

1 **RICHLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**
2 **March 6, 2023**
3

4 *[Members Present: Christopher Yonke, Gary Dennis, John Metts, Terrence Taylor,
5 Frederick Johnson, II, Charles Durant, Chris Siercks, Beverly Frierson]*

6 Called to order: _____
7
8

9 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Please turn off or silence any cellphones. Audience
10 members may come and go as needed. Applicants are allowed up to two minutes to
11 make statements. Citizens signed up to speak are allowed up to two minutes each.
12 Redundant comments should be minimized. Please only address remarks to the
13 Commission and do not expect the Commission to respond to questions from the
14 speakers in a back and forth style; this is not the purpose of this meeting. Please no
15 audience/speaker exchanges. No audience demonstrations or other disruptions to the
16 meeting are permitted nor are comments from any other than the speaker at the
17 podium. Please remember the meeting is being recorded, as we just heard. Please
18 speak into the microphone and give your name and address. Abusive language is
19 inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Please don't voice displeasure or frustration at a
20 recommendation while the Planning Commission is still conducting business. If you
21 have any questions or concerns you may contact the Richland County Planning
22 Department Staff. Okay, let's go Item number 3., which is additions and deletions to the
23 Agenda. Commissioners, do we have any additions or deletions, Staff?

24 MR. PRICE: There's one by Staff. Under Item 4., Approval of Minutes if you
25 would remove item 4.b., which will be the February 6th minutes, those were not
26 prepared in time for distribution, but it is, from my conversation with our transcriptionist
27 is expected to have that, those Minutes for the February 6th, 2023 and also the ones

1 from the November 7th, 2022 available for you at the April meeting. And we will then be
2 caught up.

3 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. That moves us on to number 4.,
4 Approval of the Minutes. The Staff provided the Commission with copies of the
5 transcript of the Commission's December 5th, 2022 meeting. Do any Commissioners
6 have any comments or concerns regarding these transcripts? If not, the Chair makes a
7 motion to approve the Minutes from December 5th, 2022. Do I have a second?

8 ?: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Price, can you conduct a vote?

10 MR. PRICE: Those in favor of the approval of the December 5th, 2022 Minutes,
11 Yonke?

12 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Aye.

13 MR. PRICE: Frierson?

14 MS. FRIERSON: Aye.

15 MR. PRICE: Johnson?

16 MR. JOHNSON: Aye.

17 MR. PRICE: Dennis?

18 MR. DENNIS: Aye.

19 MR. PRICE: Metts?

20 MR. METTS: Aye.

21 MR. PRICE: Durant?

22 MR. DURANT: Aye.

23 MR. PRICE: Taylor?

1 MR. TAYLOR: Aye.

2 MR. PRICE: Siercks?

3 MR. SIERCKS: Aye.

4 [Approved: Yonke, Frierson, Johnson, Dennis, Metts, Durant, Taylor, Siercks]

5 MR. PRICE: Motion passes.

6 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. Moving on to Item number 5., on our
7 Agenda, the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda is an action item that allows the
8 Commission to approve Road Names and Map Amendment requests where, one the
9 Staff recommends approval, two no one from the public has signed up to speak against
10 the amendment, and three no Member of the Commission is in need of further
11 discussion on the request. Ms. Frierson, which cases do we have people signed up for
12 or against?

13 MS. FRIERSON: We don't have anyone who is signed up against any of the Map
14 Amendments at this time.

15 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you. Well Commissioners, would anyone like to
16 engage in discussion on any of the other Map Amendments still on the Consent
17 Agenda? Per our packet that would be items 5.a. and b. 1., 2., 4., and 5. Any discussion
18 on those? If not I'd like to make a motion as the Chair to pass the Consent Agenda with
19 Agenda number 5.a. and b., Items 1., 2., 4. and 5., all going forward with the Road
20 Names as approved?

21 MS. FRIERSON: Second the amendment, I meant the motion.

22 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Price, will you take a vote?

1 MR. PRICE: Alright, so the motion was for the approval under the Consent
2 Agenda of the Road Names items 5.1., 5.b.2., 5.b.4. and 5.b.5. Alright, those in favor of
3 the motion, Taylor?

4 MR. TAYLOR: Aye.

5 MR. PRICE: Durant?

6 MR. DURANT: Aye.

7 MR. PRICE: Siercks?

8 MR. SIERCKS: Aye.

9 MR. PRICE: Metts?

10 MR. METTS: Aye.

11 MR. PRICE: Dennis?

12 MR. DENNIS: Aye.

13 MR. PRICE: Johnson?

14 MR. JOHNSON: Aye.

15 MR. PRICE: Frierson?

16 MS. FRIERSON: Aye?

17 MR. PRICE: Yonke?

18 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Aye.

19 *[Approved: Yonke, Frierson, Johnson, Dennis, Metts, Durant, Taylor, Siercks]*

20 MR. PRICE: Alright that motion passes.

21 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. This would move us to our action
22 item today which will be 5.b.3., Case Number 23-004MA. Take it over Mr. Price, please
23 for more information.

1 **CASE NO. 23-004MA:**

2 MR. PRICE: Alright, next item is Case 23-004MA. The Applicant is Carlos Hart,
3 the location is 711 Frost Avenue. The Applicant is requesting to rezone a little less than
4 1/3 of an acre from RS-MD to general commercial. Normally in order to enact a
5 rezoning request or to initiate a rezoning request you must have at least two acres of
6 land but there's certain conditions that will allow, excuse me, will allow for the rezoning
7 request. And in this particular case the subject parcel's adjacency to general
8 commercial zoning allows for that request. Staff recommends disapproval of this
9 amendment as the request would be, would not be consistent with the
10 recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Per the plan non residential
11 development within a neighborhood medium density designation may be considered for
12 location along main corridors and within a contextually appropriate distance from the
13 intersection of a primary arterial. This request is not located along a main road corridor
14 or within an appropriate distance from intersection of a primary arterial. Additionally, the
15 Plan states that commercial uses should not be located within, should be located within
16 neighborhood activity centers. The request does not fall within the neighborhood activity
17 center.

