

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

March 11, 2025 – 5:30 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting

I. COMMISSION PRE-MEETING (Agenda discussion(s))

Beginning: 5:00 PM

Location: NDS Conference Room

Members Present: Chairman Mitchell, Commissioner Solla-Yates, Commissioner Schwarz, Commissioner d’Oronzio, Commissioner Joy, Commissioner Stolzenberg, Commissioner Roettger, Commissioner Yoder

Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Missy Creasy, Ben Koby, Matt Alfele

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Creasy to provide a process explanation for each item on the agenda. Following that review, Commissioner Schwarz asked how long the process was for an application to move through the Special Exception process. Ms. Creasy noted observations on this to date and Commissioner Schwarz noted this was good information as we look ahead to opportunities to evaluate the code in the future. There was a brief discussion about future code review. Mr. Alfele noted that City Council will be looking at development code items in the Spring and that we will need to schedule a time for the Planning Commission. Following the outcome of those meetings, determinations for joint meetings as well as code process can be evaluated.

Commissioner Stolzenberg asked for guidance on the depth of input on the Parks and Recreation Plan that should be given as a hearing is occurring with Council next week. Should we refrain from significant substantive comments? Ms. Creasy provided background on what will be part of the presentation. The plan had a specific scoping and there are items that it covers and those that it does not. The presentation may clarify concerns but if not, additional discussion in the meeting is appropriate.

II. COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING – Meeting called to order by Chairman Mitchell at 5:31 PM

Beginning: 5:30 PM

Location: City Hall Chambers

A. COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Commissioner Stolzenberg – We had an MPO Tech meeting. We talked about the smart scale scores that came out. We did not get anything. The one project in our region that was funded is called the 250 Rolkin Road/Peter Jefferson Parkway Bundle. It adds a few blocks of sidewalks along 250 and some pedestrian crossings. It also includes some median hardening so you will not be able to turn left across the median. It will change the traffic flow over by Martha Jefferson. Because of the recent snow and hurricanes, VDOT is moving over \$1 billion in the 6-year improvement plan from construction to operations because of the increased costs. It is possible that even fewer smart scale projects are funded. Some will be cut. The amount of money given to the entire district for this grant program was less than the budgeted cost for some of the applications submitted. We will have to work on improving that process in future cycles to submit better applications. The amount in smart scale has leveled off from a high level of funding in the first 2 years. Because of the way they phased in the gas taxes that led to the increased funding and because of the 6-year improvement plan, everything is added at the end. We are now at 6 years after that first happened. When that first happened, we were getting extra taxes for extra years on top of what we were planning for. The whole amount in smart scale will be lower moving forward. We did get an interesting presentation on a smart intersection project that VDOT is doing in conjunction with The Innovation

and Technology Transportation Fund. They will be installing cameras at 4 intersections around town in the county. They will be trying to measure pedestrian counts; vehicle counts and find near misses. A lot of our safety needs are based on crash data. Crashes are low frequency. If you can add near misses and see when those happen, you can get a more detailed understanding about potential safety issues before crashes happen. The ones that they have in mind are Rio/29, Old Ivy, Alderman/McCormick, and another one. I had a LUPEC meeting. It was also on transportation. There are several projects that are soon going to construction. People will be happy that the 240 and 250 roundabout is going to construction first. Later this year, Fontaine work will start. That will be an interchange reconfiguration. That was the displaced left turn project. The city's Fontaine Streetscape Project is now being managed by VDOT. It is part of that bundle. They will be closing the left turn from 29 to 64 west to funnel that traffic through the Fontaine intersection. The District Avenue Roundabout has been moved forward. That will be sometime in 2026.

Commissioner Schwarz – With the BAR, we approved the demolition of the Violet Crown Cinema (200 West Main). The BAR does not tell anybody what to do. We don't control private property. We are asked permission to do certain things. We say whether it meets our guidelines or not. This was one thing that there was no way in our guidelines that we could have denied this demolition. We did condition it. They will have to get an approved building permit for a new building before they can tear down the existing building. That is something that we have been conditioning a lot of demolitions on to prevent having a big open site. We looked at 218 West Market Street, which is the proposed hotel where the Artful Lodger is. The applicant made several changes to the massing of the project. We have asked them to work more on the materiality. It is still a large EIFS building. A 6-story building downtown does not meet our guidelines. We looked at 1000 Wertland Street, which is UVA's affordable housing project in the 10th and Page neighborhood. That is only 6 stories. Its footprint is very large. We have been working with them to try to find a way to make the Wertland Street elevation not as long and monotonous as it is. There is still some work that they are going to be doing on that. Fortunately, they can proceed with their tax credit application without getting BAR approval. They can continue to work on this while the project proceeds. It should not be slowing anything down.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – Some legislation that I worked on that was inspired by our Charlottesville Plans Together process has passed both chambers in Richmond and awaits the signature from the Governor. The bill is HB-2153-Comprehensive Plan Housing Development by Nonprofit Organizations. It broadly eases the way for other localities to follow us in streamlining their comprehensive plan, housing strategies, and zoning to allow the kinds of successful nonprofit housing efforts we have approved and funded here. It also offers administrative support from the state to get this done, which many small localities would benefit from. Virginia Beach, Alexandria, Falls Church, and the City of Charlottesville have reached out to Governor Youngkin to encourage his signature.

