Richmond 300: Code Refresh
Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Date: June 17th, 2026, 4 P.M.
Location: City Hall, 5th Floor Conference Room
900 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Microsoft Teams (https://bit.ly/CodeRefreshAC)

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Attendance:

Members Present: Elizabeth Greenfield, Andrew Bunn, Riley Champine, Preston Lloyd, Charles Menges, Casey Overton, Councilwoman Ellen Robertson, Brian White, Charlie Wilson, Phillip Hart, Tiffany Gunn, Bennie Gates (virtual), Maritza Pechin (virtual), Melissa Savenko (virtual)

Members Absent: Wayne Credle, Eric Mai, Jennifer Mullen, Damian Pitt

Staff Present: Dir. Kevin Vonck and Sr. Dep. Dir. Marianne Pitts (Department of Planning and Development Review),
René Biberstein and Colin Scarff (Code Studio, consulting team representatives), Kyle Talente (RKG Associates)

CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call

Chair Greenfield called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M. and then called the roll.

Virtual participation requests were paused until a quorum was present.

Chair's Comments

Chair Greenfield went ahead to open the floor to public comment. They said that the agenda for day was lengthy, so public comment would be limited to three minutes per person. They reserved 15 minutes for in-person comments and 15 minutes for virtual comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Greenfield opened the floor to public comment.

Copeland Casati recalled their upbringing in the countryside. They mentioned private rights but also broad acceptance of shared resources like peace and quiet. They stressed "harm not thy neighbor." They advocated to protect shared natural resources and protect trees by maintaining today's unbuilt yard percentages. They opposed any decrease in trees for the sake of density and development. Casati emphasized the need to maintain Randolph, Byrd Park, Maymont, and Carillon's yards. They supported affordable housing. To ensure affordability, they suggested keeping ADUs at 500 S.F.. They stated that 1,200 S.F. ADUs would concrete neighborhoods. They requested to enforce shadow modeling. Casati

went on to characterize neighborhoods as cultural and economic resources. They wanted Church funds and property to go to the community. They also added that mixed-use buildings should be on commercial streets, not residential. They stated that mixing commercial buildings with residential would bring health issues to homes. They opposed over three unrelated people living in a dwelling, citing issues with health, overcrowding, and conflicts.

Cassandra Ziegler, resident of Greater Fulton area, recalled the location of their neighborhood between Gilpin Court and Blue Atlas Restaurant. They remarked on the stark difference between the two sides. They recalled their neighborhood in Pittsburgh, PA and its organic nature. They stated that density is always managed wisely, mentioning intergenerational households. They went on to say counting how many people live in a home is cold. They stressed the need for flexibility in rules. They also stated how there must be a balance between current urban dwellers and incoming dwellers to ensure everyone enjoys the environment. They mentioned that concerns against density may come from misunderstandings about Richmond. They stated how Richmond lacks widespread industry and work, apart from low-paying service work. They went on to say how current residents' incomes are impacted by policies and regulations. They advised council to keep current residents in mind while drafting Code Refresh.

Laney Sullivan, founder of Fonticello Food Forest and Earth Folk Collective, on wooded areas, mentioned developers clear-cutting 1.5 acres of woods. They referenced conflict between their organization and the developers due to their conservation easement. They noted how clear-cutting was permitted by-right under current zoning. They requested Code Refresh to protect trees. They referenced the heritage tree protections done in Williamsburg where tree demolition fines go toward a tree fund. They also differentiated between 100-year-old oak trees and 5-year-old trees and their impact on the environment. They also voiced their desire for density and environmental protection.

Summer Anderson, mother of a middle schooler, on renting, mentioned financial constraint and their middle schooler sharing a bedroom with them. They stated that their one-bedroom apartment had to be in a walkable community where public transit was available. They noted their limited income as a hotel worker downtown. They voiced support for policies supporting high density, affordable housing, and walkable neighborhoods. They also requested building high density housing near public transit to reduce car dependence. Anderson also said they would like to see Code Refresh end the gentrification and displacement of Black residents. They stated that they would like to see racial and income diversification in Richmond. They stressed the need for sustainable and equitable growth in the future. They also voiced support for environmental regulations and increased accessibility.

