

**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Regular Session 7:00PM Community Room, Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard:

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**REGULAR SESSION**

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**1. Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held after due and proper notice in the Community Room, Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, Salem, Virginia, at 7:00 p.m., on February 14, 2024. The item to be heard was continued from the January 10, 2024, meeting.

There being the members of said Commission, to wit: Vicki G. Daulton, Chair; Denise P. King, Vice Chair, Reid Garst, Neil L. Conner, and Jackson Beamer, constituting a legal quorum, presided together with H. Robert Light, Assistant City Manager; Jim Guynn, City Attorney; Mary Ellen Wines, Planning & Zoning Administrator; Maxwell S. Dillon, City Planner; and Charles E. Van Allman, Jr., Director of Community Development, and the following business was transacted:

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

**2. Consent Agenda**

**A. Minutes of the December meeting**

Consider acceptance of the minutes from the December 13, 2023, work session and regular meeting. (Continued from the January 10, 2024, meeting.)

Jackson Beamer motioned to approve minutes of the December 11, 2023, work session and regular meeting. Denise King seconded the motion.

Ayes: Beamer, Conner, Daulton, Garst, King

**B. Minutes of the January meeting**

Consider acceptance of the minutes from the January 10, 2024, work session and regular meeting.

Jackson Beamer motioned to approve minutes of the January 10, 2024, work session and regular meeting. Denise King seconded the motion.

Ayes: Beamer, Conner, Daulton, Garst, King

**C. Minutes of the January meeting**

Consider acceptance of the minutes from the January 29, 2024, special work session.

Jackson Beamer motioned to approve minutes of the January 29, 2024, special work session. Denise King seconded the motion.

Ayes: Beamer, Conner, Daulton, Garst, King

**3. New Business**

**A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance**

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Virginia Baptist Children's Home (dba HopeTree Family Services), property owner, for rezoning the properties located at 1000 block Red Ln and a portion of 860 Mount Vernon Lane (Tax Map #'s 41-1-1, 41-1-2, 41-1-3, 41-1-4, 41-1-5, 41-1-6, and a portion of 44-3-10) from RSF Residential Single Family to PUD Planned Unit District. (Continued from the January 10, 2024, meeting.)

Staff noted the following:

The subject property is commonly known as “HopeTree”, formerly as the “Baptist Home” and consists of seven parcels land of approximately 62.318 acres. It is bounded by the Stonegate & Emerald Hills subdivisions and North Broad Street on the west, East Carrollton Avenue on the south, Red Lane on the east, and Interstate 81 to the north. The property is currently, and will continue, to be the home of HopeTree Family Services. These services include clinical services such as equine assisted psychotherapy, therapeutic foster care, the HopeTree Academy, therapeutic group homes, and developmental disability homes.

This request is to rezone the property in order for it to be developed as a planned unit district that will contain the existing HopeTree services, a significant number of residential building types (not to exceed 340 units), and mixed use structures that will contain commercial uses. Approximately 40% of the site will be preserved or used as public or private open space areas including a proposed lawn area near the center of the site. As a planned unit district is extremely flexible by design, the exact building types and locations have not been determined.

The applicant is proposing access adjustments to the property. According to the proposal, the existing main entrance from Mount Vernon Lane and East Carrollton will remain. The northern entrance on Red Lane will be moved in line with the intersection to the North Oaks Subdivision. The second existing entrance from Red Lane will remain and four additional entrances from Red Lane will be added. Two additional entrances will be constructed on East Carrollton Avenue along with the

opening and extension of North Broad Street. All roads within the PUD will be privately owned.

Several potential areas for stormwater management are identified throughout the plan. As a PUD is designed to be flexible in nature, the exact size and location of the SWM areas have not been determined. As a light imprint development, stormwater facilities are often small in nature and dispersed throughout the development. The actual number of facilities and their design will depend on engineering and regulatory requirements and will be reviewed and approved through the site plan review process.

#### PROFFERED CONDITIONS:

The Planned Unit District master plan (labeled PUD Rezoning Application in attached documentation) will constitute the required conditional zoning proffers. All other documentation included throughout the application process is supportive in nature.

#### INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS OF TRAFFIC DATA SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT:

The City hired Mattern & Craig, an independent, licensed professional engineer to review the traffic data that was submitted with the request for accuracy and to obtain a third party opinion.

In summary, Mattern & Craig found the need for an expansion of the study area in regard to the intersections examined (not just Red Lane/ East Carrolton Ave and East Carrolton Ave/ North Broad St) and data points collected. Additionally, there needs to be justification for the trip generation reduction (currently as assumption of 25%); otherwise, standardized metrics (provided by the Institute of Transportation Engineers or VDOT) should be utilized.

Mattern & Craig's analysis can be found in the supporting documents of this staff report. Balzer and Associates has responded to Mattern & Craig's independent analysis, and correspondingly updated its Traffic Impact Study. Those materials can be found in the supporting documents of this staff report.

#### COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM CITY DEPARTMENTS:

The proposed development was submitted to all city departments for comment and review. Below is the response of each department:

##### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, Engineering Division

If approved, the project will have to comply with all applicable local and state stormwater regulations and requirements, including over-detention.