18 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. Commissioners, do we have any
19 questions for Staff?

20 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

21 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Taylor?

22 MR. PRICE: Yeah -

23 MR. TAYLOR: I thought you were about to say something?

1 MR. PRICE: Yeah, I'm sorry, I wanted to point out something. So, I'm sure one of
2 the things you may have noticed on your package, and this was again another
3 discussion that Staff has had, looking at this request and you'll see it on page 22 of your
4 packet, that the surrounding properties around it are zoned general commercial. So we
5 did a lot of research, we pulled multiple old ordinances, old maps to see, and all our
6 records indicate that those parcels were zoned general commercial and it goes back to
7 sometime before the '84, before 1984, because that was the last one we found before
8 the change occurred. So I can't give you the actual reasons why those were zoned
9 general commercial or what the intent was but those parcels even though they have a
10 general commercial zoning designation, they still are not in compliance with the
11 recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. And we did not take those, the current
12 rezonings as we did not use those to determine, you know, what our recommendations
13 would change. It was based solely on the Comprehensive Plan.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman?

15 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Is the Applicant present?

17 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Ms. Frierson?

18 MS. FRIERSON: The Applicant didn't sign the sheet but I see a gentleman raised
19 his hand.

20 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Would you like a few minutes to speak? Yes? Alright, come
21 on down to the podium. You'll have two minutes, please state your name and address.

22 MR. PRICE: Excuse me, Mr. Yonke.

23 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Price?

1 MR. PRICE: I apologize. I think Mr. Taylor may have had a question. I'm not sure
2 if I addressed it, but I think he had a question before I spoke.

3 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, question was under [inaudible] I want to be sure the
4 application was accepted, it was less than two acres but it was, because it was an
5 extension of the existing general commercial that's the reason it was accepted, is that
6 correct?

7 MR. PRICE: That is correct.

8 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Come on down, sir. Thank you.

10 **TESTIMONY OF CARLOS HART:**

11 MR. HART: Hi, good afternoon everyone. Sorry, I was late I was helping
12 someone jump a car in the parking lot. So my name is Carlos Hart. I am part owner to
13 7011 Frost Avenue. And is there any specific things you would like me to address?

14 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Go ahead and tell us about your Map Amendment request.

15 CARLOS HART: Okay, so we would like to convert the property to a general
16 commercial based on the outlying properties that surround it, just because we would like
17 to use it for, for offices and just, and also because there's so much more commercial
18 activity that's happening in just, in that one region, we just, we would like to use it for
19 that purpose.

20 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Okay, thank you. Commissioners, we have this property
21 up here for discussion. Mr. Taylor?

22 MR. TAYLOR: Question [inaudible]. The proposed request does not fall within a
23 neighborhood activity center? What exactly, when you say it falls within, I mean, is that

1 a specified distance or within the boundaries of an activity center? I just want to get
2 clarification on what that means.

3 MR. PRICE: Okay, if you would turn to page 23 in your package. Yeah, so within
4 our, looking at the Comprehensive Plan the future land use map for the North Central
5 planning area you can see where have an arrow drawn to the parcel. But if you take a
6 look, you see a couple of rings, one is a red ring which represents a community activity
7 center. You see the one with a brown ring that represents a neighborhood activity
8 centers. So within those, those are typically areas where we designate more of the
9 commercial uses versus where the subject parcel lies.

10 MR. DURANT: Mr. Chair?

11 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes?

12 MR. DURANT: Mr. Price, looking at this on a surface it seems like all that's being
13 asked for is to turn this parcel into the same zoning as that which surrounds it on three
14 sides. But you're telling us that it doesn't conform with the Comprehensive Plan. Am I to
15 assume, are we to assume that the, the remaining general commercial that surrounds
16 this property is going to be converted to something else somewhere down the line?

17 MR. PRICE: Well, no sir. I'm not sure exactly what would happen to the general
18 commercial. The only way that it would be changed is either by the initiation of the
19 property owners or an applicant or even by the County, you know, even through the
20 County Administrator, County Council, Planning Director or the Planning Commission
21 could initiate a rezoning request. But as far any future intent of that parcel, we don't
22 know.

23 MR. DURANT: Thank you.

1 MR. SIERCKS: Mr. Chair?

2 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

3 MR. SIERCKS: Question for Staff?

4 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Commissioner.

5 MR. SIERCKS: Mr. Price the, if I understood you right, earlier you said that even

6 though the surrounding areas are general commercial they've been that way since at

7 least 1984 and there's no real indication as to why they were made that way but that

8 those parcels given the surrounding nature or the nature of the surrounding area that

9 those would not be in conformance with the current Comprehensive Plan, is that right?

10 MR. PRICE: That is correct.

11 MR. SIERCKS: Alright, thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Siercks.

13 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

14 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Dennis?

15 MR. DENNIS: The adjacent property to the right of it, is that owned by the same

16 applicant? GIS is showing that so I'm curious to that.

17 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Sure.

18 MR. PRICE: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRMAN YONKE: I'll open it for discussion, Commissioners. Any questions?

