# Richmond 300: Code Refresh
# Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Date: May 20th, 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

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**Attendance:**

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| **Members Present:** | Elizabeth Greenfield, Preston Lloyd, Phillip Hart, Melissa Savenko, Andrew Bunn, Brian White, Bennie Gates, Riley Champine, Charlie Wilson, Charles Menges, Maritza Pechin, Damian Pitt, Councilwoman Ellen Robertson, Tiffany Gunn, Casey Overton, Jennifer Mullen (virtual) |
| **Members Absent:** | Eric Mai, Wayne Credle, Kendra Norrell, David Johannas, Latasha White |
| **Staff Present:** | Dir. Kevin Vonck and Sr. Dep. Dir. Marianne Pitts (Department of Planning and Development Review),<br>René Biberstein and Colin Scarff (Code Studio, consulting team representatives), Kyle Talente and August Benzo (RKG Associates) |

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call**

Member Preston Lloyd called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M.. A quorum was present.

Chair Greenfield arrived at 4:03 P.M.

Virtual participation requests were received from Member Mullen. Mullen stated their reason for need to join virtually. A motion to approve the request was made, seconded, and approved by the council.

**Chair's Comments**

Chair Greenfield reminded everyone that the purpose of the Council is to advise the Planning Commission, Department of Planning and Development Review, and the consultant team on the zoning ordinance revision process. Chair Greenfield also reminded members to speak loudly so those attending virtually are able to hear them and to also announce their name so those listening will know who's speaking.

**Approval of February 2026 Meeting Notes**

Preston Lloyd motioned to approve the February 2026 meeting notes, seconded by Phillip Hart. After Council vote, the February 2026 meeting notes were approved, unanimously.

**Approval of March 2026 Meeting Notes**

Andrew Bunn motioned to approve the March 2026 meeting notes, seconded by Phillip Hart. After Council vote, the March 2026 meeting notes were approved, unanimously.

**Roll Call**
Chair Greenfield called the roll.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Greenfield opened the floor to public comment.

Chair Greenfield elected to begin with virtual public comment, ensuring virtual participants had enough time to speak.

Sam Runner (virtual), resident of Shockoe Bottom, on Code Refresh generally, appreciated the Council's work and voiced support for the zoning rewrite. They stressed the importance of a wide variety of houses at wide ranges of prices to support new and old residents of Richmond. They hoped for less special use permits (SUPs) and more by-right designations. They mentioned balancing welcoming new residents and maintaining conditions for old residents to prevent gentrification.

Chair Greenfield welcomed in-person public comment.

Annika Schunn, Housing Advocate at Housing Opportunities Made Equal, thanked the ZAC for its tremendous effort over the last 2 years. They voiced concern about underrepresentation of certain groups. They referenced a survey conducted by Embold Research on 621 registered voters in Richmond. They stated that the survey attained great representation of the city over incomes, education level, and racial identity. They cited the study's finding that 58% of surveyed residents are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. They emphasized statistics on residents lacking affordable housing or housing options in the City. They stressed survey respondents' belief that affordable housing should be a top priority. They cited that 70% support building duplexes, apartments, and condos in residential areas. They stated roughly 60% support duplexes in detached single-family neighborhoods and five-story apartments along larger neighborhood roads. They went on to mention that residents showed strong support for neighborhood commercial housing. They shared open-ended responses to the survey about low affordability and diversity. They stated that building market-rate housing would be useful in combatting the affordability crisis and preventing further escalating prices. They stated that the Homes for All Neighbors Coalition urges the council to prioritize opportunities for diverse housing. They listed policies they support: creating a small duplex exemption to the preservation bonus for starter homes, adhering to building code for overcrowding and definition of a family, and expanding opportunities for low density apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings. They requested the council to look into displacement data presented in the 2026 Market Value Analysis (MVA).