Commissioner d'Oronzio – The HAC has not met in 2025 due to bad weather in January and February. The CAHF Committee has met many times. I think it is going to City Council on the 17th. We managed to 'plow' through that short version of \$1.6 million. It was \$850,000 on the sticks and bricks side. \$575,000 was available on the HOP side. That was a tough road. The group did a very good job of getting through that. There were a lot of different perspectives. We came up with what we thought was a nuanced way of moving forward. CDBG is scheduled to meet many times in March. I do not yet have the summary. I have all the applications. That is this weekend's project. I will let you know. I do not know what the funding is going to look like. We might be proceeding on the extraordinary assumption that funding will be there. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District has met. We did a lot of work on rural transportation and development of the strategic plan surrounding that. The Regional Housing Partnership annual summit is at the end of this week. They ended up funding the whole thing from contributions.

Commissioner Roettger – I have mainly been doing The Tree Commission. I don't think that I have reported on that. It is an awesome and passionate group. They had a work session with City Council to deliver The State of The Tree Canopy. There was a good discussion. The second part was talking about storm water management fees and a couple ideas of how to recalculate that to be better for homeowners versus commercial parking lots

Commissioner Yoder – No Report.

B. UNIVERSITY REPORT

Commissioner Joy – We have 2nd year housing, which consists of 780 beds that will be in 2 buildings. They are at the western end of the Emmet/Ivy Corridor. That has officially started construction. That is looking for a delivery in 2026. We have Darden student housing, which is currently under construction. That is 348 beds. That is located north of The Forum Hotel. It is adjacent to the existing Darden Parking Garage. That will also be a 2026 delivery. The Fontaine Parking Garage construction is preceding and on schedule. It will open this fall. It will add over 1200 parking spaces for clinic use and University commuters. The North Grounds Parking Garage started construction. That is in the northwest corner of Massie and Copley Roads where Copley Housing One was. That construction is underway. That is going to bring 1000 spaces. That will be completed in 2026. The Hospital Towers are in preconstruction phases. That was completed in advance of the pandemic. There were 3 floors that were left ‘shelled.’ Those will be built out with construction starting next year. The Center for the Arts is returning to The Board of Visitors for approval in June. There are ongoing conversations between our consultant team, The Board, and Leadership to balance the programmatic needs for that building and to create a contextually sensitive architectural envelope at that site. There will be more on that as we get closer to that June meeting.

C. CHAIR’S REPORT

Chairman Mitchell – The Wertland Street proposal, managed by the UVA Foundation, did make it to the BZA. What they want to do is get a variance on the entrance spacing; to make that work. The other thing that I have been working on is Parks and Recreation. We are going to hear about that tonight. I will congratulate the Parks and Recreation team and the consultants. They put in a lot of work in the Advisory Board on getting us to the point where we are ready to present this to this body and to Council next week.

D. DEPARTMENT OF NDS

Missy Creasy, Deputy Director – We don’t have a work session scheduled for March. We are getting ready for work sessions. We have 2 hearings scheduled for April. CDBG is planning to come forward. As we are working with them, we are advertising that it provides for what the funding was last year. They are moving forward in that manner until they are given direction to do something different. We have a request for a special use permit for a bed & breakfast. This will be our first special use permit for an actual use in a long time.

E. MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE FORMAL AGENDA

No Public Comments

F. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes – December 10, 2024 – Regular Meeting
2. Minutes – November 26, 2024 – Work Session
3. Resolution – Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda – Commissioner Roettger – Second by Commissioner Stolzenberg – Motion passes 7-0.

Planning Commission was recessed until 6:00 PM.

Planning Commission was called back to order at 6:00 PM.

III. PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARINGS

Continuing: Until all public hearings are complete

Format: (i) Staff Report, (ii) Applicant, (iii) Hearing, (iv) Discussion and Motion

1. Notice of Intent to Amend the City Comprehensive Plan

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE: notice is hereby given by the Charlottesville Planning Commission that, on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m., the Charlottesville Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing for consideration of a proposed action to amend the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Charlottesville. Persons affected by the proposed action may appear virtually or in person at the meeting and present their views. On that same date, following the public hearing, it is the intention of the City that the Planning Commission will vote on the proposed action. (City Council's vote would take place at a later City Council meeting agenda, following receipt of the Commission's recommendation). The 2021 Comprehensive Plan, as amended, that is proposed to be amended is currently available for viewing on the City's website: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7073/Comprehensive-Plan-Document---2021-1115-Final?bidId=>

Proposed Action: the proposed action is as follows: Amendment to Chapter 9 (Community Facilities and Services), to add the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, provide strategic direction and vision to meet current and emerging public needs, as well as remain the primary steward of the significant natural, cultural, and historic resources. The Plan can be reviewed here: Master Plan | Charlottesville, VA

i. Staff Report

Riann Anthony, Director – I would like to thank the community. The community came out. They are really invested in the beautiful parks and recreation amenities that we offer in the city. I would like to thank our staff. Our staff did a wonderful job. We were in front of Council in October 2023. It has been a long process.

This is a comprehensive master plan. It is a guide and road map with community priorities in mind. We used our professional guidance to put a strategic plan together for the next 10 years.

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The journey started out with the community to our advisory board last month. We are now before the Planning Commission. Once we get through the Planning Commission, we will be going to the last stop in front of City Council.

Michael Svetz, Consultant – I wanted to provide an overview of the larger pieces of the Master Plan process. I want to use this opportunity to respond to some of the comments that were made at the Advisory Board last month.