20 MR. DURANT: Mr. Chair?

21 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

22 MR. DURANT: For some reason I can't get over this point that the purpose of this

23 application seems to just, just simply make this one parcel conform with everything that

1 around it, yet for the reasons stated by Mr. Price we, we shouldn't approve it because it
2 doesn't conform with the Comprehensive Plan. But that would mean to me the other
3 parcels don't conform to the Comprehensive Plan either. Would that be correct?

4 MR. PRICE: That's correct.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman? I'm sorry, go ahead.

6 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Johnson?

7 MR. JOHNSON: I think Mr. Price was about to say something.

8 MR. PRICE: Yeah, I was just going to say Mr. Durant I know this, this will
9 occur I will tell you probably a little more frequently as you continue to serve on the
10 Planning Commission. Again, once we, when we adopted the Comprehensive Plan and
11 we identified the designations for our future land use plan you're going to run, it was
12 done relatively broadly. You know, we can't address every parcel, we can't address
13 every situation. Again, one of the points is either from a Staff standpoint we always
14 recommend according to what the Richland County Comprehensive Plan states. But
15 you as a Planning Commission can take that information and, and really kind of look at
16 it a little more broadly. You could make the argument what makes sense or what seems
17 to fit because you're looking at it a little more differently than what we normally would as
18 a Staff.

19 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

20 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

21 MR. DENNIS: I'd like to make a motion.

22 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Dennis?

1 MR. DENNIS: I would like to send Case Number 23-004MA to County Council
2 with recommendation of approval. Reason being is it does fit with the surrounding
3 parcels that are general commercial and the Applicant actually owns a general
4 commercial that this is part of. So I'm going to air on the side of property rights and go
5 that route.

6 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. I think I heard a second. Can I hear
7 that again?

8 MR. JOHNSON: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Second from Mr. Johnson. We have a motion on the floor
10 and a second. So I believe we conduct a vote.

11 MR. PRICE: Alright, those in favor of the motion to approve, excuse me, Case
12 23-004MA. Siercks?

13 MR. SIERCKS: No.

14 MR. PRICE: Taylor?

15 MR. TAYLOR: Aye.

16 MR. PRICE: Durant?

17 MR. DURANT: Aye.

18 MR. PRICE: Metts?

19 MR. METTS: [Inaudible]

20 MR. PRICE: Dennis?

21 MR. DENNIS: Aye.

22 MR. PRICE: Johnson?

23 MR. JOHNSON: [Inaudible]

1 MR. PRICE: Frierson?

2 MS. FRIERSON: Aye.

3 MR. PRICE: Yonke?

4 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Aye.

5 *[Approved: Yonke, Frierson, Johnson(?), Dennis, Metts(?), Durant, Taylor; Opposed:
6 Siercks]*

7 MR. PRICE: Alright, that motion passes.

8 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. Thank you, Commissioners. And
9 again we are a recommending body. County Council will be taking this on their agenda
10 at their next meeting hopefully. So that is it for Item number 5. on our Agenda. Moving
11 along to Item number 6., Chairman's Report.

12 MR. PRICE: Excuse me, Mr. Chair?

13 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

14 MR. PRICE: I look around we still have a number of people here. So some of
15 them may be a little perplexed about what happened with the Consent Agenda.

16 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

17 MR. PRICE: You may want to go elaborate on that so that they'll know what
18 happened.

19 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Okay, so looking back at Item 5. on our Agenda we had
20 five Map Amendments to look at today. If Staff recommends approval and none of the
21 Commissioners would like to speak on it these Map Amendments are thus approved
22 and they get moved to County Council with that recommendation. So the case will be
23 taken up again at their next meeting with the Staff's recommendation of approval and

1 now the Planning Commission recommendation of approval. Thank you, I'm sorry, we
2 moved along too quickly there.

3 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

4 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Dennis?

5 MR. DENNIS: Also remind everybody out there that the Public Zoning Hearing
6 date that these will be brought up will be March 28th.

7 CHAIRMAN YONKE: March 28th, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Dennis. I'm going to
8 go ahead and move on to number 6., Chairman's Report. I just want to say thanks again
9 to my fellow Commissioners for all their time and effort they invest each month in this
10 Commission. Last month I mentioned this year as your Chair my primary goal is to
11 promote debate and conversation amongst our group as well as provide time for public
12 participation. Again, any feedback from you on how we can make the most of 2023 as a
13 Commission to serve Richland County the best we can is always welcome, thank you.
14 Staff, are there any updates on scheduling a work session for annual training? This can
15 be as simple as scheduling time in this building to review our rules and materials
16 provided to us from you. We should be welcoming a new member soon I'm assuming,
17 we have one vacancy. So it would be nice to line up that training with whenever that
18 person joins us. Mr. Price? Yeah, good. Any updates on that? Do you know?

19 MR. PRICE: No, I'm sure that the Rules and Appointment Committee will
20 continue to their interviews and they make sure that they interview all applicants so if
21 they have 20, then they will review all 20 before they make their recommendation.

22 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Also, later in the year I'd like to help coordinate a retreat
23 where we can hear from other departments. We have successfully had two of these

1 during my time on the Commission and I found both of them to be extremely valuable
2 for both us and those from the public who choose to attend. So any way I can help at
3 some point in 2023 to host something like that, that would be great. Thank you.

4 MR. PRICE: Yes, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN YONKE: We're going to move on to number 7. The Planning
6 Director's Reports.