Lisa Porter, resident of Stratford Hills, voiced frustration that City planning and zoning did not contact their neighborhood about Code Refresh. They mentioned how large the neighborhood is and how existing R-2 zoned properties can be subdivided and built upon. They voiced concern about water infrastructure and electricity dependability as current infrastructure barely covers existing buildings. They stated that they did not support Code Refresh but would like to continue discussions.

Sam Pard, on access in Richmond, stressed its importance. They stated that the need to access jobs, schools, and healthcare relies on density. They stated how current zoning makes increased density illegal. They advocated increased access via higher density, referencing examples like walking to the grocery store. They mentioned how single-family zoning restricts density and supports car dependency.

Stella, resident of Greater Fulton area, stated that zoning laws are difficult to understand. They voiced frustration at the 2nd draft of Code Refresh due to its inconsistencies. They opposed listing regulations like signage as numbers because residents do not know what that entails. They also stated the draft plan does not align with Richmond 300. They stressed that the draft shows no concern for parking or trees. They referenced the recent approval of a 12-story building to replace Creighton Court apartments. They questioned if Richmond was pouring poor people into slums. They emphasized the need for affordable housing, grocery stores, and libraries, not vape shops. They stated that Code Refresh is nowhere near ready to be finalized. They questioned why none of the email concerns about Code Refresh would be

addressed in the meeting. They reiterated their concern about affordable housing. They also recalled Dominion Energy tearing down trees in their neighborhood but failing to plant new trees or address the tree age gap.

Online Comments:

Kevin Cianfarini, resident of the Fulton neighborhood, on behalf of Climate Changemakers RVA, explained their organization's goals. They stated that the organization advocates climate policy on the local, regional, and statewide level. They added that to combat climate pollution, more people must live within walking, biking, and bus distance of where they want to go. They explained that more density must be allowed in the city gradually and incrementally. They suggested allowing duplexes universally.

Will Wilson, resident of the Historic Jackson Ward Association and lead at RVA YIMBY, on tree canopy standards, shared four provisions of Portland, Oregon. They stated that Portland utilizes tree density credits on smaller sites like 3,000 square feet. They added that it would be helpful for small-scale infill development. They cited another provision of Portland, stating that if a site is over an acre, they calculate a development impact area where the tree canopy requirements apply. They compared the payment-in-lieu program proposed by the Office of Sustainability with Portland's. They said that no justification is required in Portland. Rather, developers pay the fund the equivalent to the cost of planting and establishing 1.5-inch caliber trees. They went on to mention Portland's "Option B" where developers may set aside percentages and simply provide tree coverage on all land not used in building coverage. They suggested using the method along transit corridors where housing units need to be maximized.

Patricia Merrill, resident of the 1st District, cited page 210 of Richmond 300, stating that the document anticipates Code Refresh to take three to five years. They said that Brick & Story's engagement survey indicated a public engagement period starting in April 2024. They stated that the engagement survey's phase 5 voices concerns about transparency, accountability, and the real-world impacts of zoning changes. Merrill went on to say that the zoning rewrite has only taken two years, indicating that the process has much longer to go. They also stated that concerns about transparency and accountability are increasing, not decreasing. They suggested releasing Draft 3 when it is ready, seeking new ways to educate the public on the rationale for Code Refresh, collecting feedback on Draft 3, and planning for Draft 4 to become the zoning ordinance sent to Planning Commission. They added that the zoning code is only halfway through its timeline and that a code must be compromised on to move Richmond forward. They also noted that Draft 3 is the first time the zoning map and entire draft will come out for the public to read.

Emily Grimes, resident of Ellwood Avenue, expressed support for Patricia Merrill's comments. They voiced for affordable housing, walkable neighborhoods, and mixed-use neighborhoods when it makes sense for all Richmond residents. They stated that Richmond offers many types of housing and neighborhoods to support many ways of living. They voiced concern towards Code Refresh, stating that it disregards neighborhood character and infrastructure capacity. They added that Code Refresh creates a blanket of zoning by-right without proper guidelines or future resident input. They added that neighborhood personalities support quality of life and tax revenues from visitors and residents. They pointed out two concerns. They stated that MX-4 zoning near their neighborhood and Carytown is a complete departure from the character of the neighborhood. They added that zoning threatens the area's 100-year history and explained that it is not protected by the 1994 Design Overlay. They reiterated that 3-story buildings on Cary Street without a Design Overlay do not honor the unique communities in the City of Richmond. They went on to explain their other concern about infrastructure. They stated that public transportation is limited, running mostly East and West. They stated that it is limited, infrequent, inconvenient, and not manageable for most traffic. They also mentioned that there is limited parking. They added that increasing density in the area would stress the parking issue more.

