated to have it. He said that he was wondering if they had any insight into market trends regarding commercial space in their community. He asked if Mr. Shimp had any data or information that suggested what was happening in their community with commercial space, and how that might have influenced the developer's decision to request this change.

Mr. Shimp said that he had done very little retail in his business over the past five years or more. He said that the reason for this was that there was sufficient space available that it was not economically viable to build a building and lease it to pay for it. He said that as a result, the rate of rent for commercial retail space had not kept pace with the rate of home prices.

Mr. Shimp said that consequently, it was cheaper for builders to construct townhomes or two-family dwellings, which could be sold and generate a profit. He said that however, building new in that location was not feasible unless there was a specific user who required that space, such as an owner-occupied user or a for-lease space. He said that this was true even in this development, where they still had vacant commercial space and therefore did not need to build more. He said that the market had driven this trend. He said that reflecting on the original plan

from 2003, he likely was not familiar with Amazon at that time, but now they delivered to his house every day. He said that over the past 25 years, patterns had changed, and this was just part of the change.

Mr. Murray said that he wanted to follow up on that point. He said that when he looked at development that was being done well, he considered Old Trail as an example. He said that they had been gradually moved out their commercial spaces and incorporating residential units above some of the existing commercial areas. He said that what he found particularly effective about the commercial development they were undertaking was that it met the needs of local residents, rather than catering to big-box stores or generic retail.

Mr. Murray said that instead, it was tailored to the specific needs of the people living in the area. He said that given that the market may not be fully established yet because the people were not there yet, but he wondered if there were ways to design spaces that could be flexible and adaptable, allowing them to transition into commercial use as the area developed, rather than building exclusively residential and later discovering a need for small commercial retail.

Mr. Shimp said that he thought about a building on Rio Road, designed in the form-based code, included tall ceilings and a convertible first-floor space. He said that he thought the reason that worked well in Old Trail was because the ratio of people to businesses was suitable for local and small businesses, and otherwise they would have to drive farther to larger stores. He said that, however, in this subject site, the ratio of commercial to residential properties was skewed, making it difficult for new retail shops to establish themselves.

Mr. Shimp said that the ratio had changed significantly since the days when businesses could easily pop up in this area. He said that he hoped that would change someday, but he believed they were far from achieving a suitable ratio for this site to support small businesses. He said that Old Trail, on the other hand, was a successful model for how this could be done, and he attributed its success to the ideal ratio of people to businesses.

Mr. Murray said that he encouraged them to think about the long-term implications of their decisions. He said that they had mentioned concerns about running out of space in the County's development area. He said that if they only considered a 20-year timeline and not a 50-year one, they were doing themselves a disservice. He said that as the population grew, he thought they would need to prioritize creating a commercial and residential area that was walkable and served neighborhood functions.

Mr. Moore said that he believed many of the questions he had were addressed. He said that he did see the applicant's point that, in the shadow of a Target and now being referred to as one of their destination centers in the AC44 Plan, the demand for additional commercial space on the ground floor may be relatively soft. He said that this aligned with Mr. Bivins' point that this might be something the Board of Supervisors could take up in the future, specifically exploring the development of a permanently affordable housing stock, which would serve as a secondary market for those in need, but that was beyond the scope of this particular application.

Ms. Firehock said that as they moved towards a more remote work environment, she wondered if the design of these units had taken into account the need for small, private workspaces or office nooks. She asked if there was a different architectural approach being used. She said that as someone who had staff working from home two days a week and lived in apartments in Albemarle

County, she was interested in knowing if this shift had influenced the design of these developments.

Mr. Shimp said that they certainly saw that happening, and many of these units were two-bedroom units and often occupied by a couple or a single person, with the extra bedroom serving as additional space. He said that although tangential, he would mention that throughout his career, he had studied traffic patterns as zoning regulations had changed. He said that if they were to review the original traffic study from 2003, he was confident that they would find that the build-out was significantly less traffic than initially planned. He said that the study was conducted before the widespread adoption of remote work, and it assumed that residents would travel to multiple retail shops to access services.

Mr. Shimp said that as a result, the proffers were based on those numbers. He said that however, if they were to examine the data from that time, they would likely find that the impacts were over-calculated, particularly in terms of residential versus commercial development, and this had led to the construction of additional lanes and paving. He said that regarding traffic patterns from 2019 to 2023, according to VDOT's latest numbers, traffic was flat. He said that during the COVID-19 pandemic years, traffic projections had begun to decline and then rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. He said that their data supported this trend, and VDOT had refused to allow them to use COVID-19 era data due to its skewed nature.