7 MR. PRICE: So at this point we have three items on there. One is for a report
8 from Assistant County Administrator Eric Jenson about the Lower Richland focus group.
9 We also have the Report of Council from their decisions based on the February 2020,
10 excuse me, February 28, 2023 Zoning Public Hearing, that's on page 41 of your
11 package. We have also have the Rules of Procedure which it's asked that we'll take that
12 up at a later date. Again, we just ask that you continue to review and when Staff kind of
13 comes up with our own recommendations and send those to you and then we'll have
14 those prepared for a subsequent meeting for you to then decide on any changes that
15 you deem necessary. But at this time I'll turn this over to ACA Jenson.

16 MS. FRIERSON: Excuse me, I have a question, please. Mr. Price, I was looking
17 at pages 41 and 42 and I noticed that for each of the Map Amendments the Council
18 unanimously deferred the zoning request. Is there any rationale or reason as to why that
19 was so, to your knowledge?

20 MR. PRICE: Yes. I know specifically Councilwoman Barron, she likes to have a
21 community meeting in the community to discuss the cases in which she will then have
22 the applicant to show and meet with the community to discuss the request.
23 Councilwoman English on her deferral she just wanted to, she actually kinds of talks to

1 the applicants to get a better understanding of their request prior to her making a
2 decision.

3 MS. FRIERSON: Thank you so much.

4 MR. PRICE: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Price. We'll go to Mr. Jenson.

6 MR. JENSON: Alright, good afternoon. Thank you Mr. Chair for recognizing me.
7 Pleasure to be with you again. It's not too often that I get to come down to Planning
8 Commission but with all the Land Development Code going on I've been here more
9 often than I ever expected, so, glad to see your faces. For those of you who are, well
10 you know, everyone's been here long enough, you know who I am and, you know, I
11 come from a planning background and community development is my personal passion
12 in life. It's what I grew up doing from a young age and I continue to do even though I'm
13 an assistant county administrator now. And so at the last meeting of October the
14 Planning Commission requested that we as Staff go back and work with the folks in
15 Lower Richland and gather additional information on what they thought of the
16 recommendations and the Land Development Code amendments. And they, the
17 request was that we come back to two weeks later and report; well that's not, you know,
18 that's not possible and so we went through and we did our due diligence and we, we
19 conducted what we call a focus group. And a focus group, for those of you who have a
20 little bit of a marketing background, that is where a client has a specific product or idea
21 or something that they want to vet with a group of people that are representative of a
22 larger group of people. And, and so what we did is we went to Councilwoman English
23 and Councilwoman Newton, Chakisse Newton, and we said the Planning Commission

1 would like more information on what the people in Lower Richland think of what is being
2 proposed in terms of land use density and uses and so forth per the Code amendment
3 and per the Code update. And so we did and the Councilmembers came back with a list
4 of people that they wanted to have participate in this focus group and we also included
5 a couple others; the mayor of Eastover volunteered his services to come and join and
6 when the mayor, you know, calls, you always say yes. So the Mayor was part of the
7 focus group and the focus group took place over two days. So the first day we were
8 focusing on specifically just the background information, educating them on what a
9 focus group was, on what the issues were. And then the second day was the day when
10 the deliberation took place. And there was about a month in-between the two so there
11 was time for the folks to go back, think about what they had learned, talk with their
12 neighbors and so forth and then come back for the second meeting. So if you would, oh
13 and just really quickly, so Brian Davis and I co facilitated the meeting and it's always
14 better when you have two facilitators because of them can be working with the folks and
15 the other can be observing and taking notes. And so I'm very appreciative to Brian for
16 assisting me with that. So if you would Mr. DeLage to the next one. So here we had,
17 that's what I just said sorry, flip to the next one. So yeah, Brian Davis and I we did it on
18 December 8th and on January 19th, we held it at the Lower Richland Library. Next slide.
19 We had a very broad spectrum of participants which is what you want to have in a focus
20 group. Okay, the next one please. So the topic that we introduced was specifically rural
21 residential lot size and densities, what is appropriate for Lower Richland. So it was a
22 very open ended question but it was a narrow focus. You know, we weren't talking
23 about the whole Land Development Code. We were talking about this specific topic but

1 it was very open ended in the sense that they could tell us anything that they wanted.

2 Okay, next slide. One of the interesting things that we found, and this wasn't something

3 that we asked about, but the participants said in, in one of the first meetings or in the

4 first meeting, excuse me, they said, well you understand that there are effectively two

5 areas in Lower Richland. And they said there's this one section that's, I called it Upper

6 Lower Richland just meaning that it's closer to downtown, and the folks there had a

7 particular set of issues and things that they prioritized that were slightly different than

8 the folks who were in "Lower, Lower Richland", which is further away from and closer

9 down toward the Congaree River and the confluence down there. Okay, so everybody

10 in, in the group no matter where they were from, you know, were very concerned about

11 development. The folks in Upper Lower Richland were obviously more concerned about

12 development coming now. They were, it was a more pressing issue for them in terms of

13 they're seeing it happening right now. As you got further down in Lower Richland they

14 were a little less concerned about it and they were more concerned about not having

15 enough services, which makes sense because it's a longer drive from Eastover to

16 Downtown. Okay, next one please. So again, regardless of the location these were the

17 things that they, they talked about, and in particular a reoccurring theme was

18 preservation of rural character or preserving the rural character. And so we asked them,

19 we said well, what does that mean, rural character? Because that's not a, something

20 you can look up in the dictionary and just get an answer and go oh yeah, that's rural

21 character. No, you can't. And so and it's very, you know, context sensitive, and so these

22 are the points, these bullet points are the things that came out of the, the group: large

23 working lands and that means active agriculture fields like commercial agriculture; large