Gustavo Espinosa, tenant organizer with the Legal Aid Justice Center, on West Grace Street zoning, opposed the previous meeting's public comment on the street. They quoted their neighbor's comments on rooming houses as crime ridden. They stated that negative perception of rooming houses derives from racist and classist views. They emphasized that wealthy homeowners have dominated the conversation, highlighting the majority minority demographic of Richmond. They provided insight into their experience with West Grace Street as a tenant organizer. They stated that landlords take advantage of the housing shortage and price out tenants. They questioned why certain neighborhoods voice extreme backlash to simple proposals like duplexes. They worried about representing low-income, minority neighborhoods in community engagement for Code Refresh. They stated that each neighborhood has different needs, such as opening up historically excluded neighborhoods or protecting historically displaced residents. They emphasized the need to listen to renters. They opposed the conclusion that housing development is too slow to help with affordable housing. They added that zoning is a tool to prevent displacement and can decrease escalating rental rates. They asked the council to promote equity and the human rights of housing.

Kathy Hamberg, board member of West Grace Street, on rooming houses, refreshed the council on the history of West Grace Street. They stated that, in the 1970s, West Grace Street was known for prostitution, drugs, and crime. They asked for a better choice than 6 units in a dwelling for West Grace

Street and Monument Avenue. They stated that they examined the data from the 2020 U.S. Census and found 60% of the Fan to be occupied by renters. They went on to say that people moving into the Fan wish to rent or would obtain housing elsewhere. They posed a solution, recommending a middle ground housing area between 6 to 12 dwelling units and single-family residences. They suggested making duplexes by-right in the Fan and grandfathering in existing apartment buildings. They proposed duplexes as a win for everyone, allowing aging in place and even housing density across the Fan.

Lauren Marshall, Director of Marketing and Communications at Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity, on housing, stated that Richmond Habitat recently dedicated their 400th home. They expressed hope to expedite the home building process. They highlighted zoning as a useful tool in home building. They advocated to include duplexes by-right, with a size limit, in Draft 3. They stated that the change would greatly help nonprofit home builders and provide more housing in limited land areas. They stressed the importance of starter homes and commented on the benefits of a stable home.

Seeing no other members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Greenfield closed the public comment period and thanked everyone for their comments.

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

**COUNCIL RECAP AND MEETING INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Marianne Pitts, Deputy Department Director of Planning & Development Review, provided a recap of the previous meeting held in April. They reminded council of their discussion on development scenarios in residential detached districts with consultant Kyle Talente from RKG Associates. They stated that Talente will rejoin council to go over an expanded market analysis on MX, RM, and RA districts. They mentioned the previous meeting's tree canopy presentation by Tara Warden at the Office of Sustainability. They clarified agenda timing, calling out the last 30 minutes as an open discussion on Code Refresh.

**TIMELINE FOR ZONING ADVISORY COUNCIL AND DRAFT 3**

Ms. Marianne Pitts invited Mr. Kevin Vonck, Director of Planning & Development Review, to provide insight into the timeline of ZAC and roll out of draft 3. They referenced the immense feedback and discussions surrounding draft 2 of Code Refresh. They explained how the release of draft 3 would occur in segments. They denoted the first segment to be a handful of critical points like places of worship and number of units per lot. They shared that three workshops would occur with City Council, Planning Commission, and the ZAC to clarify policy for the critical points.

Chair Greenfield asked if the entirety of draft 3 would be shared in June. Mr. Kevin Vonck affirmed that draft 3 would not fully be shared. They explained how they were hoping to include feedback from the June workshops before sharing the entire draft.

Phillip Hart asked when Code Refresh would move forward to Planning Commission and Zoning. Mr. Kevin Vonck shared that no timetable was available. They expressed desire to share draft 3 as soon as possible. They stated that they would work with Planning Commission to determine when the draft could move forward.

Councilwoman Robertson asked if there was a projected time draft 3 would be presented to Planning Commission and City Council. Mr. Kevin Vonck stated that they hoped to finish draft 3 with the consultants and feedback by the end of June. They mentioned that the official governing bodies would then determine whether it requires more workshop or could move forward.

Charles Menges posed a question about if draft 3 would be a complete zoning ordinance. Mr. Kevin Vonck affirmed that the draft 3 presented to the council would include all sections of the zoning ordinance.