Mr. Missel said that while they were being tangential, he would like to ask Mr. Shimp why he thought they were seeing so much congestion on the roads today in Albemarle County. He said that it appeared that the issue was not universal, and not everyone was overestimating the need for improvements. He said that instead, it seemed that the opposite was true.

Mr. Shimp said that in his opinion, the calculation based on any given number of projected businesses might be less, but they still had a significant number of businesses and people there. He said that the growth would always lead to increased traffic. He said that considering this, he would speculate that if they assumed a certain number of residents, such as 2005, who drove to retail, work, and did not have online shopping, they would project significantly higher traffic counts based on the number of people and businesses there than what they actually saw. He said that therefore, he believed the trend of increased traffic per user there was likely to be a curve that eventually flattened out.

Mr. Missel said that it was interesting to note that despite the various factors he mentioned, such as Amazon deliveries, people working from home, and other factors, the volume of traffic on the roads appeared to have increased beyond the capacity those roads were built for, and the proffers were able to handle.

Mr. Shimp said that was certainly the case. He said that in the case of this development, the proffers were made for this individual development, but if someone in Greene County put in 1,000 new houses and those people commuted to Albemarle, they would see that traffic.

Mr. Missel said that they also had to make assumptions based on background traffic that were also projections in some cases, which were likely projected to be high.

Mr. Bivins said that it related to some of the conversations they had here. He said that part of it was that they could make projections in Albemarle County that worked within their boundaries, but not within the City's boundaries. He said that this created a situation where they had two sets

of infrastructure that did not mesh with each other. He said that he thought this was fundamentally the issue they were seeing with the main arteries connecting these two jurisdictions.

Mr. Bivins said that they could go to Greene County, but they were never anticipated to have traffic flow in a way that optimized the flow of traffic. He said that they may recall that the City failed to uphold its part of the deal to have its traffic lights synchronized with the rest. He said that as a result, even if the road was good, the infrastructure issue prevented the flow of traffic in a meaningful way. He said that this went back to his concern that this issue would not be solved until they rethought what these two jurisdictions meant to each other.

Mr. Bivins said that in the same way that people talked about improving transit, they would not make significant changes to the way they moved people around because there was no unified approach. He said that there was no collaboration between the two jurisdictions, and the University of Virginia down the road did not even consider the transportation thinking of the other two jurisdictions. He said that he believed that was the real issue.

Mr. Murray said that in terms of integrating travel and coordinated planning, he found it instructive to examine the site, despite its designation as a town center, and upon reviewing the Strava heat map, he was struck by the stark contrast between the commercial area and the surrounding pedestrian traffic. He said that the Strava heat map recorded data on walking, running, cycling, and pedestrian traffic, providing a clear picture of where people were moving and where they were not.

Mr. Murray said that as it could be seen, the commercial area was relatively dark on the map, with many dark areas and very limited pedestrian activity, particularly at road crossings. He said that it was particularly noteworthy that a town center, which was intended to be a hub of activity, had such limited pedestrian traffic. He said that he encouraged them to utilize available pedestrian data, as it was indeed shocking to see a town center with such limited movement of users.

Mr. Missel asked if that data was available to the public.

Mr. Murray said that yes, they collected data from various sources, and it was available to the public. He said that also, cell phones collected movement data, which was anonymized and used to analyze pedestrian travel patterns. He said that this could help identify where people were going.

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

Ms. Firehock said that she was pleased to see more housing density coming into the area. She said that, given the high level of commercial activity surrounding this location, it did not make sense to require the applicant to include commercial space when there was no demonstrated market demand for it. She said that it had been vacant for a reason, and the issue was not that there was a lack of commercial space.

Mr. Murray said that he would say there was no demand yet. He said that he believed that Short Pump was what Places 29 aimed to be, both good and bad. He said that there was a significant amount of commercial activity in Short Pump, and as Albemarle's population increased, he believed the potential for commercial development to be viable was there. He said that writing off

large areas of the development area as solely residential only was a problem unless they considered the possibility of adaptability.

Mr. Missel said that regarding the applicant's comments, he thought it was important to consider the percentage of residential, commercial, and retail support. He said that the percentages had changed over time, and it appeared that they were shifting more towards residential development, as people were increasingly relying on mail-order services and staying at home more. He said that this shift was leading to a decrease in commercial support and walkable areas.

Mr. missel said that it would be interesting to know the current percentage and compare it to the 2005 data, as well as understand how this change had impacted traffic generation. He said that if the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) manual was being revised to reflect the recent realities, it would be beneficial to know about these changes.

Mr. Clayborne said that along those same lines, he believed that the term "mixed use" may need to be redefined. He said that he thought that a daycare would likely fill up quickly in one of these commercial spaces, given the need for childcare, or co-working areas may take up the ground-floor commercial space. He said that in his opinion, the concept of mixed use was evolving, and it may take on a different form. He said that he was in full support of this proposal, based on the justifications provided.

Mr. Carrazana said that there were certain areas of the county that were likely to be well-suited for mixed-use development, and the density could allow for smaller shops to be successful. He said that this approach encouraged small businesses, which he believed they should aim to support. He said that when considering the arrival of large companies to Albemarle County, it was clear that residents wanted to live near services and amenities.

Mr. Carrazana said that while they did have a Target here and a few other large stores, there was not a lot, but there were opportunities. He said that there were also opportunities for growth, and if they filled all these areas with single-family homes, they risked creating bedroom communities that lacked access to services. He said that this was a common issue, as seen in many other places, locally and across the country.

Mr. Carrazana said that they could learn from examples where this approach had been successful, such as the Old Trail development. He said that in Crozet, the proximity to commercial areas was fairly accessible. He said that however, on North 29, there was not a lot of access, yet they continued to build these new communities. He said that he thought it was essential to be mindful of this balance and not eliminate commercial development solely for the present. He said that by doing so, they risked losing opportunities for future growth and development, so they needed to be cautious.

Mr. Missel said that he thought the Planning Commission would benefit from having a brief work session or discussion item on their local, regional, and national markets as they related to this discussion.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to note that they had CoStar as a local entity, the leading group that conducted analysis on commercial buildings and other real estate. He said that it would be interesting to explore the possibility of collaborating with them. He said that he would be interested to hear from them about their local market for development. He said that unlike the Richmond suburbs, which had the ability to attract large box stores, he believed their community did not

have that same attractive quality. He said that he thought it would be beneficial to discuss what this meant for communities with a business mix like theirs.

Mr. Missel said that Stonefield was another example of a mixed-use development.

Mr. Bivins said that considering what happened in Stonefield, the project's potential failed due to the 2008 economic downturn. He said that he believed they also needed to take into account that investors in their area had a different risk profile compared to those in Richmond. He said that for example, Greystar, an international company, had taken a risk on a property on Old Ivy Road at the right time.

Mr. Bivins said that they had a similar opportunity near Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center (CATEC), but the company ultimately decided to withdraw due to the negative feedback from the community. He said that when considering what was being asked of someone, they saw that national chains were making decisions based on their local market. He said that the Kroger's location had been closed, and the Starbucks in Hollymead had also closed. He said that it was clear that national chains were making decisions based on their local market.

Mr. Bivins said that as Mr. Carrazana had mentioned, the economics were different for local vendors to enter the commercial market. He said that they had seen an example of this with Mudhouse, which had started as a pushcart on the corner of the downtown mall and had since grown into a very successful local enterprise. He said that while they may see some sprouts of commerce in their area due to a different risk profile, he believed it would be challenging to replicate the success seen on the outskirts of Richmond.

Mr. Murray said that he did not necessarily believe they should replicate that.

Mr. Bivins said that if one considered the area of the County around Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, that section worked well because people could walk to the gym, and there were numerous restaurants in the area. He said that in contrast, the side of the street where Nordstrom's used to be was less vibrant, with fewer housing options and less density.

Mr. Bivins said that the idea of integrating housing solutions with commercial ones, particularly with higher-income individuals, provided insight into their local mix. He said that their dispersed mix of incomes, which they had discussed previously, suggested that they were not concentrated in a single jurisdiction, making it challenging for national businesses to sustain themselves.

Mr. Murray said that one of the concerns he had was that, and while he did not have direct experience in building construction, based on his understanding, one of the significant problems was adaptability. He said that if they built an office building, it was not easily convertible into apartments or a restaurant later on. He said that with proper design, it was possible to create buildings that were more adaptable to future changes. He said that he was unsure what they could do to ensure their design standards were flexible enough to accommodate market changes in 20 years, so they were not stuck with a use that no longer made sense.

Mr. Moore said that he agreed they should consider bringing in market study presentation experts, as it would be beneficial for the Commission. He said that he often felt that their conversations lacked concrete data to support their ideas and conclusions. He said that he believed that the demand for housing was high, as was the demand for light industrial. He said that he had been hearing from developers that the demand for commercial properties was currently soft; however,

that was similarly just an observation rather than based on concrete data. He said that he thought it would be valuable to analyze more data to better understand the situation and explore ways to build thriving neighborhoods and communities.

Mr. Bivins motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of ZMA-2025-00006 Hollymead Town Center, Area C, for the reasons stated in the staff report and discussed at the dais. Mr. Moore seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Adjournment

At 7:50 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 28, 2025, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.



Michael Barnes, Planning Director

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 10/28/2025
Initials: CSS