1 spaces between homes, not tract homes; not everything carved up into one acre lots;
2 both timber and crop production; and small personal farms. And again, small is, you
3 know, dependent, you know, one acre to someone is, is a farm and to others, you know,
4 10, 20 acres. And so some of the definitions we heard, which I thought was interesting,
5 one person said a one mule farm was his definition of a small farm, another person said
6 if it's big enough to turn your tractor around at the end of a row then it's a real farm.
7 Okay, those are not one acre, two acre, three acre definitions. Next slide, please. Again,
8 all the participants were concerned about the lack of commercial services in Lower
9 Richland and as I mentioned the further away you, the further away you work from
10 Downtown the more concerned you were, generally speaking. One of the participants
11 actually said after the first meeting, would you get me a copy of all your maps because I
12 wanna go around to my neighbors and talk to them about where I think we should be
13 putting commercial services. So we will be collecting that information from that
14 individual and we'll find out what he and his neighbors had to say. Next one, please. We
15 discussed specifically the three different rural zones that are in the 2021 LDC, or the
16 replacements for the rural zones, AG, HM and RT. And we talked specifically about, we
17 asked them specifically, excuse me, what do you think of the Planning Commission's
18 recommendations, what do you think of the text as it was currently passed? Because
19 again, the Planning Commission had slightly different, had you know, recommended
20 some changes to it in terms of densities and so forth. So if you'll flip to the next one,
21 please. So this was a, an exercise that we - we'll come back to zoning, the densities in a
22 second - we did an exercise on subdivisions because what we heard in the group, some
23 folks said, you know, everybody should be able to, if you own ground you should be

1 able to subdivide and give a piece of it to your children indefinitely. And others said no,
2 no, no, we don't want people to continue to subdivide their ground, we want it to stay
3 the way it is right now. And then you had people in-between. And so we did an exercise
4 and this is a very simple exercise, we had a great big, you know, pad of paper and I put
5 it on the table and I started out and one of the applicants said my family owns 100 acres
6 and so I said okay, great. So I drew a box and then we called it a 100 acre box. And
7 then he said well, let's divide it between three of my, you know, three people, three heirs
8 and so we divided it into three and then we went through and we did scenarios until we
9 got to a point where the people said, you know what, that's too small, you have to stop
10 subdividing because that's not rural anymore. And that was about the one acre size is
11 where they kind of said, huh-uh, nope, once you hit one acre you can't subdivide it
12 anymore because we don't think that's rural anymore. And so we had a big discussion
13 on that, you know, is that the right size or not, and we'll a, we'll come to that in a
14 second. Next slide, please. But one of the things that they came, that they talked about
15 when they said, what is rural character, and they said, you know, rural character is
16 having large chunks of working land, it's having homes, it's having some services but
17 not big urban type of development. And so we got into how do you do that? And so
18 when we got into the three different zones, into AG, HM and RT, they were looking at
19 the densities that were recommended. And Council had, had about one a, you had to
20 have about six acres for example to do a lot in the AG zone. Planning Commission kind
21 of reduced that down, I want to say it was about three-ish acres, somewhere in that ball
22 park. Well they said, we want to go the other direction, we would recommend to go the
23 other direction, we think AG should be at 10 acre minimum. And their reasoning was

1 that they said, at densities of 10 acres or one unit for every 10 acres, nobody will come
2 and development under that density, under that zoning, cause they don't, they won't get
3 enough lots or at least in their opinion they wouldn't get enough lots. And so then they
4 would have to come in and petition for a rezone to R1 or R2 or something else and so
5 then they would get a chance to go a public hearing and to voice their opinion to the
6 Planning Commission and to the Council on what they think the zoning should be. So in
7 other words there would not be administrative suburban style subdivisions occurring at
8 densities of 10 acres per every unit. Okay, next slide. So then we got to the HM zone
9 and they wanted, they were recommending two acres, I think, I think, I want to say that
10 in the 2021 it was about two and a half acres and the Planning Commission
11 recommended down to one a half, and they kinda said we think two acres. And I said
12 why do you, why two acres? And they said, well because that's about how big our
13 properties are right now and that's what we want them to be. And so that, and again,
14 this is a group of citizens, this is not, they're not scientists their not, they don't do this for
15 a living, they just said, you know, two acres is about how big our lots are and we think
16 that the lots around it should be two acres also. Then we get to the RT zone, and in RT,
17 this is where we had probably our longest discussion, and some of the folks again, said
18 that, you know, right now it's $\frac{3}{4}$ acre under the 2005 Code, it's going to one acre in the
19 2021, and I think the Planning Commission recommended one acre. And they said, you
20 know what, some of the people at the table said we want it to go back down to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an
21 acre and others said no, we don't think that's appropriate. And, and at the end of the
22 day they discussed it back and forth and they, the one acre folks prevailed and, but the
23 folks who had $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lots right now said, if it's going to go that direction we want to