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The first thing we want to talk about and be clear about is what this Master Plan process was. It is all encompassing. One of the things that we tried to work through was to understand the implementation on the front end and throughout the process. We did not wait to discuss implementation until the end. We wanted to make sure that this was a realistic, implementable, and financially sustainable plan. It is a 10-year planning horizon. It is based on city of Charlottesville resident need, unmet need, and importance as it relates to experiences and opportunities desired. The plan focuses on investment and reinvestment in the city owned and co-owned parks and facilities primarily within the city of Charlottesville's borders. This is a city of Charlottesville centric plan. We did look at other planning efforts. We are not making recommendations at a regional level, whether it be a Planning Commission District level or whether it be Albemarle County. This is focused on the city of Charlottesville.

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There is alignment with other current plans and policies from the Urban Forest Management Plan that is about 16 years old through some of the plans that were done right before COVID, the Bike & Pedestrian Green Way Plan by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, climate goals, the Comp Plan. This is going to be a key part of updating the Rivanna Corridor Plan, Three Notched Trail Master Plan, other multiple internal plans, and City Council Strategic Plan, Climate Action Plan, the Visitors Bureau Tourism Plan, Downtown Mall Tree Plan, and the latest Capital Improvement Plan.

Next Slide

We tried to focus this on wholistic and continuous engagement. Some master plan efforts focused on just engaging the community. We made a concerted effort to keep the community in the loop and gather their feedback along the way. We focused on in-person engagement. We complimented that with surveys and opportunities for people to provide continuous feedback using the project website.

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This gives you a quick summary of the in-person engagement. There were about 33 different engagement opportunities along the way. That started back in November 2023. It is continuing with tonight's public hearing and the City Council meeting next week. We had almost 2500 different participants. I don't want to say unique participants but different touch points with people along the way. This is the in-person side of the equation.

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In terms of where we held these community engagement opportunities, you can see that there were 13 different locations where we focused our engagement effort. Many of them focused on downtown, south of Charlottesville, and typically in communities that we do not hear from. The effort was made from a location perspective to really try to engage the whole community and try to get out to people.

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In terms of the kind of in-person community engagement, there is one thing missing from this screen. That is increased river access. The graphic has been updated in the Master Plan document. In addition to increased river access, economic development through park investment, reinvesting in the existing park system, continually reinvesting, shared-use path system expansion connectivity, continued increased awareness, advocacy and outreach and sustainable funding are the key themes that came out of all our engagement. It certainly isn't all the detail associated with it. What did we hear? These are some of the key components that we heard from the community as part of the in-person engagement.

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In terms of overall community priority rankings, there are a couple of things to point out. Looking at the things that are the high-priority, medium-priority, and low-priority, high-priority means that the city of Charlottesville residents wants the city to provide more of those things, whether it be space and place or programs and services yesterday. If you had budget cuts or if you had opportunities to expand your budget, it is going to be focused on the things that are in the red category. Medium-priority means that you have it right. You always want to continue to evaluate it and to ensure it does not become a high priority or drop into the low priority. Low priority does not mean that you don't do it. Low priority means that it is usually very special interest. It is usually age specific or it is skill specific. You will see a lot of sports, sport fields, sport-type of programs: programs that are tied to very specific age groups in the low priority. It does not mean that you do not do it. It is that you will not provide those services to the community. They are going to have a specific target market and/or a specific location in which you are going to have those. You see golf there on the low end of the program and service assessment. You have plenty of golfers. Your entire community is not going to golf or wants to golf. You are going to focus your golfing efforts at Meadow Creek.

With comparing the high priority between programs, facilities, and amenities, you see that there are more high priority items in the facility and amenity chart than you do on the program and service. What this reflects is that Park & Recreation systems are utilized for self-directed activities and programs and services. One out of every three people in your community typically will engage in a true program or a service, attend a special event, go to the City Market, participate in a performing art program, participate in roller skating at Carver. About 80 to 90 percent of the community over all uses Parks & Recreation facilities and locations. Through Other, that delta becomes that self-directed activity such as taking the dog for a walk/for exercise. You will see that there is not a one-to-one correlation between formal program and service offerings and the space and place requirements. That is the distinction as to why.

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We put together 3 slides that speak to level of service. The first slide is the old standby. How much do you have of any one thing based on your population? This is usually measured in terms of park acreage per 1000 people. The national median for the median service level for agencies of Charlottesville size is about 10.2 acres per 1000. Charlottesville has 49 acres per 1000 people. It is almost 5 times greater than what we typically see in park systems, in which you are servicing 50,000 people. You can also see that in terms of amenities and facilities. Charlottesville also provides a greater level of service than the national average.

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This slide gets into having equitable access to your parks through what we are referring to as a 10-minute walk. 84 percent of Charlottesville residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. You compare this to an urban community and that national median is 55 percent. The walkability of the community to get to parks is significantly higher than what we see for other communities across the country. We are not 'resting on our laurels.' We want to improve upon that, which is why we did the connectivity analysis associated with this plan.

Next Slide

One other level of service that we wanted to measure was the river. So often in the survey, it came up often on the website and in-person. We wanted to get back and reference the study that had been previously done. This plan does not go into depth to identifying opportunities for improvement. They think that is a much larger effort that would need to be done jointly with the county, especially since access points exist in the county. There are other potential access points that would take place at Darden Towe Park. There are only 4 different boat launches along the entire Rivanna River starting at Ivy Creek Natural Area and running down towards Woolen Mills. Unfortunately, there are many informal access points that people have made on their own. This creates significant safety issues that need to be addressed. We are recognizing that increased river access is important. What we are trying to do as part of this plan is to elevate the need to dive into studying that much further at what we would refer to as a site-specific process. That is the recommendation as part of this plan.