Bruce Pardoe, partner of Emily Grimes and resident of Ellwood Avenue, on the Museum District, emphasized what Grimes stated. They suggested using contextual zoning in Richmond instead of by-right. They mentioned that Richmond is a jewel of the East Coast where a cookie cutter approach will not

effectively work. They expressed surprise at the existence of by-right development. They reiterated their struggles with parking. They opposed increasing density and then improving infrastructure, stating that it is a backwards approach. They voiced support for affordable, high-density housing for seniors and entry-level residents in areas which already have access to public transportation.

At the end of the allotted 30 minutes, Chair Greenfield closed the public comment period.

Roll Call

With a quorum in the room, Chair Greenfield addressed the requests for virtual participation.

Virtual participation requests were received from Bennie Gates, Maritza Pechin, and Melissa Savenko. Thet stated their reasons for participating virtually. A motion to approve the request was made, seconded, and approved by the council.

COUNCIL RECAP AND MEETING INTRODUCTION

Ms. Marianne Pitts, Senior Deputy Department Director of Planning & Development Review, provided a recap of the previous meeting held in May. They stated that Kyle Talente of RKG Associates shared their second development scenario analyses on mixed-use, residential attached, and residential multifamily districts. They asked council to share any additional questions for Talente to Staff. They mentioned the open discussion period where council discussed affordability and starter homes in the residential cottage districts. They stated that today, Director Vonck will present some information on Code Refresh and three key questions for draft 3. They added that the same presentation was shown to Planning Commission and City Council. They requested feedback from council on the key questions after Director Vonck's presentation.

Chair Greenfield provided logistics on the open discussion with Director Vonck. They explained that after the presentation, each council member would have five minutes to comment and question. After the individual comments, time permitting, they said there will be a collaborative discussion.

CODE REFRESH DRAFT 3 WORKSHOP

Presentation by Director Vonck – Draft 3 Preview

Prior to beginning the presentation, Director Vonck stated that they wished to fact check certain projects. They stated that Mosby South Community Unit Plan was approved by City Council at the last meeting. They added that no more than 500 units or any building above five stories would be allowed. They explained that a large amount of community engagement work was done, noting that the Mayor also sent out a postcard to every single parcel in December 2025.

They corrected misinformation on tree canopies. They stated that the current code has zero protection for trees. They noted that Code of Virginia allows for municipalities to require minimums, but state code restricts possible Code Refresh policies on tree canopies.

They moved on to discuss vape shops. They stated that, as of last year, City Council made it difficult to have vape shops in the city by defining retail tobacco. They added that those definitions and restrictions will be coming over in current ordinance.

Director Vonck began the presentation. They explained that the purpose of the work session was to gather feedback for draft 3. They added that there are no right or wrong answers, emphasizing that they are working towards an answer for draft 3.

They framed Code Refresh as an implementation of the Master Plan, especially housing choice, neighborhood walkability, economic vitality, and climate resilience. They emphasized that a new zoning code must simplify standards and procedures and facilitate new development like housing.

They went on to explain how Code Refresh aligns with Richmond 300. They cited pages 210 and 211 where the document talks about big moves. They stated that a zoning code has to promote and expand equity, sustainability, and beauty as mentioned in Richmond 300. They stressed the importance of how Richmond 300 frames Code Refresh. They explained the various parties involved in crafting a draft code, listing public engagement like pop-ups, office hours, and meetings and existing regulations that restrict Code Refresh. They further detailed regulations such as Code of Virginia, RKG development scenarios, and Utile pattern book.

They also explained areas of substantial agreement. They noted that substantial agreement does not mean perfect alignment. They listed topics like number of zoning districts, mapping nodes and corridors, and form-based building. They stated that the zoning code will be more prescriptive, explaining what things would look like moving forward. They explained contextual height requirements as well, assuaging fear that four-story buildings cannot be built if around one-story buildings.

They moved on to list the three major questions for discussion. They started with the question of how many people in a household. They framed the question around housing-focused objectives listed in Richmond 300 like 14.2, 14.8, and 14.9. They described the evolution of the question from current code to draft 3. They explained that current code states that no more than three unrelated persons may live in a household, draft 1 did not define household size, and draft 2 suggested eight or fewer unrelated individuals. For draft 3, they suggested referring to Code 36-105.4, or building code, for household size as it provides a higher standard for health and safety.