1 make sure that our $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lots can still be developed, that they can have all the uses
2 and so forth that all of the one acre lots can. And so we, we didn't go into any detail but
3 we just basically said that, you know, that yes, there's a provision under the law if you're
4 an existing lot and so forth and the zoning changes you can continue to use your lot.
5 And so they were very, and they said, okay well fine, as long as that is set somewhere
6 where we can see it and, and, you know, physically touch it and know that that's the
7 case then we can support one acre. Okay, next one. So here's a table I put together,
8 okay here we go, now we can look at the numbers. So here's the table I put together
9 really quick, so the focus group recommended 10 acres per lot for AG, two acres for
10 HM, one for RT. Planning Commission recommended three, 1.5 and one, and the 2021
11 LDC as adopted by Council is 6 2/3rds, three acres, and 1.5. So you can kind of see
12 how, you know, where they thought, and again I explained it, the reason they wanted to
13 make it less dense in AG again, is because they, their goal was to preserve large big
14 pieces of agriculture and they didn't want administrative style approval for subdivisions
15 to come in on those large tracks of land that they wanted to preserve as working lands.
16 So that's why they recommended that. Again, I told you for the HM zone, they picked
17 two acres just because the people who were in the focus groups said, we have two
18 acres lots and we like two acre lots and that was it. And then in the RT again, we, they
19 went to one acre simply because they felt that was the smallest that you could go and
20 still be considered rural. Next slide, please. There was unanimous support for the
21 Planning Commission's recommendation to allow people to come up in without fee to
22 change the zoning, so if they were RU and they got zoned to AG, HM or RT and they
23 thought that was the wrong one, that they could have a year to come in and petition to

1 have it changed to something different. Everyone thought that was a fantastic idea. Next
2 one. We, there were some other observations, things that we did not ask but that we
3 took note of during the process. That's very common when you do a thing like this, you
4 hear things that you didn't expect or you didn't ask. So here's some of the other
5 observations that we, that we recorded. Next slide. In general the people who
6 participated just were not, they didn't understand the zoning process at first. There was
7 some substantial education to kind of get them up to speed for the conversation. Next
8 one. There are a lot of rumors circulating and as the program, the process moved
9 forward we found that the rumors sort of subsided and, you know, folks kind of realized
10 what was happening. That is very common. Next. There was a lot of misunderstanding
11 between what the Comprehensive Plan is and what the Land Development Code is,
12 again that's a pretty common thing. Next one. So we had a discussion about things that
13 were happening in Lower Richland, in particular how subdivisions were occurring
14 without there being public hearings, without the public being able to participate in the
15 process. Because the question was asked how come subdivisions are being approved
16 on those, they just named some parcels of ground, and, and we don't get a chance to
17 vote on it, or the Planning Commission or the Council doesn't - in particularly they said
18 the Council - they said, how come we go and talk to our Councilmember and they say
19 well, we don't get to vote on that, that's not, we don't approve that. And so we went
20 through and we had a discussion on how administrative approvals versus legislative
21 approvals take place. And that had a big impact in my opinion on how they eventually
22 recommended, again, I think that was part of the discussion on why 10 acres, why two
23 acres, why one acre because on these large parcels of ground they wanted people to

1 have to come in and petition for a rezoning, to have a public hearing before any
2 development occurred. Next one. At the end of the exercises when we unveiled the
3 maps, and it was very interesting, so when the maps got put out on the table you could,
4 you know, we sat back and just kinda watched them to see what they would say and do
5 and they were very excited with these new maps. And part of it was, again because if
6 you look at it you can see these big, you know, chunks of dark green which are the AG
7 zone and then you can see some kinda lighter green, those are the proposed HM
8 zonings, and then if you see the very light kind of yellowish green that is where the RT
9 or one acre, you know, minimum size zoning would occur. And what they said was that
10 they liked this because it seemed to convey their idea of rural character because they
11 could see large pieces of working agricultural lands with, you know, interspersed with
12 other uses. And they said that it's much closer to what we think Lower Richland should
13 look like than the current map which is just one-color RU, just all RU. Next slide. Again,
14 this is the same thing, what I just talked about, that they were very concerned about the
15 fact that subdivisions and so forth were being approved and yet the Council never got to
16 see them and they never got a chance to have their voices heard, that they would just
17 get approved administratively. So we had that discussion and, again that I think
18 influenced some of their recommendations. Okay, one more. That's, so the conclusion,
19 one more, please. So what we heard, and this is not uncommon, this is, I've worked in
20 many jurisdictions, prepared many masterplans for rural and sensitive areas in my
21 career, and what we heard was that citizens are concerned about how things are
22 changing and they're concerned that they're, that they don't think they have a voice in
23 the changes. We heard that they want to do everything with their property and they

1 don't want their neighbor to do anything; that's, that's just human nature. We heard that
2 there's a concern and a desire for more commercial services but there's a concern that
3 too much will overwhelm and change their community and how they perceive it. Again,
4 and then the last was that we heard that they want more input into how their community
5 is developed, and in particular how they can create and protect the rural character of
6 their area. So that is the report of the focus group. At this point the Planning
7 Commission if you so desire you can schedule at another, at a future meeting not at this
8 one, to take an action or make any recommendations based on this information to
9 Council. But this one is just noticed for a report so if you wanted to do so you would
10 need to tell Staff to schedule that for a future agenda and a future meeting. But other
11 than that that's my presentation.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair?

13 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, may I ask one question of Mr. Jenson?

15 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Johnson.

16 MR. JOHNSON: What is the definition you guys use for commercial services?

17 MR. JENSON: Thank you, if I may.

18 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

19 MR. JENSON: Okay, so they defined it as hospital, commercial stores, in
20 particular. One person said that there's not a grocery store down there. Another person
21 said there's not a hospital. But they didn't get any more detailed than that and so I'm
22 very curious when this citizen that we gave all the maps to comes back, I'm curious to
23 see what the folks down there determined that is in how big a scope it is.

1 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Can we get an email copy of this so I can look through this
2 again?

3 MR. JENSON: Absolutely, and I will give you the actual written report, this is just
4 the, the report's not that much longer but I'll give you actual copies of the actual, my
5 actual detailed report.

6 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Any questions for Mr. Jenson?

7 MR. DENNIS: Yeah, can we go back to the slide where the recommendations
8 were based on what they recommended, what we sent up and what the original 2021
9 was, please?

10 MR. JENSON: The table?

11 MR. DENNIS: Yes, sir.

12 MR. JENSON: Okay, maybe about slide 12, more or less.

13 MR. TAYLOR: While we're flipping, I guess my only question was, what was the
14 size of the focus group?

15 MR. JENSON: About 22 people. I mean, I'll get a list of the actual attendants for
16 you, Brian has that but it was about 20, 20-ish people. There we go.

17 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

18 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

19 MR. DENNIS: Now when it came to the AG, I know when we went down to the
20 three acres, wasn't that, three acres that was the minimum but it had to be continuous
21 for 30 acres, right?

22 MR. JENSON: May I respond to that, Mr. Chair?

23 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Jenson.

1 MR. JENSON: Thank you. Yes, so for in creating the map, 35 acres was the,
2 yes, it's 35 acres together to get to create an AG zoning block, correct. But within that,
3 you know, with that you could theoretically carve it up into three acre parcels, correct,
4 for the zoning exercise, yes.

5 MR. DENNIS: Okay. We made sure we explained that to them, right? Even,
6 okay.

7 MR. JENSON: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Jenson it looks like these show our minimum
9 thresholds, cause I'm looking at the ledger here, RT would have been one?

10 MR. JENSON: Yeah, so if I remember correctly when we, on the mapping
11 exercise we said 35 acres and larger we would do as AG, three to 35 acres would be
12 HM, and then less than three acres would be RT. For the mapping exercise. Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Jenson. Any other questions?

14 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

15 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Dennis?

16 MR. DENNIS: Who exactly was in these focus groups, cause I know we had
17 multiple reach outs to people for a year and a half that came in here and everybody that
18 came in here really wanted more rights to subdivide but I guess the Lower Lower
19 Richland does not want that? Right, like the Upper, Lower Richland? Is that what I got
20 from that?

21 MR. JENSON: Mr. Chair?

22 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Jenson?

1 MR. JENSON: Yes. So I'm going to say that when you, as a general rule when
2 you have a public hearing, the people who come to the public hearing are people who
3 are interested in something in particular. When you do a focus group, you get a broader
4 group of voices. And so I'm not surprised that you heard or that we heard at this focus
5 group something that is different than what you heard because the folks who come
6 down, take the time to come down here have something in mind in particular; whereas
7 the folks who are happy with the way things are typically will not come to your public
8 hearings. It's, that's just, and so when you hear voices you can't expect that you're
9 going to be hearing necessarily the most accurate comprehensive view of opinions;
10 whereas when you do something like a focus group where you specifically look for
11 different, a diversity of participants, you hear a diversity of opinions.

12 MR. DENNIS: Yeah I, I understand that, it's just, I find it hard, as long as we've
13 been doing this and as many, not just meetings here, the public meetings that I went to
14 down there and everybody, it was all about subdividing their land as much as we could,
15 but we didn't, you know, we didn't want to have it where they can subdivide where
16 somebody can sell it and then you can subdivide it off and magically have a
17 development which is currently happening under the old Code. So yeah, I just, I mean, I
18 kinda look at these and I'm kind of like, well, we're kind of in the middle of the 2021 and
19 that, so I mean, I'm still with the work we've done cause, I mean, no matter what if
20 somebody wanted to make a development and they wanted to even make it an RT they
21 would have to buy a lot of land, they'd have to subdivide it to one lot, one acre lots and
22 then they're gonna have to bring that to us and then they're going to have to bring that
23 to County Council and all that to rezone for that.

1 MR. JENSON: Yeah, Mr. Chair, if I may?

2 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

3 MR. JENSON: Yes and no. So the, it, under the 2005 Code and under some of
4 the provisions of the 2021 Code, theoretically you can cluster and you can get your lot
5 sizes down. So some of the people who owned, let's just say 100 acres of something
6 that's zoned RT at one unit per acre could still do 10,000 square foot lots, they would
7 just leave 2/3rds of the property an open space. And so you can get subdivisions of, or
8 suburban style subdivisions without rezoning.

9 MR. DENNIS: But didn't we take out the cluster?

10 MR. JENSON: Some of it, you did some of it but those have not been adopted
11 yet by Council. And so under the language, just what's adopted by Council in the 2021
12 that is, can still occur.

13 MR. DENNIS: Right.

14 MR. JENSON: If the Council adopts the modified language it is less likely to
15 occur but it can still occur to some extent.

16 MR. DENNIS: Right, okay.

17 MR. DURANT: One more question for Mr. Jenson?

18 MR. JENSON: Yes sir.

19 MR. DURANT: Mr. Jenson, I detected there was some tension between the folks
20 who wanted to make sure they retained the rural character and those who wanted
21 additional commercial services. Would you say it was it split evenly?

22 MR. JENSON: Mr. Chair? Yeah, and I would say actually the bigger discussion
23 was on the lot sizes, that's where we had the biggest diversity of opinion on the

1 commercial services, not as much, but yes there were some people who said no, we
2 just want to leave it as is and there are some who wanted the services. But surprisingly,
3 because I think, I, and I'm going to say I think the reason why is because the discussion
4 was so limited and the people who wanted the commercial services specifically said,
5 you know, we just want, right at this intersection we want something over here, they
6 didn't say they wanted it widespread. I, I have a feeling that if they'd gone that direction
7 we would've had more discussion. But the big discussion was one the lot sizes because
8 there were some very passionate people in there who said, I absolutely want to
9 subdivide for my children and I want them to be able to subdivide, but I want them to be
10 able to subdivide and I don't want anybody to be able to tell me that I can't do that. So
11 that voice was very loud. And then we also had the other side, we had the voices that
12 were, no, we don't want everything carved up into one acre lots, that was a direct quote
13 from somebody. We don't want everything carved up into one acre lots, that's not rural
14 character. Rural character is having large pieces of working lands with housing
15 dispersed throughout it. And so we had multiple, we had multiple voices at the table.

16 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

17 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Dennis.

18 MR. DENNIS: Yeah, I, I'm stuck on this commercial thing because I remember I
19 introduced a few items to change where we could bring some commercial services into
20 rural areas and then the more research I've done, I found how that could actually cause
21 an area that should be rural to become not very rural so that's why I walked that back. I
22 do, you know, from the fundamental part of how we bring stuff there, I mean, we can't
23 make companies come down there. Companies are only gonna go where there's people

1 and they can make money, we know that. Or people got to go to those companies. So I,
2 I just, I feel for them, but I mean, there's going to be some time before they, you know,
3 get some of it. I just remember growing up in North Carolina, I lived in Rockingham and
4 I went to big City of Charlotte and now Charlotte is almost to Wadesboro and Monroe,
5 like we used to go past cow fields and not, not anymore there's like three malls through
6 Monroe, like it's all Charlotte now. And, you know, I don't see that happening here for a
7 while, a long time, but I think it's coming in the years. I, it's hard because I looked at
8 Charlotte back in the '80s and they still had more people per capita in the City of
9 Charlotte than we have in all of Richland County. So, you know, they're at 1.1 million
10 something now just in Mecklenburg County and we're only at 480 something from that,
11 from the last number. So I mean, I feel for them and I want to get them some
12 commercial stuff out there but if we open it up to commercial that's really gonna make
13 some of these people that want to keep it rural mad. I mean, it's a balancing act for us
14 all and that's why it's, and that's why we've even had it walked back to us, the original
15 one that was past because of a lotta that. So I, I would, you know, I know the rest of the
16 County is very acceptable for what we've done, some people are still not happy with it
17 and some people are. It's just one of those balancing acts we got to figure out. But
18 yeah, I would like to see this report, please.

19 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Dennis. Any other questions for Mr.
20 Jenson?

21 MR. JENSON: Thank you.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman?

23 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Maybe I'm confusing some items. A few meetings, I don't
2 remember exactly but when Mr. Jenson made another presentation, we had a follow-up
3 where there was a graphic that really laid out some comparisons between the three
4 zones and what it really meant from a density standpoint. And I don't remember if that's
5 in our emails or if it was even distributed, but when this information is sent it'd be nice to
6 have that as well to look at them side by side. I can't tell you what meeting that was or
7 when we had it but that graphic, I think would help me to, to digest it.

8 MR. DENNIS: September, I think it was. I know I got the notes, give me a day or
9 two and I'll look through my notes and, cause I wrote it down. I just got to go back
10 through all my packets.

11 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Thank you, Mr. Dennis, if you find that and give that to
12 Staff. Staff, can distribute, or if Staff finds it, to that table, to compare. Thank you,
13 everyone. Alright, if there's no more comments on this, going to move on to number 8.
14 on our Agenda. Was that the end of the Chairman's Report, Mr. Price? Okay.

15 MR. PRICE: Excuse me, don't want to interrupt you.

16 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Sorry, the Director's Report, yes

17 MR. PRICE: That was the end of it.

18 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Okay, thank you. Alright, so number 8. is other items for
19 discussion.

20 MR. DURANT: Chair?

21 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes.

22 MR. DURANT: I may have missed it but are we skipping Rules and Procedure
23 under the Planning Director's Report?

1 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Price?

2 MR. PRICE: I'm sorry, I thought I addressed that earlier. It is on there, we just
3 ask that you continue to look at your rules and as Staff, you know, it is our intent to
4 prepare our recommendations to the Rules and Procedure and we'll get that to you. We
5 just haven't gotten together to come up, you know, come up with our version I guess
6 you could say, and we'll get that to you and then have that prepared at a later meeting
7 for us to discuss about any potential changes or amendments to the Rules.

8 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Are there items for discussion? I have a note here about
9 public comments, public participation. Last year when we were reading the Land
10 Development Code there were many times when public would come and participate. So
11 just food for thought, think about that, if that's something we wanted to add into our
12 agenda regularly, if not every meeting, quarterly. I'm not sure how that would look but
13 just wanted to raise that question with my peers.

14 MR. DENNIS: Mr. Chair?

15 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yes, Mr. Dennis?

16 MR. DENNIS: You mean like public participation not regarding to anything on
17 here just to come here, the public, kind of what they want, like commercial services and
18 us kind of look at that in the future or?

19 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Yeah, it's like a public comments -

20 MR. DENNIS: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN YONKE: - portion of our agenda.

22 MR. DENNIS: Copy.

23 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Price, any other items that need to be discussed?

1 MR. PRICE: No, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Okay, if not that takes us to number 9. which is
3 adjournment. So the Chair would make a motion for adjournment. Do I have a second?

4 MR. DENNIS: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Mr. Dennis, second. Mr. Price you want to do a vote of
6 hands? Looks unanimous.

7 MR. PRICE: It is.

8 *[Approved: Yonke, Frierson, Johnson, Dennis, Metts, Durant, Taylor, Siercks]*

9 CHAIRMAN YONKE: Alright, we're adjourned. Thank you.

10

11 *[Meeting Adjourned]*