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In terms of connectivity goals, we are talking about shared-use paths. What is a shared-use path? How does that differentiate between that and the Rivanna Trail? Shared-use paths are accessible paved or stone dust trails. They are intended to be utilized by different people, people that walk, jog, ride bikes, skate, and use scooters. The idea is to ensure that they are multi-use in nature and they serve both opportunities for recreation and connectivity. They truly are accessible to multiple modes of transportation. They are not intended to be utilized by any motorized vehicles. That does not include e-bikes. I mean trucks, cars, and anything powered by a motor. The opportunities that we tried to dive into on this connectivity was to understand working with Chris Gensic where those shared-use path segments needed to be updated, where the opportunity was to expand the system and to prioritize this.

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You can see here that there are proposed shared-use paths. I want to say around 20 different segments that would add 12 miles of additional shared-use paths in the system. How does that measure against today? Today, there is around 8 to 9 miles. It would be more than doubling the shared-use path system that exists in the city today. There is an entire chapter on this. I am happy to address any questions on this that you might have. We knew going into this project that this was going to come out of the community's need process. We wanted to get out in front of it and ensure that this was a part of the overall Master Plan scope.

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In terms of cost estimating for capital improvements, we have identified this in 3 specific buckets. One is sustainable, which is life cycle replacement. The second one is expanded services, which is about reinvesting in existing parks that go beyond just replacing a playground. The visionary bucket is such things as adding to the shared-use path system. The recommendations that we are making, as it relates to the cost estimating for capital improvements, is for Fiscal Year 26-27 through Fiscal Year 34-35. We are not double counting. We are not including projects in this cost estimating plan that are in the current capital improvement budget. That is a part of the city's next budget process, which will be adopted in the next month. All the current projects that are currently slated to be funded and incorporated the next 16 to 18 months are not included in this plan. This plan is intended to guide the future development of the capital improvement plan that Parks & Recreation put together.

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We did ask a specific question on the survey about the community's preferred level of additional tax rate, financial support for the improvement of Parks & Recreation services. In looking at the lighter blue and the gray shaded sections of the pie, that is indicating to you that 67 percent of the community are willing to add a minimum of 1 cent to the additional tax rate for the improvement of Parks and Recreation services. The key here is to recognize that only 14 percent of the community supported no additional tax rate for Parks & Recreation. There is strong support and advocacy for Parks & Recreation in terms of people putting their money where their mouth is.

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In terms of the cost estimating approach, the sustainable bucket is about \$16 million, expanded services is \$17 million, and visionary projects is \$44 million for a total of \$78 million over the course of 10 years. The new paved trails and investment in the framework plan at Washington Park, Tonsler Park, Court Square Park, and Market Street Park make up about 40 percent of the total cost estimating plan. Just developing all the new shared-use paths over the next 10 years and the reinvestment in the framework plans make up 40 percent of that total. One thing to recognize is that the total is \$78 million. It is not intended that \$78 million would be fully funded by the city of Charlottesville taxpayers. There are many funding sources as identified in the Master Plan including several granting opportunities for shared-use paths. Even though we are saying that this is \$78 million, it is not the city adopting a \$78 million cost estimating plan. It is reflecting the total cost including escalation factors over the next 10 years for the improvements identified in the plan.

Next Slide

With the overall goals, there is a lot more detail in the Master Plan. The goals are:

- Safe, accessible, public spaces.
- Meaningful recreation programs and events.
- Prioritizing health and equity across the city.
- Ensuring that the department has a diverse and dynamic workforce to carry out the residents' wishes and needs.
- Continuing to build innovative and lasting partnerships. Charlottesville Parks & Recreation can be a conduit for so many recreational opportunities. It does not have to do it all itself.

- Environmentally sustainable park ecosystem.
- Clearly and transparently communicating with the community and making sure that we have a financially sustainable and resilient operation.

Next Slide

All these things are in the Master Plan. The key is to recognize the 10-year planning horizon tied to Charlottesville City residents and investment and reinvestment in city-owned and/or co-owned places. We feel this is realistic. We feel that it is implementable. We do recognize the need for it to be financially sustainable.

Commissioner Roettger – I love all the connectivity. I feel that is important. As a resident, my kids are teenagers. They have been using the programs. One of them works for Parks & Recreation. It is a great place for youth to get programming, jobs, and be part of the city.

Commissioner Yoder – I sent in a question via email today about the 3 buckets of funding. It was sustaining what we have, expanding and visionary and how this fits in with the Capital Improvement budget. The answer was that the visionary and expanded projects are not included in any Capital Improvement plans. I look forward to considering those projects when they come to us in future years. That was an interesting survey result on people's willingness to have a tax increase for parks. When I know what the money is doing, I am happy for tax money to go to parks and transportation. I wonder if it is something the city should consider with more transportation.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – With public outreach, did you collect demographic information? Did you find interesting differences between groups.

Mr. Svetz – Through this statistically valid survey, we have provided cross-tabulation information based on different household types. Households that have kids that are 0 to 9 have different needs than an adult between the ages of 18 and 25. We did do cross-tabulation based on different household types. We also did cross-tabulation based on geography. There were some significant obvious differences between young families with kids 0 to 9 and what they want versus university students or empty nest middle agers or the senior population. The lists are much longer for the household types. We also found some significant differences in terms of geography. There were a lot of consistencies whether it be programs and services, or facility amenities requested across the city. There were some additional amenities and/or facilities and programs and services requested from the 10th & Page area and Rose Hill. That information has been incorporated into the overall program and service. It was contemplated. A part of our decision-making as we went through and made specific recommendations on a park-by-park basis; understanding where that park is, who that park is serving, understanding what that park could do in terms of providing a different kind of experience. We were also mindful of not making sure that we did the whole 'square peg in a round hole' thing. A park, based on its location and geography, access points, size, topography can only handle so much of improvement. We utilized that information in that way. In terms of the in-person engagement, we did not collect demographic data. It is not something that we typically do as part of the in-person engagement. The effort was made to recognize that we wanted to reach different people, which is why we 'took the show on the road.' We did this in concert with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that we reached out to different communities, micro-communities as part of the process.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – I see the word 'equity' a lot. I am pleased to see that. Did you work with the Office of Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion to make sure we got this right?