They presented the second question. They questioned how places of worship should be zoned. They framed the question around objectives in Richmond 300 like 1.1, 3.2, and 11.3. They described the evolution of the question from current code to draft 3. They explained that current code zones places of worship in a wide mix of districts from R-1 through B-4, draft 1 zoned all places of worship as institutional, and draft 2 pivoted to mixed-use 3. For draft 3, they suggested a nuanced approach using RM and RC zonings. They listed zonings based on environment: neighborhoods RM-A, major streets and corridors RM-B, transit corridors and growth nodes RM-C, and as requested RC. They explained how RC zoning is fundamentally different from other zonings in how a property looks and operates. They added that RC zoning is a great option for small-scale infill housing, but since it looks different, the zoning will only be provided as requested.

They presented the third question. They asked how many dwelling units on a lot. They framed the question around objectives in Richmond 300 like 4.1, 14.1, and 14.5. They added that increasing housing at all income levels would not occur in every single neighborhood but would create more options than currently exist today. They described the evolution of the question from current code to draft 3. They detailed how current code allows for a principal dwelling unit plus one ADU with size restrictions (1 + 1 ADU). They explained that draft 1 proposed 2 + 1 and draft 2 added in the preservation bonus policy. For draft 3, they suggested retaining draft 2 policy but restricting the preservation bonus policy to only 2 buildings. They added that limiting the lot to 2 buildings may help decrease concerns about overcrowding. They went on to show diagrams depicting housing possibilities in current code and draft 3. They also noted additional provisions that ADUs shall not be taller than primary dwelling units.

They requested direct feedback from council on the three questions but also welcomed discussion on any topics of Code Refresh.

Council Discussion

Chair Greenfield turned it over to ZAC for comment. They requested Councilwoman Robertson comment last. They turned over comment to Charles Menges.

Charles Menges stated that the goal should be to finish and to release draft 3. They noted timing issues, suggesting draft 3 includes policies which will work and pass. They voiced hesitation on 2 + 1 policies, stating that adding units to single family detached housing will not help affordable housing. They stated that adding on units is a non-starter and frustrates residents in single family detached neighborhoods. They suggested focusing on areas in the city where affordable housing units can be constructed, not in established neighborhoods. They also added that draft 3 will be important because it adds definitions and the administrative portion of zoning like the process for conditional use permits. They further suggested someone read through draft 3 and fix the language to match legislation speech. They stated that consultant language is not acceptable for legislation. They added that permitted uses and regulations should be written in clear, precise, and complete sentences with graphics as clarification. They stated that the consultant language does not follow city and state procedures, listing the inclusion of a register of deeds as an example. They explained that in-depth review is necessary to make the ordinance read correctly, be precise, be understandable, and not just include consultant speak.

Director Vonck, on conditional use permits, stated that similar language to today would be brought over. They also stated that certain requirements listed in the ordinance must be met before asking for any additional use. They went on to reiterate the importance of including definitions and administrative regulations.

Charles Menges added that draft 2 fails to explicitly state 8 as the number of residents of a household. They stressed the importance of fixing the language to be clear. They noted how blended families may have large household sizes. They supported 8 as the number of unrelated people living in a household.

Riley Champine asked for clarification on ADU percentage versus square foot policies. They wished to know how ADU sizing works with overall lot coverage percentage.

Director Vonck responded that staff's recommendation is a hard number for ADU size. They, however, did mention that for larger households, a percentage could be helpful. They asked for feedback from council and added that a hard number is more digestible for neighbors. They stated that current code does not count square footage of an ADU if above a garage. They went on to say that some people have advocated for the accessory unit like a garage adhere to 1200 S.F. so that the structure size is predictable. For lot coverage, they went on to suggest bringing down lot coverage for single structure buildings and maintaining proposed lot coverage for multi-structured buildings.

Riley Champine asked for clarification on places of worship. They voiced confusion on how places of worship would operate under new zoning. They stated that they understood why MX zoning would not work due to fear of strip malls. They also asked about what the process would be to request RC zoning.

