

Docket Item #10  
Planning Commission Public Hearing  
April 7, 2026

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of  
March 3, 2026.

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**\* \* \* M I N U T E S \* \* \***

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

March 3, 2026 7:00 P.M.

**Council Chamber**

4850 Mark Center Dr. Rm 1305, Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Members Present:

Melissa McMahon, Chair  
Stephen Koenig, Vice Chair  
Vivian Ramirez  
Robert Dubé  
Holly Lennihan  
Jody Manor

Members Absent: None

Staff Present:

Paul Stoddard	Department of Planning & Zoning
Nancy Williams	Department of Planning & Zoning
Kendra Jacobs	Department of Planning & Zoning
Christina Brown	Office of the City Attorney
Sam Shelby	Department of Planning & Zoning
Stephanie Sample	Department of Planning & Zoning
Tamara Jovovic	Office of Housing
Ellen McElvane	Office of Housing
Mary Horner	Office of Housing
Christopher Do	Office of Housing

## **#1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order at 6:15 p.m. All members were present at the Call to Order. Commissioner Lennihan participated via Zoom from San Francisco, California for personal travel.

## **#2. ELECTIONS OF PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Department of Planning & Zoning Director Paul Stoddard called for nominations for the Planning Commission Chair. Commissioner Koenig nominated Commissioner McMahon as Chair. Commissioner Dubé seconded the nomination.

By unanimous vote, the Planning Commission appointed Commissioner McMahon as Chair for a term of one year.

Chair McMahon expressed gratitude for her nomination and appointment.

Chair McMahon opened the nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Dubé nominated Commissioner Koenig as Vice Chair. Commissioner Manor seconded the nomination.

By unanimous vote, the Planning Commission appointed Commissioner Koenig as Vice Chair for a term of one year.

## **#3. CLOSED SESSION**

Chair McMahon asked for a motion to convene in a closed session.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission moved to convene in a Closed Session pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(19), to discuss plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity or specific cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities to include briefings by staff members, legal counsel, or law-enforcement or emergency service officials; discussion of information subject to the exclusion in subdivision 2 or 14 of §2.2-3705.2, where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the safety of any person or the security of any facility, building, structure, information technology system, or software program; or discussion of reports or plans related to the security of any governmental facility, building or structure, or the safety of persons using such facility, building or structure. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission moved to reconvene in open session. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission moved to certify that only public business matters that were identified by the motion by which the executive session was convened and are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings requirements were heard, discussed, or considered by the Commission during the executive session. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

Chair McMahon read the following instructions:

“I have just a few announcements before we continue with tonight’s docket.

If you wish to speak on a Docket Item and have not already signed up to do so, please fill out a Speaker Form online by following the “Sign Up to Speak” hyperlink on the cover page of this evening’s Public Hearing Docket or in person by filling out a hardcopy speaker form, which can be found on the tables located immediately outside of Chambers, and providing it to Ms. Williams, who has her hand raised.

Please note, comments from the public are limited to 3 minutes per speaker, except for applicants and their representation. To make your public comment through the Zoom application, please click on the "Raise Hand" button located on the Zoom taskbar when you hear your name called, to let staff know you need to be unmuted. If you are dialing into tonight’s meeting via phone, please press \*9 to execute the “Raise Hand” function when you hear your name called, followed by \*6 to toggle the unmute function.

For those here in person, please come up to the podium located at the front of Chambers when you hear your name called and identify yourself by first and last name.

The City encourages and welcomes public comments from all residents on Planning Commission matters. In keeping with that principle, and with the principle of inclusiveness, this is a reminder of the shared expectation that the content and tenor of public comments always be civil and respectful. Thank you for honoring those principles.

A reminder to all, including Commissioners, staff, and speakers in the Chambers, please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all can hear you clearly.”

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED**

### **#4 Development Site Plans and Zoning Ordinance Subdivision cases are heard by the Planning Commission but placed on the City Council docket for information. Zoning Ordinance Subdivision cases are heard by City Council only upon appeal.**

Subdivision #2025-00006

Development Site Plan #2025-00030

806 North Columbus Street – Townhomes

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for: (A) a Subdivision to re-subdivide three existing lots with variations to the lot areas, widths, and frontages; and (B) a Development Site Plan to construct three townhouses; zoned RB/Townhouse.

Applicant: 732 and 806 Development LLC, represented by Kenneth Wire, Attorney

### **SPEAKERS**

Kate Zernes, neighbor at 814 N. Columbus, said that she did not support the height of the proposed townhouses and that they were out of character with the townhouses on the block. She noted that because they would be four stories tall the houses would create shade on the alley and adjacent properties. She said she wasn’t opposed to redevelopment of the parking lot but that the townhouses should be no more than three stories; she said that when the James Bland project was redeveloped the new townhouses were not permitted to go above three stories if they were adjacent to historic buildings.

Graeme Douglas, 808 Snowden Hollowell Way, expressed concern about the mass of the townhouses and said that three story townhouses would be more appropriate. He said the townhouses were out of scale and that he didn't support the applicant's use of the private street (Snowden Hollowell Way) to access the parking spaces in the rear yards. He said that the developer/future owners should compensate the Old Town Village Homeowners Association for their maintenance of the private street. He also said he thinks the aesthetics of the parking spaces should be improved and suggested a fence.

Ken Wire, project attorney, spoke in support of the project.

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Ramirez said that she would be voting for the project and believed that the slight lot line adjustment as part of the subdivision with variation request was supportable because the new lots would be in character with the other townhouse lots in the immediate vicinity.

Commissioner Dubé said that the memo provided by staff prior to the hearing regarding the nuances of the subdivision request clarified his understanding and that he supported the project. He asked about the BAR process and if the BAR recommendations had been incorporated into the project materials. Ms. Sample explained that the materials Planning Commission reviewed were the same materials shared at the second BAR concept hearing.

Vice Chair Koenig said that the DSP request was straightforward and that he appreciated the subdivision memo which explained the complexities of the subdivision with variation request. He said that he was in support of the subdivision as that the townhouses met the standards of the RB zone, which allows for a height of 45 feet.

Chair McMahan asked staff about public access to Snowden Hollowell Way and Ms. Sample said that the private street had a public access and ingress-egress easement over it so the public and future residents of the townhouses were permitted to use the street. Ms. Sample noted that a portion of what is generally considered Snowden Hollowell Way is a 10-foot public alley and explained that the City would be required to maintain the alley, not Old Town Commons.

Chair McMahan stated that she struggled with the language in the zoning ordinance section related to subdivisions with variation and the "substantially unjust" terminology. She highlighted that "substantial injustice" means that the strict application of the ordinance creates an unreasonable burden which outweighs the land use purposes of the lot requirements. She noted that the new lots would be very similar in size and width to the existing lots. Chair McMahan found that denial of the requested variations would not further the land use purposes of the lot requirements. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to deny the applicant's variation requests.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Dubé, the Planning Commission voted to approve Subdivision #2025-00006. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Dubé, the Planning Commission voted to approve Development Site Plan #2025-00030. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

## NEW BUSINESS

- #5 APPLICANT REQUESTED WITHDRAWAL OF THIS ITEM.**  
**Zoning Ordinance Subdivision cases are heard by the Planning Commission, placed on the City Council docket for information, and heard by City Council only upon appeal.**

Subdivision #2025-00013

3833, 3835, and 3837 Elbert Avenue

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide four existing lots into two lots; zoned RB/Residential Townhouse

Applicant: Farhang Mojgani

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

This item was heard before Docket Item #4. On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to accept the applicants request to withdraw Subdivision #2025-00013. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0

- #6** Discussion Item: Housing 2040 Master Plan

### **DISCUSSION**

Chair McMahon commended the broad reach of the proposed Housing Master Plan. She emphasized the ways that the Planning Commission interconnect with the provisions of this plan. Chair McMahon emphasized the ways in which populations can become vulnerable and the need for an intersectional framework to address this vulnerability. She inquired into takeaways regarding project viability in an unpredictable market, calling back to the Alate project.

Commissioner Dubé thanked the Office of Housing team for their presentation. He inquired into public accessibility of the proposed housing dashboard. Commissioner Dubé inquired into how condominiums partake in affordable housing projects. He clarified concerns about the adequacy of housing infrastructure and advocated for including emphasis on the electric grid.

Vice Chair Koenig complimented the work of the Office of Housing team facing such a wide breadth of issues. He expressed excitement for collaboration between the Housing Plan and the Green Building Plan and encouraged further collaboration with the Office of Climate Action. Vice Chair Koenig admired the conceptual rehabilitation pipeline and incentives for solar and battery infrastructure. He inquired into how to integrate CPACE and OCA into these sustainability-oriented goals, addressing methods of making sustainability initiatives more affordable.

Commissioner Ramirez expressed excitement for this proposed update to the Housing Master Plan. She highlighted the risk present in all development projects and the importance of learning from proposals that did not build success. Commissioner Ramirez emphasized the intersectionality of sustainability, encompassing green sustainability and long-term viability of these projects.

Commissioner Manor highlighted the importance of the Chirilagua neighborhood and supporting affordable housing in that community and his desire to follow up further to discuss other initiatives.

Commissioner Lennihan echoed the Commission's appreciation for this presentation, emphasizing their widespread outreach and accessibility for the plan.

Commissioner McMahon also recommended an alteration to the Housing 2040 Parking Strategy, suggesting that staff instead acknowledge that parking requirements produce direct parking costs that can impact housing affordability or constrain housing production.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

The Planning Commission received a presentation on the proposed Housing 2040 Master Plan.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Planning Commission acknowledged the public service and dedication of Nancy Williams in light of her upcoming retirement.

#### **Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions**

Commissioner Manor summarized the Waterfront Commission's last meeting.

Commissioner Dubé summarized the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority's last meeting.

Vice Chair Koenig also discussed his time on the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

#### **Planning & Zoning Director's Report**

Planning Director Paul Stoddard highlighted the release of the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, the upcoming Bi-Monthly Community Meeting, and upcoming projects.

#### **MINUTES**

#7 Consideration of the February 3, 2026 Planning Commission Public Hearing minutes.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of January 6, 2026 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

#### **#8 ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.