An independent analysis of the submitted traffic data was performed by Mattern & Craig, Professional Engineers. For more details, please see the Traffic Section above.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, Planning & Zoning Division

The intent of the Planned Unit District (PUD) is to encourage maximum flexibility in the design and development of land. PUD developments facilitate the adequate and economical provision of streets, utilities, and other improvements, and allow for the management of the natural and scenic qualities of vacant land that is proposed for development. The PUD district allows a variety of housing options, as well as commercial, civic and office use types of a number and scale sufficient to serve the needs of the PUD residents.

Although the proposal offers a delightful light imprint development focused on walkability, open space, amenities, and a sense of community, the submitted documents do not ensure that type of development. There are no guarantees for single-family detached homes nor are there guarantees for small scale commercial that is mainly supported by the residents of the PUD. City Council is to approve the maximum gross density of the development in addition to the maximum area devoted to non-residential uses. Although these areas are located in the plan, these maximum numbers have not been determined.

The proposed allowable use list needs to be reduced to uses more appropriate to the location and the proximity to downtown. The City has spent a tremendous amount of time and money to create a unique downtown district that we need to protect and promote.

Finally, conflicting information exists throughout the document(s) that need clarification.

#### Economic Development

HopeTree's proposed development appears to be a very creative "outside the box" development, unique to the Roanoke Region. The overall development has the potential for becoming a well-known planned development well outside the Roanoke Valley.

Historically, economic development only engages in commercial and industrial land use development. The proposed HopeTree development is a unique master planned community largely consisting of residential development. However, in the interest of economic development, the plan incorporates several initiatives related to Economic Development's strategic plan and incorporates a small portion of proposed

commercial uses. Proposed commercial uses are predominantly associated with the adaptive reuse of older HopeTree buildings.

Related to Economic Development's strategic plan, the HopeTree development supports several objectives, including:

1. Opportunities to diversify the housing options in the City of Salem
  - a. Support existing efforts in retention and attraction of talent
2. Opportunities to expand quality of life amenities to local residents
  - a. Pedestrian walking paths, preserving open green space and recreation for the public
  - b. Increase beautification efforts in building design and city corridors
    - i. Reference of Wiley Court & pocket parks are positive
3. Business attraction & entrepreneurial support
  - a. Enhanced adaptive reuse of older buildings can boost efforts to attract eclectic businesses with potential to be retail/ hospitality destinations

Further time for review of proposed uses/zoning and what is a good fit for such a unique development and the larger neighborhood will be needed. For example, "automobile repair services, minor" would not be a good use for the neighborhood as well as "personal storage", "warehousing & distribution". In addition, further time for review of the traffic study and evaluation of other off-site improvements to mediate traffic flow will be needed.

## ELECTRIC

Electric loading - The proposed development would not adversely affect the power in that area. We have adequate feeds available for the new load.

Easement/ Pre-Construction – This development will require extensive easements and phase planning prior to construction. The existing power on site will need to be replaced/ intercepted as Salem Electric will be bringing the existing power up to its code. Well in advance to construction, materials and equipment will need to be decided upon in coordination with the developer and ordered to ensure that they will be available at the time of construction.

Construction – The proposed development will require all new power feeds into the site. Coordinating the existing power with the new facilities will require extensive electrical work and planning to ensure that outages will be manageable and new electric services will be available to the proposed phases of construction.

## POLICE

Along the same lines of the Police Department's response to the Simms Farm development, we would anticipate a slight increase in Calls for Police Services which is expected from any development of this nature. We are not in a position to dispute the facts presented in the Traffic Study which details the increase of vehicular traffic in the adjacent neighborhoods. At this time, there is no immediate concern regarding quality of life issues such as homelessness.

## SCHOOLS

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this matter. Ultimately, please know that the School Board and School Administration trust the City Council and City Administrators to make good decisions that benefit all Salem residents.

From the perspective of the Salem City School Division, new development is likely to increase enrollment. Since 2017, the Salem City School Division has experienced a significant decline in enrollment, negatively affecting state funding (approximately 300 students in grades K-12). Increased enrollment will provide additional revenue from the state on a per-pupil basis for annual instructional costs.

Additionally, enrollment increases generally happen over time, which permits staffing and program delivery to adapt and adjust incrementally.

Outside of annual instructional programming, the other consideration is the capacity of school facilities. The proposed development is in what is currently the West Salem Elementary Attendance Zone. West Salem Elementary School has a facility capacity of approximately 450 students and is currently operating below capacity with approximately 400 students, some of whom are nonresident students or in-division transfer students. So, there is capacity for increased enrollment at West Salem. ALMS and SHS also have ample space to address increases in enrollment in grades 6-12.

If additional enrollment results in the need to adjust attendance zones, changes will be phased in over time by permitting current students in affected neighborhoods to continue attending the neighborhood's traditional school while new students are transported to the newly assigned school. In large or rural districts, the redundant transportation required to phase in changes would be a more significant challenge than it will be here in Salem. While there would be a modest increase in transportation costs during implementation, it would be a small price to pay to mitigate the impact of changing attendance zones on families.

## STREET DEPARTMENT

All roads in this PUD will be privately owned; therefore, the City will not have any maintenance cost. All maintenance, snow removal, asphalt patching, and etc. would be the responsibility of the owner.