Mr. Svetz – Absolutely. That was at the table as part of the steering committee and helped to inform the criteria that went into prioritizing the connectivity analysis. There is a large social equity criteria associated with the connectivity analysis. That was factored into that decision-making.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – I note that when breaking down some of the demographics that we are defining millennials as born up to 1999 in this. I noted that the sports and fitness industry associations participation report use that methodology. Is that some peculiarity of this part of the statistical world? Did something happen that I did not notice? Was this deliberate or incidental?

Mr. Svetz – We have tapped into how others have defined that without questioning it. We have tried to utilize consistency across the board in terms of defining different generations. Of most importance for us, as part of this plan, we feel the national trend information is great. It is awesome for people to know what people like to do at different demographics. It is more critically important for us to hone in on what we refer to as life mode or household type, which came out of that statistically valid survey. It helps to dial in the differences of experiences desired for Parks & Recreation based on how people must live their lives. We did utilize and did incorporate the sport fitness industry association generational information. I would use that as more information as opposed to using it to inform recommendations or the interpretation of recommendations in the plan.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – I did read through their sports, fitness, and leisure report. That is a lot of data. That is what they used. We will ‘go along for the ride.’

The Master Plan calls for an administrative reorganization of the department and splitting it into 6 divisions. How deep of a dive did you and the department take into that? Is that a generalized recommendation that we need to dig into when it comes to implementation?

Mr. Svetz – It was a deep dive with the department. There is information of where we started in there from an organizational functionality perspective and where we ended up. That was a ‘big lift.’ Mr. Anthony mentioned the staff’s input and staff’s contributions. There was a lot of conversation to make sure we got that right. It is important not just to understand where your inefficiencies and ineffectiveness are now. If you don’t get that right going forward, it will be that much harder for you to implement a master plan. That was done in lock step with the department.

Mr. Anthony – We must look through the lens of not individuals. We look through the functions. Once we remove individuals, it can get very sticky. We look through the function of what the community expects from us. We had to pivot. We must look at the need. In the recommendations, the community wants more events. We don’t have an event coordinator. We are looking into that even further. We must look deeper. We must pivot and look at our functions. We did a deep dive.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – When you start putting together an implementation strategy, the ‘nuts and bolts’ of what you are going to do and in what order will come forward.

Mr. Anthony – That is correct.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – Would that have implications for an expanded staff. There are some direct statements about expanding the staff capacity. Do you have a sense of the number?

Mr. Anthony – When we worked on this plan, even in this fiscal year, we made a recommendation of close to 3 or 4 positions within the cycle. We had a major need in terms of cleaning our parks. That was one of the complaints. We only have 3 people that clean all our parks within Charlottesville. We requested an FTE for that. If you look at the Master Plan calling for reinvestment, what does that mean? It means that our facilities are crumbling. We don’t have a dedicated project manager within Parks & Recreation. We called that out. Hopefully through the budget process, we will get that. We have Chris Gensic, who started out with little milage of trails. We now have a robust trail system. It is still a department of one. How are we maintaining our

trails? We are focusing on infrastructure. How do we maintain our infrastructure? Those are our focuses. The other position was an inclusion coordinator. We must be inclusive. Unfortunately, we are not yet there. We are trying to get those resources so we can be efficient and effective for the community.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – With this administrative reorganization that is going to take place over time, there is going to be a review of staffing and how that is structured. It is not a table of organization. We have these 6 divisions that we need to split things into.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – (Moved to Slide on Level of Service) This chart is different from the same chart in the plan.

Mr. Svetz – It is different because we need to update this slide. There were a couple of things that have some moving parts, even over the last week or so in terms of acreage. There were some things that had to be moved around. I think what we ended up doing is reducing some of the acreage. What I am looking at in the plan as it has been updated is 45.1 acres per 1000 whereas the presentation is showing closer to 50 acres per 1000.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – It seems like the top line population is different. In the plan, it is inconsistently applied to the numbers. There were probably a couple other charts that similarly have errors like this. I think there is one that says the Ridge Street neighborhood has one tenth of the population density at least in 2034 than Greenbrier and Barracks/Rugby. You could do a sweep through that and catch those technical errors.

I was excited to see all the shared-use paths proposed in the plan. I was a little surprised. I attended the open house at Carver Recreation Center last fall. I don’t remember hearing about them. Looking at the map, it seems that none of them touch the proposed Three Notched Trail. The county got \$2 million grant from the federal government to start planning up to the city limits. In other parts of the state, similar very long trails have become the recreational focal point of the trail system and of the park system. Did you put any thought into making a connection to the Three Notched Trail or even through the city so that one day it can continue onto Richmond.