Maritza Pechin clarified that draft 3, if finalized, would go to the community and be refined if necessary. They emphasized how the future of the draft relies on community feedback. Charles Menges referenced the incomplete sections of draft 2, inquiring if they would be included in draft 3. They specified certain definitions such as conditional use permits (CUPs) and SUPs. Mr. Kevin Vonck stated that draft 3 would be a complete zoning ordinance.

Charles Menges voiced concern about drafts 1 and 2, stating that they have not been written in normal legislative language. They compared the language of the consultants with the legislative language of other zoning ordinances. They asked if the city attorney had approved the language of the drafts. Mr. Kevin Vonck stated that they were working with the city attorney to make necessary changes to provisions or add in clauses. They mentioned their consideration of new state code. They responded that yes, the existing language of the drafts would be published. They clarified that the zoning ordinance would not be rewritten in legislative language. They provided insight into the recodification process and how code would be attached as an appended document, similar to Charlottesville's zoning ordinance.

Councilwoman Robertson inquired about the processes to finalize draft 3. They questioned if there would be public hearings before being presented to the council, Planning Commission, and City Council. Mr. Kevin Vonck clarified the purpose of the workshops as an opportunity to gather feedback. They desired to model the City Council budget sessions and receive targeted feedback from the councils. They conceded that not everyone would be 100% satisfied with the zoning code but emphasized reaching as much consensus as possible. They clarified the formal process for finalizing the code, mentioning City Council bringing the code to Planning Commission. They stated they were uncertain of how much engagement draft 3 would receive apart from the legal process.

Bennie Gates thanked Mr. Kevin Vonck for his professional, effective, and transparent manner at last month's City Council meeting. They expressed frustration at negative, wrongful comments and suggestions. Mr. Kevin Vonck added that public hearings provide an opportunity to correct misconceptions and educate the public.

Preston Lloyd expressed gratitude for direct engagement with Planning Commission and City Council before the council makes their final recommendation. They cited state code, mentioning how Planning Commission is required to hold a public hearing. They went on to state that City Council would host a second public hearing before they make a final decision. They stated how Planning Commission create ZAC as a body to provide technical feedback. They stressed the importance of engaging in Planning Commission and their thoughts before providing a recommendation.

Phillip Hart followed up on Preston Lloyd's remarks. They stated that the council has not given any votes, only providing their thoughts on certain issues. They asked if the council would take a vote on the draft or take any formal action. Mr. Kevin Vonck responded that the council was not created as a voting body. Chair Greenfield suggested creating a summary of ZAC's thoughts to send to Planning Commission. They expressed sharing highlights of the body to the Chair of Planning Commission. Mr. Kevin Vonck acknowledged all the work the council has done for the zoning ordinance. They supported forwarding something to the Planning Commission. They expressed creating a summary similar to a court opinion with suggestions from the council to the Planning Commission.

Charles Menges asked for clarification on Mr. Kevin Vonck's remarks. Vonck stated that a report would be sent by the council to the Planning Commission. Menges questioned how the report would be developed without voting. Vonck suggested that PDR craft the report and present it to the ZAC. They stated that ZAC could refine and gather consensus on the report. They emphasized two aspects of the report: ensuring the reports comes across as the ZAC speaking and voicing the opinions of individual members. They stated that council members could voice a minority opinion and include individual comments on the document.

Councilwoman Robertson thanked Mr. Kevin Vonck for their effort on the zoning rewrite. They appreciated Vonck's desire to replicate the budget process efficiency for the zoning rewrite. They stressed the

importance of addressing elephants in the room in meetings with the other bodies. They voiced concern about the work sessions increasing time necessary to finalize draft 3. They stated that the bodies need enough time to appreciate the document in its entirety. They mentioned that City Council also has other legislation on the docket. They recommended appointing a citizen commission to ensure that the bodies making decisions on Code Refresh are fully informed by the work done by volunteer boards. They suggested talking to Chief of Staff RJ to determine the best actions moving forward to balance City Council's other legislation. They also emphasized the importance of developing short presentations with condensed information, shying away from bombarding the relevant bodies with data and policies. Mr. Kevin Vonck agreed. They added that the workshop would aid in sharing 5 to 8 major issues that define the ordinance.