When it comes to trash, we feel we can service those new residential units initially with current staffing levels and keep the collection day the same as it currently is, until the PUD is fully built out. There will be a slight increase in fuel and maintenance. Once it is completed, we would need to re-evaluate to see if we need to increase staff to handle the total number of residential units there. There is the possibility of increased staff and salary along with fuel and maintenance costs once the PUD is completed.

We will provide a garbage tote to each new residential unit; I'm only counting one tote for each of the units. The traffic study mentions 340 residential units (115 single family detached, 140 single family attached, 85 multi-family units). The current cost of a new tote is about \$75 each including shipping, which is going to cost \$25,500.00. Garbage totes last approximately ten years. I'm estimating the residential units might dispose of 150lbs of garbage per week, which equals 26 tons a week. We currently pay \$55.00 a ton, equals \$1,430.00 a week or \$5,700.00 a month or \$74,400.00 a year for disposal. We would also provide curbside bulk collection. Being they will be new residential units this is a difficult one to estimate; I would estimate \$6,000.00 in tipping fees for bulk. In round numbers, the impact to garbage collection will be approximately \$80K annually.

## WATER DEPARTMENT

We still have a concern about how the water metering will be handled since the complex is currently served by a master meter. Likely, some of the existing HopeTree buildings will have to be separately metered.

John Morris, President, and Chief Executive Officer of HopeTree Family Services appeared before the Commission and stated that for more than 130 years HopeTree has evolved and changed to remain relevant. He then gave the history of the property. He stated that today HopeTree employees more than 250 professionals serving more than a thousand individuals and family members every year. Our programs include foster care, developmental disabilities, ministry where we provide group homes for more than 80 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, therapeutic group home for youth, ranging from ages 13 to 18, hope tree academy which is a private day school for middle and high school students across our region, and community based services like equine assisted psychotherapy and family center treatment. We are licensed by three different governments. bodies and accredited by two different organizations. In essence, we are a highly regulated, highly qualified organization providing desperately needed services to adults, youth, and families. The question has been asked, why is Hope Tree considering this right now? Well, the reality is we are amid another season of change. Hope Tree is drastically different today than we were 10 and 20 years ago. The work we do today is much more challenging and much more specialized than at any point in our history. Residential care in a congregate campus -style setting is no longer the preferred method to serve our youth and adults. In fact, funding sources have mandated that our group homes be integrated into the communities where we operate. While there will always be and continue to be a need for short-term

residential care, we will never have hundreds of children living on our campus again. The most we will be able to serve on our campus at any one time is 16 residents. Previously when children came to the Baptist home, they stayed until they turned 18. Today the youth that come to Hope Tree on average stay only six months. Most other buildings on our campus were constructed between 1900 and 1966 and are not equipped to provide the quality residential, mental, and behavioral health care services for today. Furthermore, we have six buildings that are vacant and will never be used by HopeTree for services again. Since 2007, our Board of Trustees has been engaged in discussions about what to do with the Salem campus. Several options have been considered over the years. Number one, selling the entire 60 acres and moving our homes and operations elsewhere. Number two, to tear down the vacant buildings that we no longer use, and the third option was to sell the land around our campus center to build single family housing, which we could do by right. In fact, we had an offer from a developer in 2021 to build single -family housing. -family housing all along Red Lane, but that did not align with our goals for campus redesign. Our three goals are, number one, to honor our history by staying on the property where we were founded in 1890, by not tearing down any of the beautiful and historic buildings on our campus, and by continuing to tell the story of our rich and meaningful history. We plan to invest in a new museum and place placards on all the old buildings to tell the story of what they once were.

Our second goal is to position Hope Tree for the future by investing millions of dollars to create new modern homes for our residents and spaces for our team members to serve our community. We also plan to invest in new non -traditional methods of therapy to better serve the youth and families who need our services. And our third goal is we want to do something to make our community proud by partnering with our community city leaders, our team members, and our development team to bring something unique and meaningful to the city of Salem. Immediately after we received the offer to build houses along Red Lane, our board wanted to hear from other developers to help us dream about what could be done with our property. After engaging with six different developers, the Board of Trustees selected the team of states and homes, Snyder and Associates, and Tom Lowe with Civic by Design. The reason that they were selected is that their approach and care for our campus project aligned perfectly with our three goals. He presented their development team--Todd Robertson from States and Homes; Mike Snyder with Snyder & Associates; Chris Burns with Balzer and Associates are here with us this evening. He further stated that Tom Lowe with Civic by Design could not be here tonight. Tom came down with COVID, but he sent a presentation that will be shared this evening.

Mike Snyder, President of Snyder & Associates, appeared before the Commission and stated that they are a general contractor up in Blacksburg. We specialize in historic renovations, commercial construction, and development, and have been in business since 1985, going on 39 years now. He then highlighted some of the projects that have been done over the years. The Alexander Black House in Blacksburg was a historic renovation that was done several years ago, that is now a



museum, and a centerpiece of Blacksburg. The Marymount Center renovation at Virginia Tech, the University Club. Club and President Suites at Virginia Tech. In Salem, they have done some projects for Graham White, and the Roanoke County Salem jail, as well as other projects in the Roanoke Valley for the Berglund Center and the Hotel Roanoke. He stated that Snyder and Associates and States and Homes, have teamed up on several different residential projects in the New River Valley that were very successful. He is confident that if approved this Hope Tree project will be the same. He is really excited for the opportunity to repurpose many of the older buildings and give them new life as well as to create something that Salem will be proud of. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak.