Chris Gensic, Trails Manager – This is a park plan. We work a lot with transportation. Most of it coming into the city would be Woolen Mills up the Coal Tower to the Downtown Mall. It is on the street. Unless the railroad went out of business, it would make the trail easier. You must get out to Ivy Road, and you are basically using West Main, University, and Ivy with improvements on that side. Yes, is the answer. Most of that is going to be on the Public Works and Traffic Engineering side. We want to make sure, as much is as comfortable as possible. The Capital Trail is great. Getting away from traffic is great. That may not always be possible here to get it all together. I am glad that they are going west. I just need to build it back to the flood zone.

Mr. Svetz – The key to the shared-use path system is that it is off-road. With all these segments that have been identified, we can pull off the road. They are not sidewalks or sharing sidewalks. They are not sharing bike lanes or roads. These are true off-road shared-use path connections.

Commissioner Schwarz – I noticed in the Master Plan document that you have this SWOT analysis. You have a list of threats. All the threats tend to deal with duplicate services from private and nonprofit organizations. You mentioned partnerships in your last slide. Are these threats opportunities? What is the thought process for dealing with the duplicate services that are out there. You listed private aquatic organizations, basketball organizations, and the City Market.

Mr. Svetz – It is an excellent question. I think that it is truly recognizing the role that the city plays in terms of providing direct services. What can we do with the taxpayer money that was allocated that we are going to inhouse ourselves? It is going to be our direct conduit to the community. One of the other things that we need to

do is recognize that we have wonderful spaces and places that we can facilitate the utilization of programs and services. That is where the understanding of where the role and responsibility of who does what is important. The prioritization of programs, services, spaces, and places helps us define what the city in part should be tapped into and what they should be doing versus how you facilitate those partnerships. There are significant opportunities for partnerships. There is no possible way that the city of Charlottesville will have enough staff capacity and/or resources to do it all themselves. When you talk about the implementation side of the equation, this is where we start to say: What are we going to do as a city versus what are we going to facilitate on behalf of somebody else a. who might have more resources, b. may have a greater level of subject matter expertise to implement, and/or c. both? That is where I think the department has a significant opportunity to continue to be a conduit and a community builder.

Mr. Anthony – When we went through this exercise, we had to recognize that. Ten years ago, there were a few different institutions around. We now have everything from soccer to volleyball. We need to ask ourselves the question as a city department. What is our role to play within the community? We are recreators, introductions to people to go to these different clubs. At the same time, we also must recognize that we have one asset. That is space. How do we utilize and monopolize our partnerships? We are weak with partnerships in the department. That is one area that is a great opportunity that we will be exploring in our next phase, the implementation phase. How are we going to achieve those goals in terms of reaching out. We don't have to do it all. We can utilize partnerships, allowing them to use our facilities, our spaces, and still provide recreation to that same community.

Mr. Svetz – One of the things that I want to bring attention to is that in the full Master Plan document in the appendices is the full statistically valid survey. One of the first questions that we asked, as part of that survey, is who does the city of Charlottesville use for recreation sports and activities. The number one is Albemarle County. 63 percent of the city of Charlottesville residents, at some point over the course of a year, tap into what Albemarle County offers. Another 58 percent of the community taps into Virginia state parks. Charlottesville Parks & Recreation is 37 percent. As much as we would love to think that the Parks & Recreation Department is #1 sole provider of what people tap into, it is 3rd on the list. It starts to give you an understanding of where you sit in terms of the market, in terms of being a service provider, but also those other potential partners are Albemarle County and Virginia state parks that we could tap into. Charlottesville does not have great significant opportunities within its borders, within its existing park system to add outdoor recreation spaces. That is high on the list of priorities that your community wants. How do you facilitate that? You facilitate that through partnerships with the county and/or Virginia state parks as a starting point. That is where the partnerships come into play. How can we tap into things that people are already using and can provide a better-quality experience?

Commissioner Roettger – I am glad that you brought up partnerships. I wanted to encourage more of that. When I was on the public housing board, there were various reasons or things happening. There is much to work out. That could be a person's job. With these redevelopments, there are partnerships there to bring in some activities. It seems like we have these large institutions working in the same populations. That is maybe where we sometimes miss some of the residents because we cannot get the partnership to work well. It is all there. We have so much support. That is maybe part of the problem. We have a lot of active people running all these organizations. It needs to work together. We have all these resources that fall within Parks & Recreation.

Commissioner Solla-Yates – Something that comes up when I speak with city staff is space. To do the work, you need space to do the work. How are you thinking about this issue?

Mr. Anthony – Space is always a good opportunity for Parks & Recreation. It is finding unique opportunities to utilize space. I always go back to partnerships. In some housing authorities, they have open spaces. It is underutilized. We must look through those opportunities. Looking at opportunities is looking at our schools. We use schools for basketball programs. We could expand that. The staff that is on board are creative thinkers. I am

happy that we have this process in front of us. This is our roadmap. This will help us get us to our goals that we will be setting after the Master Plan is adopted. We will do some goal setting and prioritization. We are taking pieces out of the Master Plan, year-to-year pieces, 5-year plan, and 10-year plan on how to achieve those things.