## CONSULTANT PRESENTATION ON AND DISCUSSION OF EXPANDED MARKET ANALYSIS

### Expanded Market Analysis on MX, RM, and RA Zoning Districts

Kyle Talente, consultant with RKG Associates, began the expanded market analysis presentation. They stated that the slides in methodology and subarea markets were the same as their earlier market analysis. They reminded council of their creation of the 6 subarea markets. They refreshed council on the methodology of screening parcels and how certain parcels were excluded due to unlikelihood of redevelopment. They explained how financial feasibility was tested using a residual land value analysis, involving land costs, construction costs, and revenue assumptions. They stated that they looked at rate of change analyses based on properties which were financially feasible from an acquisition perspective.

They listed the key results and findings of the MX zone. They stated that the potential for redevelopment is limited due to area of the city. They found subareas 3 and 4, specifically commercial corridors like Scott's Addition, the Diamond District, and Manchester, to see the most potential redevelopment. In response to questions about the state of commercial properties, Talente stated that most properties in the Fan are too valuable for redevelopment under current market conditions. They mentioned that it would not be feasible for developers to redevelop those properties. They went on to explain the low likelihood of towers. They stated that the market will deliver 5 to 7 story buildings, even where MX zoning allows more height. They also added that although the MX district can produce a good number of units, the development would not happen overnight, rather over decades.

They moved on to show the numbers on MX parcel development. They explained how the differential between future parcel value with rezoning compared to current value would not cause a substantial number of turnovers each year. They estimated 1200 to 1600 units annually over 20 developments. They clarified that only those values make up 12% of all MX parcels.

They then listed the key results and findings of the RM zone. They emphasized that RM zoning functions more as preservation since most parcels are already developed.

Chair Greenfield requested to pause the presentation for questions from council on the MX zone.

Damian Pitt, on MX zoning in subarea 4, clarified whether the findings on development feasibility applied only to the sporadic MX zoning throughout the region. Talente confirmed that the analysis was based only on MX zoned parcels within subarea 4. Damian Pitts followed up, stating that the 5 to 7 story buildings prediction did not apply to subarea 4 due to MX-3 zoning. Talente stated that the 5 to 7 story buildings predictions applied more so to the MX-13 and MX-U zonings.

Brian White, on the estimate of annual units delivered, questioning that the units indicated were new developments made possible by rezoning and not general multi-family developments. Talente clarified that the estimate reflects the feasibility and likelihood of properties turning over. They emphasized how although more parcels may be feasible to be redeveloped than the annual units estimate, their estimate

comes from the likelihood of turnover and the investment market's willingness to add new units. White followed up, confirming that the estimate is based on the rezoning. Talente affirmed White's statement.

Charlie Wilson wondered how many apartments are generated annually under current zoning. Mr. Kevin Vonck stated that it is ranged between 2000 and 2500 multifamily units citywide. Brian White added that CoStar shows significantly more than 2500. Charlie Wilson stated that the baseline would be useful information to have. Melissa Savenko stated that they found it to be 5000 multifamily units annually. Mr. Kevin Vonck inquired as to who published the report and whether it depicted Richmond Proper or Richmond MSA. Savenko and White showed Vonck the CoStar and Thalhimer Report. Charlie Wilson added that the 5000 may incorporate townhomes and other housing apart from apartments.

Chair Greenfield commented on the methodology of the analysis. They expressed hesitation to excluding church parcels as unlikely to redevelop due to new state legislation. Kyle Talente responded that they could go back and include churches in the analysis. They asked for clarity on the state legislation. Chair Greenfield stated that places of worship would be able to redevelop by-right to provide multifamily and affordable housing. They mentioned that the redevelopment could change the number of units being developed and thereby impact the feasibility study. Talente added that the City could analyze how many places of worship contain land assets that could be infilled.

Riley Champine asked if there were specific clusters within subarea 3 and 4 where development is predicted to occur. Talente responded that commercial corridors would see the most development. They clarified that it is a type of property distinction as opposed to a geographic location. They stated that areas where high value development has occurred like Manchester are prime candidates for new development. Preston Lloyd requested that Talente refine the presentation and add their remarks about commercial corridors and high value development as a key takeaway. Phillip Hart questioned if the commercial corridor development expanded past subareas 3 and 4. Talente stated that other subareas would not see as much development on the corridor because the market is not as strong.

Mr. Kevin Vonck clarified Charlie Wilson's previous question about apartments generated annually. They stated that their estimate came from the number of projects they are permitting per year. They mentioned that CoStar depicts the number of active projects.

Maritza Pechin, on estimated parcels developing annually, stated that the predicted 19 is an overestimate. They mentioned that developers tend to develop 200 units unless the market is very good. They stated that it would most likely be 6 to 10 parcels, not 19. Talente agreed and mentioned that parcel sizes vary as well. They stated that not every parcel can support 200 units.

Phillip Hart stated that they supported the conclusion that most development would occur along commercial corridors. They mentioned how it relates to Richmond 300 and its planned density. They stated that the analysis corroborates Richmond 300. Chair Greenfield agreed. Damian Pitt stated that the similarity to Richmond 300 showcases the alignment of the zoning ordinance with the Master Plan.

Kyle Talente continued on to the RM Zoning Feasibility Analysis. They reiterated how the RM zone acts more as a preservation zone. They stated that roughly 2% of RM parcels are financially realistic redevelopment candidates. They emphasized how the analysis focuses on current market conditions, stating that the analysis could change should the market change. They explained how assemblage could unlock additional units, but it is complicated and not guaranteed. They noted that the 3 RM subzones are unlikely to produce large outcomes, estimating about 2800 units. They stressed that the RM subareas would not be a significant solution to create more housing.

Charlie Wilson questioned if Talente was able to separate between RM-A, B, and C. Talente asked their colleague August Benzo to answer the question. Benzo stated that there was no meaningful distinction between the zones and what would be produced.

Kyle Talente moved on to the Residential Attached (RA Zones) Feasibility Analysis. They stated that the

RA zone has limited redevelopment opportunities, similar to the RM district. They noted that very few parcels are vacant, and most redevelopment would occur in subareas 3 and 4. They added that vacant lot infill is a more realistic and feasible development path. They stated that there would be a modest yield of 70 to 100 units annually. They stressed that infill would have the greatest potential.

Charlie Wilson questioned the definition of units. They asked if the definition of units in the feasibility analysis included multiple units on one dwelling or considered number of developments. Talente clarified that the estimated number of units recognizes that certain parcels can accommodate more parcels than others. They stated that their estimation of units considered varying size of parcels.

Kyle Talente concluded the presentation.

Riley Champine reiterated their interest in seeing church properties included within the analysis. Talente stated that they would look into church properties.

Charlie Wilson questioned if the analysis would be an appendix open to the public. They desired the public to be able to compare the analysis with market supply at face value. They suggested including a delta between current market supply and the predicted supply. Mr. Kevin Vonck stated that RKG would combine their analysis from March and May into one analysis with a focus on corridors, teardowns, and redevelopment. Vonck stated that the combined document would be released on the Code Refresh webpage and as a supporting document for Code Refresh. Charlie Wilson voiced curiosity into how much of a difference the predicted and current supply would show.

Damian Pitt voiced support towards Wilson's remarks. They hoped that the analysis would better frame the debates around Code Refresh. They recommended doing further analysis and listing a combined total projection of potential development units. They wished to know what the predicted analyses meant for potential buildout scenarios and exactly how many housing units would be produced. They emphasized the importance of hitting the target number of new housing units.

Phillip Hart voiced support for the significant increase in predicted number of new housing units. They found the increase in housing units to showcase the impact of Code Refresh policies. They stated that only two of the subareas would have additional units. They pointed out that the 2000 new units currently being built are spread across the city, not just subareas 3 and 4. They concluded that subareas 3 and 4 would see significantly more units. They questioned if this line of thinking was correct. Talente stated that the analysis shows a slightly higher output than current production. They also added that the increased output makes it easier for development. They highlighted the ease of developing by-right as opposed to seeking a SUP. They mentioned how the ease could translate into more housing being developed. They conceded, however, that the development market would not triple their production annually. They stated that oversupply of the market would have adverse effects on the market economy. They emphasized how the supply side of the market remains impacted by demand. Talente also added that the new zoning would remove barriers to supply, increasing output.

Andrew Bunn agreed with Talente's remarks on the supply side of development. They noted that affordability is the opposite of the market analysis. They hoped that by making development easier, more people would develop for less. They stated that this analysis would not move housing prices down because developers hold stock to make profit. They stressed that opening up opportunities is the best option to address affordability.

Charlie Wilson, on MX findings, questioned how corridors and nodes such as Southside Plaza would not be developed. They noted how subareas 3 and 4 were most likely to see development but found it implausible other nodes referenced by Richmond 300 would not see development. Talente responded that the existing value of the assets is greater than what an investor would be willing to pay to develop under current market conditions. They followed up that there are small pockets of Richmond where revenue potential is similar to that of subareas 3 and 4 and could see development. They stated that the small pockets would not be viewable on the scale of their analysis. They also mentioned that the analysis

was based on the average value, not fine-grained values of small, independent areas. They added that the analysis assumes that the City does not take action like providing abatements or incentivizing development. They included that the analysis does not address LITC projects or housing beyond market rate, for-profit projects. They distinguished that simply because the analysis says it will not happen does not mean development cannot happen in other areas and on different scales. They stated how obstacles could be overcome through City initiatives like funds or long-time property owners with low basis on their land could develop for cheaper.

Charles Menges stated that RD residents feel hesitant about duplexes being built in their neighborhood. They stated that Code Refresh takes a one-size-fits-all view, causing everyone to suffer or everyone to contribute to more affordable housing. They asked if Talente could carve out RD parcels which would be feasible to develop and then compare the data with other zoning districts. They clarified that they would like to see the predicted number of non-RD units. Maritza Pechin added that Damian Pitt did the math. They stated that significantly less units would be developed in RD zoning than others. Damian Pitt stated that at most 612 parcels per year could be developed in RD. Charles Menges asked what the total number of likely units developed would be without counting the RD district. Damian Pitt stated that it would be 1650 units from RM and MX.

Charlie Wilson stated that 0 for the RD district could be interpreted as how many single-family dwellings are being built annually today. They added that they believe RD zonings are not as dramatized as people think, suggesting that units will not change significantly. Charles Menges stated that there will not be much redevelopment done in RD districts. They suggested not including those districts. They mentioned the political nature of adopting Code Refresh and how City Council would be more likely to adopt the new ordinance if RD districts were carved out. Casey Overton stated that even if the likelihood is low, homeowners may add units to their home for personal reasons. They noted that preserving flexibility for homeowners and developers would be in the best interest. They stated that it would increase opportunity for the “Missing Middle.”

Melissa Savenko stated that ADUs were adopted of right. They mentioned how the opportunity of affordable housing through ADUs has yet to be explored. They questioned why Code Refresh is jumping ahead to other units when the effects of ADUs have not been fully seen. They stated that ADUs may create the “Missing Middle,” especially in dense areas. Charlie Wilson stated that they built an ADU. They added that it was financially scary because they had to refinance their home and max out credit cards. They stated that, as a homeowner, the later incoming 1000-dollar rent was not worth the ordeal. They voiced hesitation at the usage of ADUs as a macro-tool for affordable housing. They suggested that developers may be able to sell homes as a package with ADUs, but it would not be feasible for average homeowners.

Riley Champine supported what Casey Overton stated. They emphasized providing flexibility to homeowners. They desired to build an ADU themselves to be feasible housing spaces as opposed to Airbnbs. They voiced opposition to carving out certain zoning districts and impairing their ability to develop. Melissa Savenko clarified that they do not wish to carve out districts. They asked why policy has jumped to duplex plus ADU instead of giving ADUs an opportunity to work. Maritza Pechin added that the duplex plus ADU is only allowed after meeting certain requirements. They stated that it would not be definitive for every parcel.

Councilwoman Ellen Robertson, on ADUs and duplexes, stated there is no correlation between the two types of housing. They asked if LITC and affordable housing could be included in an analysis. They questioned if the zoning ordinance would be revisited at some frequency. Maritza Pechin stated that the zoning ordinance should be revisited over the next years, but a full-scale rewrite will not take place. Robertson stressed the need to include LITC and subsidized housing. They noted how affordable housing is misleading if only assumed to be subsidized and LITC housing. They emphasized how affordable housing includes diverse housing options. They stated that the right message must be sent out about affordable housing and what it entails for the general population. They went on to add how the misleading message has created reservation against the zoning rewrite. They mentioned how the next five years will

have many new developments for affordable housing. They wished for the significant number of new developments to be clear and taken into consideration.

Charlie Wilson, on corridors in Southside and Scott's Addition, asked if Talente could analyze the impact of IX zoning.

Riley Champine, on presentation graphics, suggested creating a breakout or reader's aide with zoning districts matched to subareas.

**COUNCIL OPEN DISCUSSION ON CODE REFRESH**

Chair Greenfield opened the floor for ZAC members to discuss any comments and concerns with the zoning ordinance. They asked for members to be kind and respectful of each other's opinions.

Melissa Savenko questioned what an affordable price would be for duplexes as starter homes. They agreed with Councilwoman Robertson on how the definitions of affordable housing can be conflated. Charlie Wilson stated that they discussed affordable prices a year ago and compared it to Durham, N.C.. They mentioned how Durham does density bonuses with an extra house of 1200 S.F. and other regulations. They also stated that there would be enforcement issues. They went on to say how the affordable price in Richmond could be compared with other programs like that of Durham. Savenko asked what the exact number would be. Chair Greenfield referenced the 30% of income rule. They stated how, based on the area median income (AMI), no more than 30% of income should be spent on housing. They calculated that affordable housing would be roughly 250,000 dollars. Savenko then added that houses cannot be built for less than 200 dollars per S.F.. They stated that an affordable 250,000-dollar home would not be buildable at that construction price.

Brian White stated that the council has focused on how zoning policy will affect housing affordability. They noted that building standards and proposed mandatory proffers have the opposite effect of affordability. They suggested council discuss those standards and how it would impact the ability to construct affordable housing. Maritza Pechin agreed with White's comments. They stated how conforming to standards increases cost. They wondered if there are too many development standards. They added that fitting all the development standards also decreases the number of units available to be built. For housing affordability, they expressed concern at the average housing sales price. They referenced the Market Value Analysis by PlanRVA and how sales prices have gone up exponentially. They stated how, in 2014, the weakest housing markets cost 54,000 dollars while they now cost 240,000 dollars. They also stated that the 250,000-dollar goal is not realistic because of market constraints and rising prices.

Melissa Savenko voiced frustration that the council does not discuss starter homes and their logistics enough. They questioned how to create policy which supports affordable housing and starter homes. Maritza Pechin stated that more land must be available and Richmond must adopt a more flexible land use policy. Savenko added that small lot subdivisions are necessary. They stated that most of the zoning ordinances policies and the council's discussions do not actually achieve affordable starter homes.

Chair Greenfield expressed hesitation to small lot subdivision. They stated that the small lots may not match with the neighborhood, frustrating homeowners. They went on to say how property owners would complain that small lots hurt their property values. They said it becomes a cycle of needing smaller homes for affordability but bigger homes to match neighborhoods. They stated how neighborhoods need to understand that housing will not look the same as each neighborhood. Melissa Savenko added that Henrico County does small lot subdivisions with design guidance but did not know its results. Chair Greenfield stated that Henrico County's subdivisions are new, so inventory and construction rates are limited.

Charlie Wilson, on large affordable housing developments, mentioned a home in Highland Grove. They stated that the home is on the market between 80% AMI and 120% AMI qualified buyers. They described

the home as 1300 S.F. four-bedroom three-bath for 365,000 dollars. They emphasized that the project is very “Affordable.” Maritza Pechin, however, mentioned how long it took to achieve affordable housing and complete the project. Melissa Savenko referenced the Armstrong project and how it was intended to be affordable. Wilson stated that the Highland Grove project is a different version of the Armstrong project.

Charlie Wilson, on starter homes, mentioned how RA districts do not have lot width or area minimums. They suggested that RA districts could be an ideal district to place small units. They predicted that corner lots would be the best location to subdivide, thanks to the secondary street. They conceded that the subdivisions may disrupt neighborhood character, but there is an opportunity to construct townhomes. They stated that current development standards do not allow subdivisions along secondary streets. They recognized the importance of preserving neighborhood character, suggesting allowing subdivisions on vacant corner lots or finding other work arounds.

Melissa Savenko reiterated their frustration on starter homes. They noticed how lots of discussion revolves around large-scale development like apartments. They noted that most people are angry about the lack of starter homes. They suggested addressing starter homes in Code Refresh rather than waiting for revisions or a zoning rewrite down the line. Casey Overton recalled their own conversations about affordability and home buying. They stated that younger generations are being more creative with financial constraints, mentioning buying homes together. They stressed the importance of flexibility. They voiced how co-living and co-ownership are the only ways to get truly affordable housing. They added that eliminating units or ADUs limits the flexibility of co-living or co-ownership. They stated that using form in an existing building is easier than constructing new units. They mentioned subdividing a large home into multiple units to ensure financial feasibility. They recommended that council consider how to make forms and the ordinance as flexible as possible. They stated that the council has a responsibility to stretch and advocate for density in order to achieve affordable housing.

Chair Greenfield reiterated their request from previous meetings for more RC designations on the map.

Andrew Bunn supported Casey Overton’s remarks. They referenced their neighborhood and how most people consider 250,000 to 300,000 dollars to be affordable. They also stated that affordability is more than the price of the house. They added the steps of saving money for down payment amidst rent prices and financial constraints. They also stressed how changes to the zoning ordinance would not cause dramatic changes and development. Rather, they framed the changes as status quo plus some change. They stated how 2200 units would be created, but the new units would not be enough for all newcomers and residents moving around within the City. They suggested thinking bigger for policies.

Damian Pitt reiterated Melissa Savenko’s point on starter homes. They added that some types of housing are being overlooked. They stated that duplexes can be starter homes. They suggested finding ways to convert large homes into multiple small single-family units. They added that apartments are another opportunity for homeownership. They also stated that supply increases should suppress rising prices, allowing residents to move out of co-housing and buy homes.

Bennie Gates recalled the story of their younger cousin. They mentioned how they cannot afford housing in Richmond and had to move to Chesterfield. They also added how their cousin’s children could not afford housing in Richmond and moved to Georgia and North Carolina. They voiced frustration that born and bred Richmond residents must leave their own city to purchase homes. They also voiced frustration that Code Refresh changes few policies for housing. They argued that there is a struggle between the haves and the have-nots, contributing to the housing crisis. They stated how it is unfair to struggle for homeownership in their own neighborhood and city.

Riley Champine suggested hearing more detail on which development standards and aspects of construction drive costs up.

Chair Greenfield, on development standards, requested more discussion about its specifics. Mr. Kevin Vonck responded that there will always be an issue of cost for standards. They stated that development standards do need to be simplified and match the public's support. They mentioned that they tested the development standards against projects the public broadly supports, trying to ensure their construction by-right. They stated that Code Refresh is trying to fix the over usage of SUPs for projects which should not require them.

Charlie Wilson mentioned the stagnation of creative processes when design teams do not understand the standards and policies set forth.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Greenfield adjourned the meeting at 6:30 P.M..