Todd Robertson with States and Homes appeared before the Commission and stated that he moved back to the community 12 years ago to start States and Homes and have built almost 700 homes between the Roanoke Valley and the New River Valley. He stated that they don't just build homes, they build communities. Recently they have built basketball courts and pickleball courts for local recreational departments. He further stated that they have been the building in Daleville Town Center for approximately three years. He spoke about two communities in the Christiansburg/Blacksburg area--Clifton Community in Christiansburg and a 416-home community in Westhill off Prices Fork Road in Blacksburg--both offer affordable housing and a variety of homes for all stages of life. He and Mike Snyder met with John Morris and came up with a vision to develop a pedestrian-friendly community that would preserve open space, offer natural amenities, as well as, a boutique hotel, one or two restaurants, a coffee shop and small deli/grocery, hiking trails, preserve the historic buildings and campus feel, and create a diverse neighborhood. Proposed development will offer a diverse mix of home types and price points and includes recreation amenities and public spaces for everyone to enjoy. They will keep the existing baseball fields, equestrian facilities, and pastor areas. Showed examples of existing communities that he has developed. Showed an example of the proposed hotel--use an existing building and convert to hotel with a restaurant on the lower level with meeting rooms to be used for various events. Showed example of the retail being proposed.

John Morris, reappeared before the Commission and reviewed the charrette process that was used to gather input from community, meet with other stakeholders, and hosted campus tours to evaluate each building and the grounds. As a result of that, the baseball fields will be preserved. The development will allow HopeTree to invest in future operations by creating a new human services building that will house more than 60 team members, create a single-point of entry for those who utilize our services, create a new space for HopeTree Academy, build four new homes for adult residents, and move youth residents into newer, more comfortable and spacious homes. A former cottage will be renovated to house a new museum and art therapy studio; and plan to install a cover over the horse rink and add an expansion of the bard for the equine therapy program. He further stated that HopeTree wanted the input from citizens and he feels that the charrette process gave them a great opportunity to hear from the citizens and to integrate their ideas into the proposed campus design.

Chris Burns, civil engineer, and traffic engineer with Balzer & Associates, appeared before the Commission to give an overview of some of the more technical aspects of the project. He stated that the site is 62 acres and is one of the few large parcels remaining for development. The existing zoning of the property is residential single family and approximately 230 homes could be built by-right. Currently there are 20 buildings that are either underutilized or not utilized at all. The parcel has rolling topography with the center of campus being the high point visually. There is an existing pond with a creek flowing from the lower portion of the pond as well as another small creek on the property. The reason for proposing a PUD for the property is to preserve as many of the existing structures as possible; will also allow the existing environmental features to be preserved; and the overall development pattern of the block street network will allow the development to branch out from the center core and be sensitive to the surrounding developments, more pedestrian friendly. The vision internally will be narrow streets with on-street parking where possible. Pedestrian friendly is the focus of the development. He stated that 40 percent of 62 acres are not planned to be developed—approximately 24 acres will be utilized as open space. Stormwater management is very important—will be two drainage areas with natural drainage features being preserved. Project will be required to meet state and local requirements. City of Salem requirements are more stringent than state standards. There are existing utilities surrounding the site with most of the internal utilities on the property being private. The proposed development will bring public utilities onto the site. City officials do not have any concerns with the additional utilities. He stated that the site does not have access to a major roadway and with the site being surrounded by two lane local roads it is very important to be sure that the roads are adequate to handle the development. The traffic evaluation is centered around studying the intersections. If the intersections can support the traffic volumes where people are having to stop and go and wait for each other--if the intersections can function appropriately, then the roadways themselves would be adequate. Traffic counts were performed, and background growth factor applied. Peak morning and evening hours were analyzed and real data was used in the study instead of projected data. Conservative counts were used to project traffic flow from the level of development that is expected on the site. Results of the study showed that the level of service were basically unchanged from current traffic—largest increase was less than 3 seconds. No turn lanes are required based on the study. He stated that based on the study, the current streets can handle the development traffic. He then played the video provided by Tom Low.

Tom Low appeared via video to discuss the proposal. He discussed design principle, work he has done, application pages. He stated that the planning he has been doing for last three decades is different than typical suburban development. He specializes in creating new cities and towns made of neighborhoods. He stated that cities and towns made of neighborhoods balance resource needs. Discussed how developments were created in the past and how they have changed over the years; traditional towns and conventional suburbia; and different types of housing developments. He presented a slide of the goals of the development. He stated that the Wiley Court neighborhood in Salem is what the proposed development is based

on. He then gave a background of his experience and various projects he has worked on that could be like what is developed on the property. He also presented examples of other developments in different states that could be like the proposed development. He noted that by-right the current zoning of the property “cookie cutter” type houses could be built, and again showed a slide of the proposed PUD on the property. He encouraged residents to go to the website to view the different public meetings that were held and how the plan evolved from the meetings, and to view the PUD application submitted to the city. He then displayed several pages of the application and briefly discussed the information in the pages.

John Morris reappeared before the Commission and asked them to recommend approval of the proposal. He stated that HopeTree cannot continue as it currently stands.

Chair Daulton adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m. for a brief break.

Chair Daulton re-convened the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Chair Daulton noted that the Commission would not be voting on the request at this meeting as there is a joint work session with City Council on February 21, 2024. She opened the public hearing portion of the meeting and stated that each speaker will have three minutes to speak. She further stated that if anyone wants to yield their time to someone else, they will have to come to the podium and give their name, address, and state who they are yielding their time to.

Patrick Shaffner, 6563 Fairway States Drive, Roanoke, appeared before the Commission and asked that the proposed plan be approved. He has served on the HopeTree Board for over 25 years and he has witnessed the impact HopeTree has had on the community. The campus cannot remain vital as it stands—the needs have changed from the early days when it was an orphanage with 700 people on campus. The buildings are deteriorating and are a financial burden on the facility. While HopeTree’s mission has remained unchanged, state, and federal requirements have changed and HopeTree needs to change in order to adhere to the requirements. He believes that what is proposed will best suit the needs of the facility.

Thomas Harvey, 307 Academy Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that he is a sixth generation resident of Salem and has a lot of investment in the community. He believes in the mission of HopeTree and what they have done in the community. He is worn out from the presentation and is concerned about the examples given of the proposed development—Middleburg, Albemarle, some places in Arkansas; Reston, Virginia and it is not Salem. He asked that the proposal not be allowed and to go back and look at the plans again. He then asked for a show of hands of people opposed to the request being approved.

Elizabeth Freund, 381 Walnut Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that she is very sympathetic and supportive of the mission of HopeTree and the

preservation of their historic buildings; however, she feels that only residential development should be allowed. She is against commercial development in a residential area and the types of people it would attract—transients and vagrants. She asked that the commission preserve the neighborhoods and historic areas as she feels it is a quality of life issue.

Jim Cochran, 417 Academy Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that he is a long-time Salem resident—his home has been on academy street for two generations. While he appreciates being able to walk to businesses on Broad Street from his residence, many of the businesses have closed due to lack of customer support necessary for profit. He stated that remodeling of the existing buildings can be done with existing zoning and new homes should be sold as single-family residents; and he feels the open space around the pasture and pond should be preserved as such.

Curt Steele, 706 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he opposes proposed development. He feels residential development is the highest and best use of the property, and asked that the commission keep the public hearing open and hold off on a decision until after the City adopts a new comprehensive plan.

Anne Lee Stevens, 831 Honeysuckle Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that she agrees with the negative speakers thus far and is concerned that this is a city-wide issue as it will negatively impact current businesses on Main Street. She does not feel that it has been taken into consideration that at the end of Red Lane there will be 80 townhomes and a four-story hotel built, and traffic from that development will be coming down Red Lane as well.

Russell Deyerly, 620 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he has heard zero about the proposed development community meetings. He stated that the proposed development goes against the comprehensive plan. He stated that the traffic study did not give an accurate description of the amount of traffic that comes down Red Lane. On-street parking is an issue on Market Street, Hawthorn Road, Broad Street, and Academy Street. He feels the proposed development is a comprehensive disaster getting ready to happen. He agrees that HopeTree needs to do something but more planning needs to go into this before a decision is made without having a comprehensive plan, and not enough information about the proposal has been given and feels as though it is intentional that the information has been withheld.

Brian Boggs, 731 Treywood Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that he is a former real estate appraiser in Florida. He opposes the proposed development and how it would negatively impact the neighborhood.

Donna Crotts, 307 North Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that she has lived there for over 40 years. She stated that this is not a Broad Street problem and hopes that the Commission realizes that this project impacts more than

Broad Street neighbors. Many residents are just now learning about the development and the failure to adequately notify surrounding neighbors has created a lack of awareness. She stated that she feels there is a need for more public hearings and a public comment period. She feels more time is needed. The proposal may alter the look of downtown Salem forever the proposed development will result in direct competition with the businesses downtown. She asked that the Commission delay a decision until after the comprehensive plan has been adopted.

Van Lane, 422 Academy Street, he doesn't feel the traffic count is accurate. He calculated the number of car trips per day times 340 houses that are being proposed and came up with 4,658 additional trips per day which indicates a level of uncertainty and a lack of truthfulness in the traffic study. He opposes the request and agrees with all the previous negative comments.

Marissa Yi, 2517 Briscola Avenue, Roanoke, appeared before the Commission and stated that as a local entrepreneur, she opposes commercial usage in the development as it will negatively impact the businesses in downtown Salem and surrounding areas.

Mike Lane, 422 Academy Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that no one has considered honoring the children buried on the property other than to build houses on top of them.

Jonathan Branson, 844 Red Lane, yielded his time to Mr. Hunt.

Ron Hunt, 922 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he was raised at the Virginia Baptist Children's Home from 1960 to 1971. He stated that he is representing most of the residents of Red Lane, some North Oaks residents, Mount Vernon, and most North Broad Street residents. He stated that Salem Racquet, Hanging Rock Golf Club, & Fellowship Community Church are all located on Red Lane and Red Lane is one of the most heavily traveled roads in the city. Fellowship Community Church typically has 250 attendees for its early service, 250 plus attendants for the next service; plus 33 to 46 vehicles from Hanging Rock Golf Club—total 342 vehicles on Sunday. Hanging Rock plans to have 25,000 to 30,000 rounds of golf this year. Salem Racquet has 180 members with 90 to 100 people going there on Saturdays and Sundays plus 40 to 60 during the week. With no entrance at the upper end of HopeTree from Red Lane due to having concrete barriers at the State's request. Average trips per day is 10 per day for non-seniors and 3 per day for seniors. Red Lane is the only proposed egress of the development. Thousands of vehicles are currently using Red Lane and he requests that the proposal be denied. He also has a petition signed by residents of Salem.

Marilyn Lurch, 1806 Westover Avenue, Roanoke, appeared before the Commission and stated that she used to come visit the children at the Baptist Home when she was a student at Virginia Tech. She now has an autistic daughter living in one of the cottages located on the HopeTree property. She has concerns about the businesses

proposed on the development. She is also concerned about how safe her daughter will be during and after construction.

Jay Huff, Raleigh Court, appeared before the Commission and stated that he grew up at the Baptist Home. He has spoken with Mr. Morris about the proposed development. He stated that after seeing the proposal, the examples given were of flat lots, not hilly developments. He understands what HopeTree is trying to accomplish in order to continue to provide services. He feels the proposal is “sketchy” and needs more time to be considered and “flushed out” more carefully before it is voted on.

Jennifer Thomas, 916 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that she attended several public meetings in the Fall of 2022 regarding the proposal. She is glad Tom Low is involved in the development. She actively participated in the meetings and feels that her concerns were heard and addressed. She stated that no matter what happens, she's losing her view but she is okay with that with an expertly thought out plan on the program.

Mike Kummer, 916 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that his family has lived in the middle of Red Lane for almost 70 years. He has played all over the HopeTree property. He received notification about the proposed development on the property. His fear of the development of the property became excitement after attending the meetings. He would like to know more details about the development. He likes that the proposed development is walkable and some of his ideas were used in the proposal. He is concerned about the traffic increase, but feels that the team developing the property is an “A-team” of professionals. He does still have concerns about the traffic. He is in favor of the request.

Jane Johnson, 2940 Phillips Brook Lane, but plans to move back to Academy Street this spring appeared before the Commission and stated that she is in constant communication with citizens through her business, civic activities, etc. She stated she represents a number of people who are not only in favor of the development, but who are also interested in ultimately residing there. The proposed variety of residence types would allow more people in her age group to downsize and stay in Salem. She supports the rezoning as it will address housing needs for a variety of residents, keep green spaces, and offer more amenities. She stated that change is going to happen regardless of what the Planning Commission and ultimately our City Council decides. This property will be developed, and failure to give a stamp of approval to this request will basically guarantee more of what Salem already has--a long row of “cookie cutter,” two-story housing that Salem already has.

Nancy Reynolds, 925 Saddle Drive, appeared before the Commission and stated that her property abuts the HopeTree property. She stated that this is not about HopeTree, it is about changing the landscape of the City of Salem. She stated that you can have a sustainable walkable area in a residential area. The proposed development is for areas where the traffic is so heavy that you do not want to go out of the area or when you do not have access to walkable businesses, but that is

not Salem. She stated that maybe the change should not be to construct residential area around buildings that are not viable.

Doug McCart, 316 N. Broad Street, yielded his time to Chris McCart.

Chris McCart, 316 N. Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that she is concerned about the traffic. She does not feel that the traffic study done by Balzer is accurate. She had a map of the area and discussed the length of time it takes to get to Interstate 81, Main Street, and surrounding areas. The roads between HopeTree and major thoroughfares are not adequate to handle truck traffic and traffic associated with the proposed development. The study performed was only for four hours, not multiple 24-hour periods and is not sufficient. She quoted various items in the traffic study. She asked that the rezoning not be recommended to Council.

Whitney Leeson, 212 Broad Street, she is sympathetic to HopeTree and knows development will happen. She also feels that there are good developers on the project. She does not want to see “cookie cutter” houses and loves the Wiley Court area development. She likes the proposed rear entrance to the homes, but the details of the development need to be looked at. She feels that more details need to be given on the development.

Barbara Bell 523 E. Burwell Street, yielded her time to Rev Susan Bentley.

Susan Bentley, 312 N. Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that she is disappointed to hear that there were community open houses and she was not invited as she would have liked to have been able to speak. She opposes the rezoning. She would like for the decision to wait until after the new comprehensive plan has been approved. She is concerned about the green space in Salem. Once green space is developed, it is gone. She does not consider HopeTree to have excess greenspace to sell. The benefit of nature for mental health is immeasurable. She believes the empty buildings at HopeTree could be used for “outside the box” programs instead of commercial development. She believes HopeTree could provide a significant impact for at-risk girls. She is concerned about additional traffic, safety, water runoff, etc. from the proposed development. Salem is not a suburban neighborhood. Rezoning to add commercial property to a walkable community is detrimental to the existing businesses along Main Street. She asked that the Commission vote no to the rezoning.

Michael Bentley, 312 N. Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and emphasized that he is connected to the former Baptist Children’s Home as his mother used to work there and his niece currently works there. He is opposed to the rezoning with commercial properties. The HopeTree presentation stated that a typical household has 13.7 car trips per day so if you add 340 households with 13.7 car trips per day to the trips of a 60-room hotel facility, and boutique commercial places, that is going to be a lot of traffic on North Broad Street and Red Lane. He does not feel the traffic study presented stated there would be minimal impact.

Will Long, 984 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he lives directly across the road from the HopeTree campus. He stated that his family has owned the property for 100 years and he relocated to Salem to be closer to his mother after she retired. He feels that his communication with HopeTree regarding the proposal has been positive in his experience, and each time he reached out to Mr. Morris he was more than accessible and accommodating in getting back with him and explaining exactly is going on. He stated that there is going to be additional traffic with the development. He is that person that gets home at the end of Red Lane and forgets something and must go back out. He stated that where he lives is not currently walkable, and he is in favor of the rezoning request.

William Reynolds, 605 N Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated there has been a Reynolds living on Broad Street for 76 years. He does not understand what is going to happen with the increased traffic from the proposed development. He understands why HopeTree needs to move forward, but there will be runoff issues and utility upgrades that will be passed along to the citizens. He does not understand how the traffic is not an issue. He feels the increased traffic is going to be catastrophic.

Mike Elmore, 622 Chamberlain Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he supports the PUD proposal. He is on the HopeTree Board, he is a social worker. He lived on the property from 1976 to 1984. He charged the Commission with carrying the baton and questioned what will be said 25 years from now if the request is denied—the Commission missed the boat. The proposed development will strengthen HopeTree and the services it provides. He feels this is a chance to give this piece of land back to the citizens and feels the development will strengthen the community for years to come.

Colin Cash, 49 Hawthorn Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that he grew up on Academy Street in Salem—moved away and came back because he missed the small-town vibe of Salem. He opposes the rezoning. He loves HopeTree and worked there for a period of time. He knows transients have been through the property, children have runaway on the property. He feels that the proposed development will decrease the security of the residents of Salem

Reid McClure, 643 Brookfield Drive, appeared before the Commission and stated that he has been a resident of the community surrounding HopeTree most of his life. He is concerned about the water runoff the proposed development will cause. He is cognizant of the impact of developing 62 acres will have on the surrounding areas—the Lawn, Academy Street, Broad Street. He asked that the Commission look closely at water retention of the development and the impact water runoff will have on Dry Branch Creek. He thanked the Commission for its work.

Dr. Sam Williams, retired surgeon, 834 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that he and his wife made 834 Red Lane their residence 42 years ago. He enjoys the view, especially to the West. The HopeTree property is a great property



to walk and showcase the area. He knows the property will be developed. He spoke with former City Manager Forest Jones in 2006 and 2008 about his concerns of people walking and riding bikes along Red Lane. He has attended the community meetings and did not realize how the proposal has changed. He feels that issues such as traffic volume, stress on infrastructure, wildlife habitat destruction, impact on Main Street businesses, loss of grade scenery, and more are concerns we should all share.

Robin Ellis 745 W. Carrollton Avenue appeared before the Commission and stated that she supports the rezoning and the comments made by Jane Johnson. She lives less than a mile from the property and feels that this is the best use of the property. She understands that people want to keep the pasture and greenspace, but it is private property, not public property. The proposed plan preserves 40 percent of greenspace and preserves the historic buildings on the property. She stated that she is not an expert on traffic or runoff or engineering of any kind, but she trusts the Planning Commission will ensure that all the proper studies have been done for that and a decision will be based on such things. She encouraged the Commission to recommend the rezoning. She yielded the remainder of her time to her husband David.

David Ellis, 745 W. Carrollton Avenue, appeared before the Commission and echoed Jane Johnson's comments and supports the rezoning. He feels that a lot of the objections he has heard thus far seem to be irrelevant as the property is going to be developed. The current proposal preserves greenspace and will provide housing that is needed in Salem.

Earl Pettrey, 650 Joan Circle, appeared before the Commission and stated that Salem has done things right with schools, sports, and services. Salem is a small city and feels that the larger buildings depicted in the presentation is not Salem and feels that if the commercial aspect of the proposal was removed, the proposal would be better received. He is concerned about the increase of traffic to the area. He asked that the Commission listen to the comments and concerns of the residents and if the Commission listens to the comments and concerns of the citizens, it will know how to vote.

Elizabeth Williams, 834 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that she agrees with Pastor Susan and knows development is coming, but the commercial aspect needs to be removed. She feels that if the commercial aspect was removed, it would be better received.

Caroline Scarborough Bain, 721 Academy Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that she has lived there 30 years and her office window looks right out on the four-way stop between Academy Street and Carrollton Avenue. She is concerned about the traffic and the number of accidents at the intersection. She stated that from 7:00 to 7:15 this morning, she counted 37 individual cars that passed through— 21 rolling stops and 7 "speed roll throughs", plus 22 cars in groups

of two to four cars. From 7:15 to 7:30 AM she counted 22 individual cars, but did not count the roll-throughs.

Mark Nayden, 352 North Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that he and his husband moved to Salem from New York City. He stated that commercial does not need to be on the HopeTree property as it will detract from the businesses on Main Street. He asked that more time be given to ensure that the development will support the businesses along Main Street and will not detract from the business. He and his husband sent out over 500 letters to businesses and citizens of Salem regarding the proposed development. This is a long-term decision and asked that the Commission make the right decision for this property. He strongly opposes the rezoning and asked that the decision be delayed until after the new Comprehensive plan has been approved.

Emily Payne Carter, 335 N Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and stated that she knows that change is necessary, but you don't want to give up your children's and your grandchildren's legacy--you want them to be able to breathe. You also don't want to look back and say "shoulda, woulda, coulda." She is against the rezoning. She yielded her remaining time to Lisa Miller.

Lisa Chapel Miller, 405 Apperson Drive (business address) appeared before the Commission and stated that Salem needs housing and feels beautiful homes could be built on the property. She feels that the proposal develops another downtown Salem and would be a "pocket zoning". She feels more time is needed before a decision is made. As a citizen, she wants to see more information about the development. PUD is described as a flexible development. She discussed the information in the agenda packet. Stated that there needs to be more time before a decision is made.

Nathan Acres, 130 Rutledge Drive, appeared before the Commission and stated that he has lived in South Salem most of his life. He stated that the proposal will capture the same environment as the Dilly Dally has in that area. He feels that the property will be sold regardless and feels the proposed development will provide needed housing in various phases of life. He supports the rezoning.

Andy Bloss, 801 Red Lane yielded his time to Adrian Bloss.

Adrian Bloss, 801 Red Lane, appeared before the Commission and stated that she opposes the rezoning due to negative traffic impact and that it does not keep in character with the neighborhood. The development will be detrimental to safe walking and biking in surrounding neighborhoods. Red Lane is not conducive for walking or bike riding as there are no sidewalks or bike lanes and the current proposal does not add either to the area. She likes the planned unit development, but it is not the best use for the property. PUDs are typically accessed by a major street like West Main Street, not a residential street like Red Lane. She asked the Commission to vote no on the rezoning and keep Salem safe.

Wendy Wall, 303 Academy Street and owns a learning center on Apperson Drive, appeared before the Commission and stated that while she teaches reading, she apparently cannot read because when she looks at the design maps, she cannot tell where apartments are planned to be built on the property verses where houses are planned on the proposal. She stated that apartments are conducive for transient students. She asked the Commission to consider the number of apartments.

James Reinhardt, 213 North Broad Street, yielded his time to Stella Reinhardt after stating that he feels that the information has not been effectively passed along to residents.

Stella Reinhardt, 213 North Broad Street, appeared before the Commission and respectfully requested that the Planning Commission delay the vote and keep the comment period open as new information was just received regarding the development and more time is needed to review the changes. She feels that there are other options to be explored if more time is given before a decision is made. The dense development does not follow the current comprehensive plan and is also considered spot zoning. She stated that she is not against the plan but feels the HopeTree property is not the right location for the development. It is also not consistent with the surrounding zoning in the area. The businesses along Main Street need to be protected. The property is a pristine, rolling environment with history and needs to be preserved. More time is needed before a decision is made and feels if the neighborhoods that were left out of the process at the very beginning were included and there were more discussions with HopeTree, we could come up with some options that perhaps we could all live with and HopeTree would come out with a better form. The dense development actually goes against the current comprehensive plan. She asked that a decision wait to be made until the new comprehensive plan is adopted. She feels the proposed development is wrong for this location--it is surrounded by historic and established neighborhoods that already have heavy traffic and no good access to Interstate 81. She further stated that there is no good way to handle the traffic of 340 homes and commercial development.

Ashby Garst, Crest Apartments, appeared before the Commission and stated that she looks forward to the rezoning of the HopeTree property for the future of Salem. She stated that she and her boyfriend are among the youngest in the crowd and are currently looking for a community to settle down in. She would like for that to be Salem, but current housing is not affordable in Salem for younger people like her--the north Salem community she loves doesn't have a place for her. She feels the proposed development will offer affordable housing for younger residents and supports the rezoning request.

Lisa Miller, 405 Apperson Drive, reappeared before the Commission and spoke on behalf of several citizens who feel that the proposal presented lacks details. Due to the fact that last minute additions were made to the proposal by HopeTree, she requested that the Commission delay the vote until the June meeting. She presented a digital petition with over 300 signatures in opposition to the rezoning, with more

signatures being added. She further requested that more public meetings be held by HopeTree with more detail regarding the proposal.

No other person(s) appeared related to the request.

Chair Daulton closed the public hearing at 10:42 p.m.

Denise King motioned to continue the vote on the request of Virginia Baptist children's Home (dba HopeTree Family Services), property owner, for rezoning the properties located at 1000 block Red Lane and a portion of 860 Mount Vernon Lane (Tax Map #'s 41-1-1, 41-1-2, 41-1-3, 41-1-4, 41-1-5, 41-1-6, and a portion of 44-3-10 from RSF Residential Single Family to PUD Planned Unit District to the March 13, 2024, meeting. Reid Garst seconded the motion.

Ayes: Beamer, Conner, Daulton, Garst, King

#### 4. Adjournment

On motion by Member Conner, seconded by Member Beamer, the meeting was

adjourned at  
10:45 pm.

City Council meeting, March 11, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street