Ned Michie, Parks Advisory Board – We have been waiting for this Master Plan for a very long time. We talked about how staff wanted it. In some ways, things have been on hold for it. We have been waiting for it for a long time. There were a couple of years where they were asking for the money but did not get the money to hire a consultant. They got the money. It took a year to get the bid out and to get the consultant. It has taken a year for the consultant to put it together. They did a great job of soliciting input on the ground and with individuals and reaching out to various organizations that are directly involved in getting those individuals in to talk in small settings and having bigger public events. We were lucky to have Mr. Svetz and his team. We are excited that it is finally here with a lot of good information. I hope you will adopt it and let it move on so we can jump on board and start making it happen.

ii. Public Hearing

Jackie Timpkin – I have a lot of concerns about this report. The data does not support any of the recommendations. There are places like Tonsler Park. They are making recommendations where they are saying instead of giving more space to pickleball and tennis, which are both medium priority things, they are adding additional sports to the courts that are there. They are squeezing in an additional court that is supposed to happen. You have more people competing for the same space when it is a huge park. You have things like a cricket pitch, which is the lowest priority. You have a chart that says 0 percent of households have the preference for having cricket available to them. I don't understand some of these recommendations when there is an incredible amount of demand for other sports. Another issue is the demographics. It does not address gender inequalities to current sports offerings. Right now, there is a huge problem with partnerships supporting only baseball. There are few if any girls' programs. I represent a program through the USTA (Girls Rule The Court). It is supposed to be a girl program. We have consistently had issues trying to reserve courts because there is not enough. The Covenant School books all the courts at Pen Park. We have 4 courts at Tonsler. We are trying to get rid of those to add futsal. It does not seem to be mentioned in a lot of the data. You are trying to squeeze in pickleball. We are talking about creating partnerships. We are not creating them. We have approached Parks & Recreation several times trying to get these things going, providing free for low-income girls to get involved with sports. A lot of these things are not addressing any of those issues. I would look at the data and see if it supports what is happening. I don't think it does. A lot of the suggested park plans are not implementable. It does not make sense. It is not a good use of city resources. A lot of their recommendations need to support issues that are currently happening with the inequity of gender and supporting girls and women of different ages.

Peter Krebs (Tufton Avenue) – A lot of the things that I asked for did get incorporated in the plan. I would like to thank the consultant and staff for doing those things. The matters related to cycling are much better. I like the references to the Rivanna Trail. The pathway, which is working with the county, is the right way to go with that. The Greenways and Trails Section is much more complete and better. It does not focus on what the county is doing. I must focus on what the county is doing. I will say that their Comp Plan, which they are working on, is greenway oriented. The plan does not show those county connections. Many of them are looking good. I would like to provide more 'color' to what the consultant talked about. In some of his other venues, he has spoken about the high demand for places to walk and bike safely. That is reflected in the plan. He did talk about age and to the point of gender that everybody walks. Walking is a sport that everybody engages in. He said in earlier venues that the quality of the facility drives who is willing to do that. For the public who is wondering why we are investing in greenways so much, you put together huge demand for places to walk. With the Rivanna Trail, as great as it is, we are going to preserve the Rivanna Trail as it is. It is not a welcoming place for everybody, having greenways that are connected. The plan is focused on the south side where people

are under parked and under-connected. That is a good thing. That is important for the public to know. For you guys, I know that you guys think about the CIP. As you make a recommendation to Council, with respect to this and in future years, I would think you get the City Council to frontload the funding of this plan. It is ambitious. We know that waiting does not make things cheaper.

iii. Discussion and Motion

Commissioner Solla-Yates – I would like staff to address the gender issue that was raised by the public.

Chairman Mitchell – I did look at some of the demographics. I realize why things like the cricket pitch is here. I realize why there is more emphasis on soccer fields and things like that. You might have noticed that the population of Charlottesville has shifted since the war in Afghanistan ended. Things like more access to soccer fields and more access to cricket pitches are becoming increasingly important because of our shifting demographics.

Mr. Anthony – Thank you for addressing this. It is an important topic to me personally and to the department. The reason why we are doing this is to find our gaps and our opportunities. We are looking to pivot and to move the department into the proper direction. Because of the trends of society, our department needs to change too. This is a very important part. We are looking through those lenses. Once we get the Master Plan adopted, we can focus on our goals and objectives. In these past few months, we have partnered with HER sports and giving opportunities to our basketball program for the first time ever. We must do one step at a time. That is our focus as a department. This plan is not to say that we are the greatest. This plan is to find our gaps and how we can improve those gaps or meet those gaps. That is important to me personally and to our department. It is important to bridge that gap. With Tonsler, that is a framework plan. It is not conceptual design. It is not a master plan. When it is adopted, that means by the pleasure of the City Management and City Council. They will assign us to please move forward on a certain park. We will do a site-specific master plan on those parks. We will again solicit the community because it is a framework. It is just ideas. As the Chair has mentioned, the community is changing. There are almost 9000 Afghans living in the city. What activities are you providing for us? If I look at our master plan and go through the program section, it is your typical programs. It is not diverse, but we are getting there. This identifies what we are offering. It is like an inventory. We can now see how we are missing these gaps.

Chairman Mitchell – The shifting population with the increasing Afghan population is mostly concentrated in our city. It is not spread throughout the county.

Motion – Commissioner d’Oronzio – WHEREAS on March 11, 2025, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the November 15, 2021 Comprehensive Plan, as amended, after public notice as set forth within Virginia Code Sec. 15.2-2204, to include the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as an amendment, and BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends City Council approve the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (dated January 27, 2025) as an amendment to the City’s November 15, 2021 Comprehensive Plan, as amended. A copy of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as recommended by the Commission is attached to this Resolution and is hereby certified to the City Council for its consideration with the following amendments and recommendations in accordance with City Code Section 34-5.2.3. Second by Commissioner Stolzenberg.

- Amend the Master Plan with a section referencing The Three Notched Trail and planning for future connections.

Motion passes 7-0.

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Continuing: until all public hearings and action items are completed.