Director Vonck responded that religious assembly and worship should be permissible in RM districts within the new code. They also stated that certain uses are accessory to the assembly use and would be permitted. For RC districts, they noted how there are limited building standards, so there can be many configurations. They added that some districts would see RC zoning as an upzone while others would see it as a downzone depending on lot size. They suggested that City Council and Planning Commission could prescribe certain areas as RC if they wish. They expressed hesitation at largely expanding RC zoning as it changes the physical form more than other zoning districts.

Riley Champine expressed support for staff's recommended changes for draft 3. For unrelated people living together, they went on to recall their living arrangements in D.C. where they needed 7 roommates to afford their housing. They opposed Menges' suggestion to discount ADUs and duplexes. They agreed that ADUs and duplexes are not the best solution for affordable housing but added that it allows different types

of housing. They recalled their research at the University of Richmond, citing that neighborhoods included more multiple dwelling units prior to freeways and intense zoning. They stated that it would be foolish to completely remove that option.

Phillip Hart, on density, cited Richmond 300, mentioning the primary use of residential areas is single family dwellings while secondary uses, along major streets, can insert duplexes and small multifamily buildings. They stated that this should be the compromise the zoning ordinance should be focused upon. They referenced Richmond 300 and how density was proposed along corridors and within nodes. They suggested that staff review Richmond 300 and place density in the prescribed areas. They emphasized the community input and detailed work done to create Richmond 300. They appreciated the inclusion of the preservation bonus in draft 3 but expressed confusion at the 5-year vacant lot stipulation. For places of worship, they stated that the recommended policy is trending in the right direction. They explained the right direction as less impact on neighborhoods and more impact on major streets and transit, stressing the importance of limited neighborhood disturbance. They moved on to number of people in a household. They explained that referring to building code places no cap on the number of people within a dwelling unit. They voiced concern that no cap would aggravate residents' fears around rooming houses. They suggested taking a simple route for the policy and resolving upon 6 people within a household.

Brian White, on places of worship, stated they had no issue with the recommended policy. They moved on to discuss household sizes. They questioned that temporary stays at homeless shelters do not count towards the numbers. Director Vonck affirmed that emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing definitions will be retained from current code and Code of Virginia. They added that building code does apply to these housing types and is calculated by the building commissioner. They then clarified that zoning could set limits on the number of people in an emergency house, but the proposed Code Refresh would not. Brian White stated that some of the concerns about number of structures are misplaced. They went on to explain that the economics of the most concerned neighborhoods do not support multiple structures. They stated that allowing duplexes everywhere would not make a meaningful impact on affordability. They suggested removing duplexes to ensure the code gets passed. They supported having ADUs. They then voiced concern that the City Assessor would increase the value of land that allows for increased density, even if a smaller unit is built upon the land. They stated that smaller units could not possibly pay for the assessment. They also voiced concerns about design standards and how their associated costs would impact the creation of housing.

Director Vonck, on design standards, responded that staff are working to preserve the intent of good design, green space, and pedestrian areas. They stated that more simplification of standards will occur to ensure there is a balance between regulation and feasibility to build.

Brian White reiterated that design standards would increase costs. They suggested that staff discuss with the Assessor to gain clarity on land values.

Tiffany Gunn stated that they attended the City Council presentation on Monday. They added that the questions and comments from City Council were right on and would like to see those questions be answered. They agreed on the proposed place of worship policy. They opposed allowing eight unrelated people in a dwelling unit due to concerns with dwelling houses in single family neighborhoods. They went on to explain their number one concern of education. With density increases, they worried about Richmond Public Schools (RPS). They stated that schools are already overcrowded. They recalled their own neighborhood and the unexpected addition of a trailer.

Director Vonck stated that part of developing draft 3 is providing studies that City Council and the public need to understand the zoning ordinance. They went on to describe schools as part of the infrastructure question. They stated that staff have been working more with schools. They added that the relationship between RPS and PDR has improved since Richmond 300, noting how RPS is on an accelerated timeline to improving infrastructure. They stated that PDR has shared information on new development projects

with RPS to help predict the number of incoming students in particular zones. They also explained that the current school population is half of that in 1970 but the distribution of students across the division is inequal. They stated that mostly households of one and two are coming into Richmond, and families with school-aged kids are not coming into Richmond.

Tiffany Gunn recalled their experience in the 9th district. They stated that their schools are overcrowded and cannot take more students. They suggested moving density and new development to areas where schools are not overcrowded.

Charlie Wilson, on the three questions, supported the zoning for places of worship. They stated that not every religious parcel is equal, so it makes sense to base zoning off the surrounding environment. They also added that the legislation is supported by YIGBY legislation. They went on to say that the new zoning sounds less scary, thereby quelling concerns about MX-3 zoning for places of worship. They moved on to discuss the 2 + 1 ADU question, stating that draft 3 presents the best possible zoning policy under given circumstances. They expressed mixed feelings about regulations on ADUs, but they also explained the creative aspects of retaining existing buildings. They stressed the importance and seriousness of the ADU policy, and they considered draft 3 to come close to pleasing everybody. They responded to the number of unrelated persons question, supporting the shift to building code for easier enforcement. They reinforced that tying the number to building code will help prevent from abuse of regulation. They further explained how property owners can go through proper channels to update their floor plan, change their building permit, change their use and occupancy, and get a new CO. They shared their thoughts on the overall code. They stated that the RKG analysis showcases the predicted use of new zoning, reducing the fearmongering around Code Refresh. They also expressed support for co-op housing.

Andrew Bunn supported Charles Menges' comments on the language of Code Refresh. They stated that the code is written in a less precise and policy-oriented way. They voiced concern about the inconsistencies and inapplicable references that Menges pointed out. They supported accessible language but believed there could be a middle ground between legislation language and the current language. For the number of unrelated persons in a dwelling unit, they strongly supported the shift to building code. They believed that a concrete number is redundant and carries over morality laws. They moved on to discuss the places of worship policy. They supported providing as much flexibility as possible to religious institutions. They referenced vacant historic church buildings in Church Hill. They hoped that the new zoning would allow for their use and rehabilitation. They stated that they supported MX-3 zoning for houses but also supported contextual housing-oriented zonings. They moved on to the 2 + 1 ADU policy, stating that they support the language in draft 1. They saw no use to the preservation bonus or limiting the number of buildings unless based on lot coverage, measurements, and other form requirements. They suggested airing on the side of flexibility with ADUs and number of buildings. They referenced the RKG analysis and how 2 + 1 ADU policy would not drastically change annual constructions. They also added that for multigenerational households and aging in place, 2 + 1 ADU policy would be incredibly important. They shared their thoughts on tree canopies. They stressed the importance of old growth tree protections. They stated that tree protections are not mutually exclusive to higher density, supporting building units with less impervious surfaces.

Casey Overton supported Andrew Bunn's sentiments around density. They appreciated the compromise draft 3 provides for density. They referred to the 2 + 1 ADU policy with a preservation bonus as an example. They expressed support for flexibility. They hoped that the zoning code can try to think 50 years into the future. They added that many people with concerns about the new zoning code may not even be in Richmond in 50 years. They stated that singling out survey results for young adults showed pro-density, and pro-flexibility. They went on to describe how the drawbacks of density and flexibility are less than the costs of over restricting building. They reiterated their support for zoning solutions that prioritize flexibility and allow for a Richmond for everyone. They moved on to discuss the places of worship zoning. They hoped property owners would understand that contextual-based zoning would provide the places of worship with the most freedom. They voiced support for how draft 3 addresses the needs of individual

communities but would like more flexibility. They wished for equity to be more of a priority in the code than beauty. They also cautioned council from letting political expediency get in the way of creative solutions. They transitioned to the family definition question. They agreed with Bunn's response. They responded to concerns about large numbers of people in one household, stating that there is strong motivation to room together. They went on to say that fears of high-density housing should not prevent others from affordable housing and living with shelter. They called upon council and staff to think creatively. They reiterated Gunn's sentiments on overcrowding schools. They hoped that equity could stand towards the top of the priority list.

Melissa Savenko stated the communities they represent in the 2nd district do not agree with a number of the items listed as major agreement. They stated that they are not on board with lot coverage, height, setbacks, and lot splits. They went on to stress the importance of the items for their denser neighborhoods. They stated that there is concern in their communities about the ability to do single room occupancy by right. They stated that the communities face a disproportionate burden of housing party houses due to the proximity to VCU. They voiced that their communities want the policy on number of unrelated persons in a house to remain as is, stressing the importance of community input. They suggested occupancy over 3 unrelated people require a SUP. They moved on to discuss places of worship. They stated that Jackson Ward and Carver neighborhoods have voiced concerns. They questioned the difference between a property developed by the church themselves or when the property is sold at market rate to a developer. They wished to better understand how the new zoning will work. They accepted the state YIGBY statute but wondered how far the Code Refresh policy would go. They moved on to discuss the 2 + 1 ADU policy. They believed that retaining the preservation bonus is essential. They emphasized their concern for historic preservation. They voiced concern about upzoning historic properties to RM. They stated that the next draft map would have to be analyzed and neighborhoods wish to understand how the upzoning will work on the ground.

Maritza Pechin supported Phillip Hart's comments on the number of persons in a household. They suggested going in the middle with five or six for the household size. They did not support using building code as it could allow for many people in a house with a larger size. They voiced support for the places of worship contextual zoning, stating that it was a good change. They moved on to discuss the 2 + 1 ADU policy. They shared personal information on their upbringing, displaying a presentation on their different housing. They stated that they lived in 14 different types of housing throughout their life in Puerto Rico and Massachusetts. They explained how renting out floors of housing was helpful for their single mother, allowing them to attend a good school. They went on to explain that two households or house types in one lot are not necessarily scary. They stated that different house types provide opportunities for unconventional households.

Preston Lloyd offered context on their responses to the three questions. They stated that Code Refresh inherited from the Richmond 300 deliberation process, fulfilling its goals and big moves. They explained that the zoning code looks to reduce regulatory barriers to new housing and transparently provide locations for the new housing. They also stated that the policy seeks to balance new housing with the existing neighborhood context. They added that both new housing units can be created while being sensitive to existing neighborhood context. They stated that each question should be looked at in the lens of creating new housing. They explained how the number of persons in a dwelling unit does not significantly change housing but does deserve clarification for neighborhoods concerned about rooming houses. They understood the intuitive sense of utilizing building code but believed that a clear standard of 5, like Hart suggested, would be better. They moved on to discuss places of worship. They supported the contextual zoning proposed by staff. They voiced concern that the contextual zoning would not match the Faith in Housing Act. They read the legislation mandates for permitted density and height, stating that the state legislation allows for more than the lower end of contextual zoning. They mentioned that it would be unfortunate to promise the community the contextual zoning policy just to have state legislation override it. They moved on to the 2 + 1 ADU proposal. They requested staff to provide information on how much engagement has been done in the 2 + 1 proposal and how much concern remains in the public. They

suggested that staff remove 2 + 1 from Code Refresh to allow some time to determine community engagement on duplexes. They suggested adding the 2 + 1 policy in the future as an amendment to the document.

Chair Greenfield voiced support for the places of worship zoning, describing it as a good compromise. They brought up Lloyd's concerns on adherence to the Faith in Housing Act. They stated that as long as the contextual zoning does not conflict with the state legislation, they support the policy. They moved on to the number of unrelated people in a building. They stated that the number of people in a dwelling unit is unenforceable. They explained how three is too little and eight is too much. They felt comfortable with the building code policy but also added that five would be a good number to land on if necessary. They moved on to the 2 + 1 ADU policy. They personally voiced indifference to whether their neighbors build duplexes or additions. They stated that many of their neighbors have large additions which could be a second dwelling unit. They conceded that the 2 + 1 ADU policy has been contentious for the past two years of the ZAC. They stated that part of the overwhelming opposition comes from misleading information. They referenced the RKG analysis, showing how the policy would not significantly change neighborhoods. They went on to say that they believe Code Refresh has included many positive policies which the community has asked for, and they did not wish for the new code to be bogged down by the 2 + 1 ADU. They added that the 2 + 1 ADU policy would not significantly add units but would continue to slow down the progress of Code Refresh. They suggested removing the policy from Code Refresh to allow for the much-needed zoning rewrite. They also voiced support for Brian White's remarks on design standards. They stated that they support tree canopy requirements for new development but opposed enforcing requirements on homeowners' private property. They provided an example of a homeowner building an addition and stated that they would not like to be told to plant more trees on their private property.

Director Vonck provided clarity on the places of worship policy. They referenced House Bill 1279. They stated that places of worship will go to RM-C by right, allowing for multi-family four stories. They added that the state legislation applies to affordable housing while draft 3 also includes market-rate housing. They added that the proposed policy is not meant to fulfill Code of Virginia and pre-emptively implement the Faith in Housing Act. They stated that they would need to add stipulations for affordable housing to match Code of Virginia if pre-emptively implementing the state code.

Councilwoman Robertson thanked Director Vonck and staff for their hours and work on Code Refresh. They stated that making hard decisions and including community desires is challenging. They appreciated getting to some feeling of consensus. They moved on to discuss the three questions. They stated that utilizing building code is the best way to go about the number of persons in a household. They liked the recommendations for places of worship based on neighborhoods and context. They also supported Preston Lloyd's comments on state legislation. They requested the policy come into compliance with state code, mentioning how January 1st, 2027, is just around the corner. They emphasized that many churches are underutilized in the community. They moved on to the number of units a lot. They recalled a SUP in their neighborhood. They stressed the importance of determining what affordable housing is. They believed that many people have misunderstandings about affordable housing. They went on to say that Richmond is expected to be home for homelessness in the region. They stated that the opportunity for affordable units and places where people are living by code will allow for diverse supply of housing choices. They voiced concern about directing density towards areas with multifamily housing and isolation and separation. They believed that zoning rewrite is an opportunity to make Richmond a friendly place. They recalled old zoning policies which restricted certain people from living in specific areas in Richmond. They stated that Richmond does not have to have restrictions that prevent certain people from living in specific neighborhoods. They believed that the zoning rewrite has made great progress and hoped to see it adopted.

Prior to open discussion, Chair Greenfield asked staff about the continuing work of the ZAC. They stated that the zoning ordinance would have to be turned over to decision makers eventually.

Director Vonck first responded to Councilwoman Robertson's remarks on affordable housing. They explained the distinction between what zoning can do and what it cannot do. They stated that they cannot zone for good management. They explained how certain households of eight may never face complaints while other households of three may regularly receive code violations. They also stated that the costs of building are mostly holding costs. They went on to stress the importance of reducing holding costs by allowing by right development. They emphasized that one third of SUPs are just to build single-family houses which lack wide enough lots. They stated that the zoning rewrite looks to balance different housing products and align with Richmond 300. They requested the council share further suggestions or comments with staff. They shared that staff hope for draft 3 to move through the decision-making process, presenting it to Planning Commission and City Council. They stated that the time with the ZAC is coming to an end, but the official end will be determined by Planning Commission. They expressed sincere appreciation for all the work and expertise the ZAC has provided.

Chair Greenfield reiterated the remarks of Director Vonck, expressing gratitude for the hard work of the ZAC.

Tiffany Gunn stated that there is not enough information about Code Refresh. They stressed that many people still do not know about Code Refresh, mentioning that there could be an uproar when draft 3 moved through the process. They suggested finding some way to spread the word. Charles Menges added that Code Refresh is a departure from traditional zoning. They stated that the change may cause some uproar, especially in single family residential neighborhoods. Tiffany Gunn mentioned that people only pay attention to zoning when constructing buildings. They stated that they only know about Code Refresh because they attend Town Hall meetings. Charlie Wilson mentioned how there is a bias of concerned individuals who show up to public meetings. They stated that many people could not explain their existing zoning. They also added that of the 230,000 people in Richmond, many people will just adapt to the change. They noted that even if the zoning rewrite comes as a surprise to some, it does not indicate a poor rewrite process.

Maritza Pechin reinforced that even if the law changes, there will not be a sudden change in how Richmond looks. They referenced the RKG analysis and how the changes will not be very noticeable, especially in residential neighborhoods. They also mentioned how there will be amendments to the zoning ordinance after adoption.

Andrew Bunn echoed Charlie Wilson's remarks. They added that most people do not think about zoning and should not have to read a technical document such as the zoning ordinance. They firmly agreed with Maritza Pechin that there will not be sudden changes. They added that most of the zoning looks to match what is on the ground with the new zoning. They stated that they have been impressed with the outreach and process of Code Refresh, especially off the back of award-winning Richmond 300.

Charles Menges agreed that the change would be gradual. They added that building an ADU next to a neighbor's house would be noticeable, mentioning that it should be a concern staff have. They went on to discuss the timing of the ZAC. They voiced hesitation at the ZAC sunsetting soon if draft 3 must be looked over. They also stated that they could see the need for draft 4 based on the changes present in draft 3.

Preston Lloyd voiced concern about making Code Refresh too regulatory and slowing down development. They appreciated the work done by Ms. Pitts and Director Vonck to balance the number of development standards.

Chair Greenfield thanked the ZAC and staff for their work.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Greenfield adjourned the meeting at 6:29 P.M.