1. Special Exception – Build-To Requirements - 1418 Emmet Street (Bodo's)

i. Staff Report

Dannan O'Connell, City Planner – I am presenting a special exception request for Bodo's Bagels at 1418 Emmet Street requesting a special exception permit for build-to width. The existing commercial property is shown here on the screen. It is currently zoned NX-5 Node Mixed Use. The Comp Plan designation is Urban Mixed-Use Node. For the NX-5 District, there is a setback range of between 0 and 10 feet and a build-to width requirement of 85 percent along the primary street, which would be Emmet Street and 65 percent along side streets. The existing commercial property does not meet any of those build-to ranges. Per our current development code on non-conformity, any new additions to the property would have to meet the build-to. The owner wishes to add on. There is an existing trash compactor enclosure to the side of the existing property. The owner would like to tear that down and replace it with a storage shed. Because of the build-to requirement, that would not be allowed by-right. We are asking for a special exception for this. Staff recommends approval of the special exception. We did not include any recommended conditions. This is being done in combination with a development plan. We would verify the location of the storage shed through that plan.

ii. Discussion and Motion

Motion – Commissioner Stolzenberg – I move to recommend approval of this application for a Special Exception Permit in the NX-5 Node Mixed Use district at 1418 Emmet Street to permit the installation of an accessory shed. Second by Commissioner d'Oronzio. Motion passes 7-0.

2. Special Exception – Build-To Requirements – 1114 E High Street

i. Staff Report

Ben Koby, City Planner – This is another special exception application that we have received at 1114 East High Street for its built-to requirements. Under the current build-to requirements in the CX-5 zoning district, they are required to build up between 0 feet and 10 feet from their front property line on an interior lot. Given the size of the workshop being proposed, it is not feasible. There is a proposed workshop off the rear behind the existing office space that does front onto East High Street. In the area, there are old residences that have been converted into a commercial use in the CX-5 zoning district. There is an existing streetscape there where practically no buildings in that block do comply with the current build-to requirement. Considering the Mixed-Use Corridor designation from the Comprehensive Plan and that there is a consideration of respecting existing streetscapes, considering the use of the workshop being a light industrial use, which is permitted by-right in that zoning district, staff note it would be appropriate to approve the special exception request for the workshop.

ii. Applicant Presentation

Mike Ball, Applicant – This feels like a glitch in the new zoning. It is a row of houses. I have always liked this row of houses here. It is one of these areas that gets weird in the new zoning. Any new building there is being told to be built within 10 feet of the street front where it is all houses up there. It is an odd transition. This is the 10-to-15-year workshop. We are not building for that 100-year view right now. Finding a workshop in Charlottesville is nearly impossible. We are on our 8th workshop in 15 years. That is something that we need more of.

iii. Discussion and Motion

Commissioner Yoder – The proposed language that we have here recommends approving with the condition that the size, location, and use be considered with the material submitted. If I understand correctly, the use is allowed by-right in the zoning code. Do we need to stipulate that the use needs to be consistent with what is presented?

Mr. Koby – In discussions, we thought it would be prudent to have that stipulation in there that it would be used as a workshop. If the use was to change to something that potentially we would be more interested in having closer to the street, if it was residences or a lighter commercial use that we would want on that street for 100-year vision that the Comprehensive Plan lays out, that is the reason why we thought it might be appropriate to add some of those stipulations.

Commissioner Yoder – If they build it and then decide to do something different with the use later, if it complies with the zoning code, it does not connect with the exception to the build-to requirements. It is a nitpicky thing.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – If they were to convert this shed into an ADU or something, that would not be allowed with this condition. If they did not want it as a workshop forever, it would have to be empty or torn down. What you are thinking is if we give a special exception for the build-to zone, then they could tear down the house, tear down the workshop, and then do whatever they wanted outside of the build-to zone in the future?

Mr. Koby – If anything, it would be torn down. They would have to come back for a new development plan, which would have to be compliant with the zoning request. They could apply for another special exception if they wanted to build outside of the build-to zone. If they were to tear it down and rebuild, the special exception would not apply in that case.

Commissioner d’Oronzio – I agree with Commissioner Yoder on this. If we permit the build where it is. It is highly restrictive for us to say that it must be used as a workshop. There are certain questions. Define what a workshop is. Is it still a workshop if it is a complete metal working and carpentry shop for 90 percent of plus a bathroom? That is a workshop. If it is storage of antiques and there is a circular saw at the front of the building, is it still a workshop? We might be boxing in a little more than we want to. What if there are economic changes for the owner and the owner wants to do something else 10 years from now in that building. We are going to grant the special exception. That has to do with the streetscape and the geography and the uses.

Commissioner Stolzenberg – The other interesting thing is that the development code, for non-conforming build-to does allow rear additions. If they were to add a breezeway connecting this to their building, this would be allowed. It probably does make sense to not restrict the use of this shed in the future. Once it is there, it is there. If they are going to open a shop out of the back of it, it would be nice to have it near the front of the property. I don’t want to see a future where the shed is forced to be empty.

Commissioner Schwarz – As we are thinking about possible edits to the zoning code, if this ends up being something that we edit, a reason that this is a good exception is that there is no parking in the front yard. There probably will not ever be parking in the front yard. As a landscaped front yard, I think it makes it more acceptable to receive an exception.

Motion – Commissioner Yoder – I move to recommend approval of this application for a Special Exception Permit in the CX-5 Corridor Mixed Use 5 zone at 1114 E High Street to permit the construction of a studio workshop space outside of the build-to requirement.

a. The size and location will be consistent with the materials submitted in application PL-25-0038 and PL-25-0041 dated February 14th, 2025, and February 27th, 2025, respectively. Second by Commissioner Schwarz. Motion passes 7-0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM.