

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018

On Wednesday, June 6, 2018, the Board of Zoning Appeals held a public hearing in the Fifth Floor Conference Room, 900 East Broad Street, at 1:00 p.m.; display notice having been published in the Richmond Legacy Newspaper on May 23 and 30, 2018 and written notice having been sent to interested parties.

Members Present:

Roger H. York, Jr., Vice-Chair

Rodney M. Poole

Kenneth R. Samuels, Sr.

Mary J. Hogue

Staff Present:

Roy W. Benbow, Secretary

William Davidson, Zoning Administrator

Brian P. Mercer, Planner II

Neil R. Gibson, Assistant City Attorney

The Chairman called the meeting to order and read the Board of Zoning Appeals Introductory Statement, which explains the proceedings of the meeting. The applicant and those appearing in support of an application speak first, followed by those appearing in opposition.

CASE NO. 21-18

APPLICANT:

Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, Inc.

Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council, Inc.

E. Kelley Lane

Jonathan Brent Raper

PREMISES:

801-815 WEST CARY STREET

104-110 SOUTH LAUREL STREET

812 GREEN ALLEY

(Tax Parcel Number W000-0293/013, W000-0293/012, W000-0293/011, W000-0293/010, W000-0293/009, W000-0293/008, W000-0293/015, W000-0293/016,

W000-0293/017, W000-0293/018, W000-0293/041, W000-

0293/006)

SUBJECT: An appeal of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, Inc.,

-2-

Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council, Inc., E. Kelley Lane, and Jonathan Brent Raper that the orders, requirements, decisions or determinations of the city zoning administrator administering the zoning ordinance related to height, setback, yard and parking of the pending POD application for 801-815 West Cary Street, 104-110 South Laurel Street, and 812 Green Alley, City File #867, including without limitation such orders, requirements, decisions or determinations contained in the March 1, 2018 signed comment letter. The specific section numbers of the Zoning Ordinance being appealed are 30-438.3, 30-438.5, 30-440.6, 30-630.3, 30-710.1, 30-710.3, 30-710.4, 30-1220.19, 30-1220.123 and 30-

1220.137.

APPEAL was filed with the Board on March 23, 2018, based on Section 17.20(a) of the City Charter.

APPEARANCES:

For Applicant: Andrew McRoberts

J. Brent Raper Parker Agelasto Kelley Lane Donald R. Traser Charles Pool

Against Applicant: Jennifer Mullen

Mark Baker Kevin O'Leary Lory Markham Larry Cluff

PLEASE SEE COURT REPORTER TRANSCRIPT AT THE END OF THESE MINUTES FOR COMPLETE DETAILS OF THE CASE.

RESOLUTION: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS that an appeal of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, Inc., Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council, Inc., E. Kelley Lane, and Jonathan Brent Raper that the orders, requirements, decisions or determinations of the city zoning administrator administering the zoning ordinance related to height, setback, yard and parking of the pending POD

application for 801-815 West Cary Street, 104-110 South Laurel Street, and 812 Green Alley, City File #867, including without limitation such orders, requirements, decisions or determinations contained in the March 1, 2018 signed comment letter be denied based on the record before the Board.

ACTION OF THE BOARD: Denied (3-1)

Vote to Denv

affirmative: York, Poole, Samuels

negative: Hogue

CASE NO. 19-18 (CONTINUED FROM MAY 2, 2018 MEETING)

APPLICANT: Carver Homes LLC

PREMISES: 808 ½ and 810 WEST CLAY STREET

(Tax Parcel Number N000-0352/030 & 016)

SUBJECT: A building permit to construct a new single-family detached

dwelling (#808 ½).

DISAPPROVED by the Zoning Administrator on March 21, 2018, based on Sections 30-300 & 30-413.5(1) of the zoning ordinance for the reason that: In an R-7 (Single-And Two-Family Urban Residential District), the lot area and lot width requirements are not met. Lot areas of three thousand six hundred square feet (3,600 SF) and lot widths of thirty feet (30') are required. For zoning purposes, one (1) lot having a lot area of 6,038.94 square feet and a lot width of sixty feet (60') currently exists; lot areas of 2,946.97 square feet (#808 1/2) and 3,073.97 square feet (#810) and a lot width of 29.65 feet (#808 ½) are proposed.

APPLICATION was filed with the Board on March 16, 2018, based on Section 15.2-2309.2 of the Code of Virginia.

APPEARANCES:

For Applicant: Cory Weiner

Alex Lugovoy

Against Applicant: H. Charleen Baylor

Doug Kleffner

FINDINGS OF FACT: The Board finds from sworn testimony and exhibits offered in this case that the applicant, Carver homes LLC, has requested a variance to construct a new single-family detached dwelling at 808 1/2 W. Clay Street. Mr. Cory Weiner, representing the applicant, testified that a former owner combined what were previously two single-family lots into a single lot of record. Mr. Weiner stated that in addition a deck had been constructed across the common property line. Mr. Weiner further stated that the intent is to construct a single-family home which conforms to the R-7 district regulations. Mr. Weiner indicated that the proposed home will be architecturally sympathetic to other dwellings in the block. Mr. Weiner pointed out that the R-7 lot width is 30 feet and that the lot in question is 29'8" in width. Further the lot area is consistent with that in the block. Mr. Weiner noted that relevant setback and parking requirements will be met.

Mr. York noted that if the variance is approved that the property is limited in occupancy to three unrelated individuals living as a family under a common lease.

In response to question from Mr. Poole, Mr. Weiner stated that the proposed common property line has been adjusted by approximately 4 inches from the original property line to meet the required setbacks.

Speaking in support, Mr. Alex Lugovoy testified that he had discussed the proposed project with surrounding neighbors and had received no objections. Mr. Lugovoy noted that the vacant lot represented a missing tooth in the block.

In response to question from Mr. Poole, Mr. Lugovoy confirmed he was aware of the fact that the property may be occupied by maximum of three unrelated people.

Speaking in opposition, Ms. Charleen Baylor, testified that the Carver Neighborhood Association was opposed to the requested variance. Ms. Baylor stated that the applicant had failed to meet with them to discuss the revised plans since the previous continuance. Ms. Baylor contended that the plans in actuality have not been revised and still reflect a five bedroom configuration. Ms. Baylor further contended that the dwelling will be utilized for student housing which is a continuing problem for the Carver Neighborhood. Ms. Baylor stated that what is being proposed is a rooming house.

Speaking in opposition, Mr. Doug Kleffner stated that the revised plans have merely reflected a change in the names of two rooms which were shown on the previous plans as bedrooms. Mr. Kleffner also expressed concern over the fact that there had not been sufficient contact between the applicant and the neighborhood association.

The Board finds that the applicant failed to show an extraordinary or exceptional situation whereby strict application of the lot width and lot area requirements unreasonably restricts its use or that there is a clearly demonstrable hardship bordering on confiscation of the property. The granting of a variance in this case would constitute a special privilege or convenience to the owner and would not be in harmony with the intended spirit and purpose of the ordinance and the powers of the Board.

BY THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS that a request for a variance from the lot area and lot width requirements be denied to Carver Homes LLC for a building permit to construct a new single-family detached dwelling (#808 ½).

ACTION OF THE BOARD:

(4-0)

Vote to Deny

affirmative:

York, Poole, Samuels, Hogue

negative:

None

<u>CASE NO. 22-18</u>

APPLICANT:

Kylan & Suzy Shirley

PREMISES:

610 WEST 26TH STREET

(Tax Parcel Number S000-0804/004)

SUBJECT:

A building permit to construct a new single-family detached

dwelling (#612).

DISAPPROVED by the Zoning Administrator on April 11, 2018, based on Sections 30-300, 30-412.4(1) & 30-412.5(1)b of the zoning ordinance for the reason that: In an R-6 (Single-Family Attached Residential District), the lot area, lot width, and side yard (setback) requirements are not met. Lot areas of five thousand square feet (5,000 SF) and lot widths of fifty feet (50') are required. For zoning purposes, one (1) lot having a lot area of 9,176 square feet and a lot width of sixty-two feet (62') currently exists; lot areas of 4,588 square feet and widths of 31.00 feet are proposed. A side yard of five (5) feet is required; 3.5' is proposed along the northern property line for the existing dwelling (#610).

APPLICATION was filed with the Board on April 11, 2018, based on Section 15.2-2309.2 of the Code of Virginia.

APPEARANCES:

For Applicant:

Kylan & Suzy Shirley

Bryson Lefmann

Against Applicant:

None

FINDINGS OF FACT: The Board finds from sworn testimony and exhibits offered in this case that the applicants, Kylan and Suzy Shirley have requested a variance to construct a new single-family detached dwelling at 612 W. 26th Street. Ms. Suzy Shirley testified that she works at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and her husband is an architect. Ms. Shirley stated that they are very invested in the Wooden Heights neighborhood. Ms. Shirley explained that formally 610 and 612 W. 26th Street existed as two lots of record that were combined through a deed of convenience. Ms. Shirley indicated that the request is to reestablish the original lotting configuration. Ms. Shirley noted that the proposed lot is consistent with other lot widths and lot sizes in the block. Ms. Shirley stated that the lot coverage and setback requirements will be met. It was noted that there was no objection from surrounding neighbors and that a presentation was made to the neighborhood association but the association did not take an official vote.

Speaking support, Mr. Kylan Shirley stated that the proposed design is consistent with massing and form of the surrounding houses. Mr. Shirley indicated that there will be two-story monolithic massing including a front porch that addresses the street. Mr. Shirley stated the siding will be fiber cement. Mr. Shirley noted that the proposed dwelling will be consistent with the architecture of other dwellings in the block.

The Board finds that evidence shows that the strict application of the terms of the ordinance would unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property or that the granting of the variance would alleviate a hardship due to a physical condition relating to the property or improvements thereon at the time of the effective date of the ordinance, and (i) the property interest for which the variance is being requested was acquired in good faith and any hardship was not created by the applicant for the variance; (ii) the granting of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property and nearby properties in the proximity of that geographical area; (iii) the condition or situation of the property concerned is not of so general or recurring a nature as to make reasonably practicable the formulation of a general regulation to be adopted as an amendment to the ordinance; (iv) the granting of the variance does not result in a use that is not otherwise permitted on such property or a change in the zoning classification of the property; and (v) the relief or remedy sought by the variance application is not available through a special exception process that is authorized in the ordinance

pursuant to subdivision 6 of § 15.2-2309 or the process for modification of a zoning ordinance pursuant to subdivision A4 of § 15.2-2286 at the time of the filing of the variance application.

RESOLUTION: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS that a request for a variance from the lot area, lot width, and side yard (setback) requirements be granted to Kylan & Suzy Shirley for a building permit to construct a new single-family detached dwelling (#612), subject to substantial compliance with the plans submitted to the Board and provision of cementitious siding.

ACTION OF THE BOARD:	(4-0)		
Vote to Grant Conditionally			
affirmative:	York, Poole, Samuels, Hogue		
negative:	None		
Upon motion made by Ms. Hogue and seconded by Mr. Samuels, Members voted (3-0) to adopt the Board's May 2, 2018 meeting minutes. Upon motion made by Mr. Poole and seconded by Mr. York, Board Members voted (3-0) to resume utilization of the zoning ordinances special exception powers. Mr. Poole noted that in the judge's decision regarding 1903 E. Marshall Street the Boards special exception powers were confirmed.			
The 1	meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. Regur Mark Vice - Chairman		

VIRGINIA COPY CITY OF RICHMOND **BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS** CASE NO. 21-18 CITY HALL 900 EAST BROAD STREET, 5TH FLOOR RICHMOND, VIRGINIA JUNE 6, 2018 1:00 P.M. REPORTED BY: JACQUELIN O. GREGORY-LONGMIRE, RPR, LSR JANE K. HENSLEY - COURT REPORTERS

(804) 739-3500

1	APPEARANCES
2	Board Members:
3	
4	Roger H. York, Jr., Chairman
5	Kenneth R. Samuels
6	Mary J. Hogue
7	Rodney N. Poole
8	Roy W. Benbow, Secretary
9	Zoning Administrator: William C. Davidson
10	Brian Mercer, assistant
11	Coursel for the Applicants.
12	Counsel for the Applicants: Andrew R. McRoberts
13	Attorney at Law Sands Anderson
14	1111 East Main Street Richmond, Virginia 23218
15	Coursel for 905 Most Crown IIC.
16	Counsel for 805 West Group, LLC: Jennifer Mullen
17	Attorney at Law Roth Jackson Gibbons Condlin
18	11 South Twelfth Street Suite 500
19	Richmond, Virginia 23219
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22	
23	
24	
25	

I N D E X

1	INDEX	
2	STATEMENTS	PAGE:
3	ANDREW R. MCROBERTS	26
4 5	WILLIAM C. DAVIDSON	62
6	JENNIFER MULLEN	70
7	ANDREW R. MCROBERTS (REBUTTAL)	79
8	WILLIAM DAVIDSON (REBUTTAL)	93
9	JENNIFER MULLEN (REBUTTAL)	97
10	KELLEY LANE	101
11	PARKER AGELASTO	104
12	BRENT RAPER	109
13	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION	119
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
	IANE K HENCLEY COURT REPORTED	

PROCEEDINGS

MR. YORK: Ladies and gentlemen, this is a regular monthly meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals in the City of Richmond, Virginia. The Board is comprised of five of your fellow citizens who are appointed by the Circuit Court and serve without compensation.

Three affirmative votes are required to approve any variance or grant in the field. The Board is assisted by its secretary, who has no voting power. The zoning administrator and his assistant are also present, as well as a representative of the City Attorney's Office but do not vote.

The Board's powers are very limited and are set forth in the Code of Virginia, the city charter, and Richmond city code. The Board does not have the power to rezone property but may only grant variances from specific zoning requirements as they apply to a particular property or grant appeals from decisions of the zoning administrator or grant certain exceptions to the zoning regulations.

The Board's proceedings are informal, but we do adhere to certain rules. We ask that those persons expecting to testify in each case be sworn in when the case is called.

The cases will be heard in the order in which they appear on the docket. First we hear the applicant, then others who wish to speak in favor of the applicant, and finally from persons in opposition.

In the case of a variance, a special exception request, the applicant, proponents, or persons aggrieved under 15.2-2314 of the Code of Virginia shall be permitted a total of six minutes each to present their case. The Board will withhold questions until conclusion of the presentation.

Rebuttal may be permitted at the discretion of the Board but shall be limited to correction or clarification of factual testimony already presented and rebuttal should not exceed five minutes.

In the case of an appeal over the decision of the zoning administrator, which is the first case we have today, the appellant or applicant's representative and the zoning administrator shall be permitted a total of ten minutes to present their case-in-chief and their rebuttal.

The appellant or applicant's representative and zoning administrator shall be required prior to their presentation to declare to the Board how many of their allotted minutes shall be devoted to their

case-in-chief and in rebuttal. I will be keeping track of it, and I'll warn you when you're reaching your rebuttal time.

Following the presentations of the appellant and zoning administrator, other interested parties shall be permitted a total of ten minutes to present their views.

Interested parties are defined as a property owner, other than the appellant, whose property is the subject of an appeal and the neighborhood constituency consisting of neighbors and neighborhood associations.

After all the cases have been heard, the Board will decide each case. After your case is heard, you are welcome to stay through the remainder of the docket to hear the Board's deliberation or you may leave. If you choose to leave, please do so quietly.

The Board will notify each applicant in writing as to the decision of the Board.

All right. As I said at the beginning, this is not a political body. This is more like a court, since the members are appointed by the Circuit Court. And in this particular case, the Board's authority is limited to deciding whether the zoning

administrator's interpretation of the applicable zoning requirements to the subject property was correct. And all of the testimony received today has to be focused on his decision, as well as the issues raised by the applicant.

The applicant will go first and will get ten minutes to speak, followed by the zoning administrator, and then anyone who wishes to speak in support of the applicant, another ten minutes. And then after that, anyone who wishes to speak in support of -- or the owner of the subject property, followed by people who wish to speak in support of the zoning administrator's position.

MR. BENBOW: Excuse me, Roger. You didn't mention the rebuttal and the ten minutes for the neighborhood associations and the neighborhood --

MR. YORK: Yeah. I'm going to explain that.

MR. BENBOW: -- are collective.

MR. YORK: We would encourage you in order to avoid repetition and make sure that the issues are all raised, keeping in mind that this is how much material we've already received, so we're very well-versed on what's going on today.

If you could choose a spokesperson to go first among the neighborhood group, that would make sure

1	that what you want to get across to us is taken care
2	of.
3	All those to be heard in this
4	MR. BENBOW: The rebuttal, they need to state
5	their case-in-chief and the rebuttal time.
6	MR. YORK: Yeah. I said that already.
7	MR. BENBOW: But you need to get it from them.
8	Okay. You want to swear them in?
9	MR. YORK: Yeah, after I swear them in.
10	All of those people who wish to be heard in this
11	case, please stand and raise your right hand.
12	(All participants expecting to testify were duly sworn.)
13	MR. YORK: Thank you.
14	The applicant will come first and let me know
15	how much of his time he wants to reserve for
16	rebuttal, but before he does that, we have an issue
17	that we have to decide amongst ourselves.
18	The applicant's attorney has submitted a rather
19	lengthy letter, which I've only had a chance to scan,
20	that raises a number of issues or elaborations or
21	issues, for example, on the timeliness of the appeal,
22	which is not mentioned at all in the application, as
23	well as greater elaboration on the merits of the
24	zoning administrator's decision.
25	And I don't have that in front of me, but the

rules that we have, Mr. Poole has them.

MR. POOLE: If you'd like, I can read it. These are the application instructions.

"If additional grounds for your appeal are presented to the Board of Zoning Appeals, which were not a part of your appeal application, the zoning administrator will not have been given all of the relevant information on which to base a final decision. This may result in a continuance of your case or exclusion of the subject information altogether from your testimony before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

"You may supplement your application with any information you deem appropriate, including, but not limited to surveys, site plans, floor plans, elevation drawings, pictures, et cetera."

That's the relevant language. And, quite frankly, I think the first thing we should do is ask the zoning administrator, have you had time to read this?

MR. DAVIDSON: I'm on page 9.

MR. YORK: Of what you've read so far, are you prepared to --

MR. DAVIDSON: Well, I guess, one concern I have is that we're citing specific previous Board cases

that I don't know may even be applicable in this situation.

They say that I ruled something back in 2003, but I don't have that case in front of me, so I can't tell you whether it was cited the same --

MR. YORK: Well, it looks like we have --

MR. DAVIDSON: I mean, the first five pages are talking about vesting law and whether the party, the aggrieved --

MR. YORK: The 30- and 60-day rules.

MR. DAVIDSON: The 30, 60 appeal period.

MR. YORK: The other angle of this is even if we choose to continue it, we can either not accept it or alternatively, we could continue it. But to the extent that there are any -- and, again, I've only scanned it -- any new arguments that are presented, they clearly are beyond the 60-day time limit, right?

MR. POOLE: I'm not sure which 60-day time limit you're --

MR. YORK: The one that over which you can't change a decision of the zoning administrator.

MR. POOLE: Well, there are two different issues there. I think one of the things I would like to know as an individual member is, does the applicant intend to argue items that are contained within his

June 6th letter?

MR. MCROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, if you'd call the case, I certainly can address that as I arrive.

MR. YORK: We have to decide whether we're going to accept testimony.

MR. BENBOW: Exactly.

MR. POOLE: Well, I'm on page 3, so I'm not prepared to even consider issues that are -- if we're going to give -- if it's the decision of the body that we're going to consider material here, at the very minimum, we have to continue the case, in my view.

And, secondly, I would admonish the applicant to adhere to the rules and that if we choose to continue the case, that this is the last material that will be submitted.

MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

This is in direct response to the application packet. The packet that we just received, many materials in there, we'd never seen in advance of just recently.

At this time there are not five BZA members and so we would exercise our right under the charter to defer this case.

MR. YORK: Actually, you have the right, if

1 there are only three members, not four members. 2 MR. MCROBERTS: Ah, I thought it was less than 3 five. 4 MR. POOLE: No. 5 MR. YORK: However, you could still choose to defer the case for 30 days. 6 7 MR. MCROBERTS: I think that would make sense. 8 Honestly, I think that there are substantial legal 9 materials that are in here. None of this is new 10 facts beyond what you'll be hearing from folks 11 speaking in favor of the application, as is their 12 right. It's mostly legal argument. It's in response 13 to zoning administrator's packet. 14 MR. YORK: I mean, I very quickly read through 15 it, and you're right, I don't see any new facts, but 16 I see lots of additional arguments and citations. 17 MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir. 18 MR. YORK: And as Chuck said, he hasn't had a 19 chance to make sure that his inconsistencies have been verified and so forth and so on. 20 21 MR. DAVIDSON: One other matter. The letter 22 references saying that he represents applicants in 23 the matter with Donald Traser, but I believe that 24 applicant is not on this docket. 25 MR. YORK: We have two vers- -- we received two JANE K. HENSLEY - COURT REPORTERS

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1 versions of the application letter, one with and one 2 without, and I asked Roy about it and, apparently --3 MR. BENBOW: Chuck ruled that it did come in --MR. YORK: It come in too late? 4 5 MR. BENBOW: -- but it wasn't timely filed. 6 MR. DAVIDSON: It was added after the 30-day 7 time period. 8 MR. YORK: Yeah. 9 MR. MCROBERTS: Your Honor, we were told that we 10 can amend our application, so we did. And in the 11 application that was requested by the zoning 12 administrator, we added Mr. Traser. 13 MR. YORK: Is that extra person critical to your 14 case? 15 MR. MCROBERTS: I think that he brings more to 16 the table, but there are the two other individual 17 applicants that, I think, are similarly situated. 18 MR. YORK: That doesn't prohibit him from being 19 able to speak. 20 MR. MCROBERTS: And I think that he probably 21 will, but it sounds like, to me, a deferral or a continuance would make sense and we support that. 22 23 MR. POOLE: Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that 24 the attorney for the developer, the owner, be heard 25 from before we make a decision, one way or the other.

MR. YORK: Do you have a copy of this letter?

MS. MULLEN: No, sir, I do not.

Mr. York, members of the BZA, I'm Jennifer
Mullen with the law firm of Roth Jackson here on
behalf of 805 West Group, LLC, which is the owner of
the properties in question, subject of this appeal.

We would request that this matter be heard based on the information that we were provided in the original application and be heard on its merits. We think this is probably an additional attempt to delay the development of this property. It has been stayed based on this BZA appeal.

With the additional information, I'm not sure what the letter provides, but the language with respect to the 60-day rule is very specific in the state code and that is one that moves through the charter, as well as the city ordinance itself, and the city attorney has opined as to that, which was also in your packet.

MR. POOLE: Would you refresh my memory on that,
Ms. --

MS. MULLEN: Yes, sir. So --

MR. POOLE: -- Mullen? Excuse me.

MS. MULLEN: So there are -- there are multiple issues, obviously, with respect to an appeal. One is

that you have standing, which I'd be happy to talk about at length as well. And the second is if you are time-barred. And time-bar has two components. One is with respect to a 30-day rule and this falls under 15.2-2311.

And the 30-day rule is based on a 30-day appeal period from the appellants based on when they received notice and that is flawed in multiple ways based on their provisions in their packet.

They did receive notice and a full upload of all documents from the City in January, and that information contained the same information that was in the October 23rd, 2017, letter.

That same information was in the January 22nd comment letter and yet they waited until the March letter, which just said that the zoning office had no further comments and the POD was acceptable for approval.

So they waited until that letter to appeal it, even though the decision had been made in October and again in January with the same decision, no new information in March.

The 60-day applies when you are aggrieved. We have materially, my clients, did everything they were supposed to do under the law. They requested a

zoning conformance letter, with specific plans attached. They received the detailed zoning conformance letter, October 23rd of 2017. They relied on that letter, and they bought the property. It was a material change in their position. They acquired the property based on that letter and then they went forward and expended further resources, developed a plan of development set, submitted that application to the City, received comments, revised that, and then only after that did they receive the March 23rd, I believe, notice of the appeal.

So that 60-day rule is one that is a thing decided. And there is case law out there, as well as a code provision, meaning that the zoning administrator cannot change his determination with respect to those items that are included in that October 23rd decision letter.

MR. YORK: The problem is the applicant has cited a bunch of cases dealing with the 30- and 60-day issue, and, of course, we haven't had an opportunity to review those cases arguing that it's not as clear-cut as you're suggesting.

MS. MULLEN: Well, and I think just not only am I suggesting, but their own city attorney has suggested that in the packet and so there are --

2 MS. MULLEN: It does become a thing decided. 3 And not only does the zoning administrator have the 4 presumption of correctness, but they have to -- the 5 appellants have to provide a preponderance of the 6 evidence in order to rebut that preponderance -- to 7 rebut his presumption of correctness, which they have 8 not. And not only is it time-barred, but they do not 9 10 have standing, so every single argument that they have in that packet, which I can go into in more 11 12 detail, you have to have a two-part test: One is 13 proximity, which may be where they're located. 14 only provided their addresses. 15 MR. YORK: Yeah. You're bordering on --16 MR. POOLE: I guess --17 MR. YORK: -- testifying here on this case. We're familiar with it. 18 19 MR. POOLE: Here's what I was trying to ask you. 20 And I understand the distinction between the 30- and 21 the 60-day. I'm addressing the issue of whether we 22 can accept this material. 23 I would say no. The application is MS. MULLEN: 24 very clear. The rules are very clear with respect to 25 the Board of Zoning Appeals. The 60-day rule is a

MR. YORK: Yes. That's true.

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thing decided, so that 60-day rule is the thing decided.

Now, bringing in additional information, again, I don't know what the letter says or what it purports to allege, but that 60-day rule is a thing decided and so continuing it just continues to stay the ability to develop the property, which I think is the ultimate goal of the appellants.

MR. POOLE: Thank you.

MS. MULLEN: Thank you.

MR. YORK: There's some pretty meaty stuff in this letter. The question is, do we give them a chance to consider it, or do we just decide that we're just going to proceed based on the --

MR. POOLE: Whoa, whoa. There are two issues that I have. Our rules say please provide the materials ahead of time, not on the day of the hearing. I mean, that's one thing that I think is applicable to this issue.

We make the rules as to how these cases are presented. This is part of our application process. It's part of what we give to every applicant and make it known to every applicant.

I understand that Mr. McRoberts' argument is he said he didn't see what was in the packet until

later. I get that. So there's arguments on either side of it. But if Ms. Mullen is right and that is that this whole issue is time-barred, if that's what the decision of this Board is, then all the other issues are irrelevant.

MR. YORK: But in the past we have in order to avoid ruling on a timeliness issue and avoid the problem of having a case appealed and then sent back to us in case we lose on the merits, we've already -- in the past, we have always considered both. Even if we reject on the timeliness issue, we still go ahead and hear the merits, keeping in mind, as you said, we have an opinion from the city attorney that confirms his -- that agrees with his decision that the 60-day rule applies here.

MR. POOLE: Well, and I think that's applicable as evidence before this Board, but I don't think that's dispositive of the issue. I think that it weighs heavily in favor of the zoning administrator who already carries a presumption of correctness, but it's up to us to decide that issue. It's our decision-making process is to consider all of the evidence and then decide is it or is it not time-barred. If we decide that, then the remainder of the case is irrelevant.

MR. YORK: Well, if we have the hearing today indicating that we're not going to accept this as part of the record and the applicant's attorney gets up and starts arguing his position on the 30- or 60-day rule, are we going to stop him when he starts to cite case law?

MR. POOLE: I think the applicant has the right to argue whatever he wants to argue in his ten-minute period of time. I don't think you can limit anybody from arguing.

The question is, is this paper considered? I think it puts us in a very untenable position.

MR. YORK: Well, the zoning administrator --

MR. POOLE: It puts the zoning administrator in extraordinarily untenable position, which is why I'm concerned about the timing of the presentation of this, particularly given Ms. Mullen's allegation that this is part and parcel of a continued effort to delay this process. That's something she'd have to prove and something that I'm sure that Mr. McRoberts would disagree with.

I think it's up to the Board to decide what to do, A, as to whether to move forward, and then, B, or to continue the case. I think that's the issue that we have to decide.

MR. YORK: And the applicant didn't even raise 1 2 the 30-, 60-day issue at all in the application. 3 Does that mean he can't provide any testimony about it? 4 5 It's not even mentioned. MR. BENBOW: Can I make a suggestion? 6 Why don't you check to see if the zoning --7 8 because he's the one that really needs to be looped 9 into this. If he's willing to go forward on the 30-10 to 60-day issue exclusively --MR. YORK: Well, it goes further than that, 11 12 though. There are arguments that are made that he's 13 been inconsistent as interpretation and how can he --It's up to him. 14 MR. BENBOW: 15. MR. YORK: -- respond to that? 16 MR. BENBOW: It's up to him. 17 MR. YORK: I mean, he would have to leave here 18 and go dig through his records. MR. BENBOW: Why don't you ask him that. 19 20 MR. YORK: Would you respond to that? 21 Did you read that part? 22 MR. BENBOW: Could you address the 30- to 60-day 23 issue? 24 Are you in a position to address that today now? 25 MR. DAVIDSON: Well, I mean, I already presented

1 my position on that but as far as what my stance is 2 and what the city attorney agreed with. 3 MR. BENBOW: So is that a yes, that you're in a 4 position to go forward? 5 MR. YORK: On that part of it? MR. BENBOW: Correct. 6 It's in the packet. 7 MR. DAVIDSON: 8 MR. BENBOW: Okay. I mean, discussion about that 9 MR. DAVIDSON: 10 this information wasn't available when they just 11 received it, I'm not sure what that means, but I 12 mean, the Board got the packet. I'm presuming the 13 applicants, the appellants got the packet. 14 MR. YORK: But as far as of the merit part of 15 the case, you're saying, though, you wouldn't be 16 prepared to be able to address some of the issues that have been raised? 17 18 MR. DAVIDSON: Well, I mean, there are specific items that are cited that I can't speak to because I 19 20 don't have the cases in front of me, number 1. It could be that they're not even related, 21 22 whether those sections were cited. I mean, I don't 23 know. And the other situation would be that if they 24 weren't cited, then maybe you then would have to call 25 into question were -- and have those properties

vested under that statute because they didn't cite it.

MR. YORK: The problem is, if we rule on just the timeliness issue and just that issue alone is appealed, then it could end up coming back to us later for the merits issue and drag this out even longer.

MR. POOLE: Well, I don't think it's any secret that no matter which way this case is decided, it's going to be appealed. I don't think that's the issue.

MR. YORK: But we still have to do what we think is the right thing regardless of the results.

MR. POOLE: It strikes me that most of the argument made in the letter of March 15th, which the applicant relies on as the explanation of his case, does not address the issue of timeliness of the filing, so I think he failed to raise that issue in his appeal.

So I think we can decide the timeliness issue, but it's up to the Board. I'm just one member of this Board.

MR. YORK: Well, if you're saying that you think we can decide the issue, but are we going to allow the applicant to testify on that issue?

MR. POOLE: I think the applicant has ten minutes to say whatever the applicant wants to provide to us. If we don't understand it and can't rely on his testimony, that's up to us. We get to weigh the evidence. That's our job.

MR. YORK: So would you make a motion then that we consider testimony on the 30- and the 60-day issue and not the merits of this case at this point, at this time so the zoning administrator could have a chance to look into the challenges that are raised in the letter, the subsequent letter?

MR. POOLE: I would make that motion for purposes of discussion.

MR. YORK: Someone second for the purposes of discussion?

MR. SAMUELS: For the purpose of discussion.

MR. YORK: All right.

MR. POOLE: You know, I think that if this Board determines that this appeal is not timely, as far as I'm concerned, there's no need to address anything else.

MR. YORK: Well, like I said, the only reason we've done that in the past is to avoid it -- not that that has ever happened, but to avoid it being sent back to us at a later date and forcing us to

deal with it again, but that's -- I mean, it's up to the Board to decide.

There's a motion before us to consider arguments pertaining to the 30-day interpretation and the 60-day interpretation and not to hear testimony with regard to the basic merits of the case.

MR. POOLE: Call the question.

MR. YORK: Call the question.

All those in favor?

MR. POOLE: Aye.

MR. SAMUELS: I would say aye.

MR. YORK: All right. What are you voting?

MS. HOGUE: I think I --

MR. YORK: Well, we got three votes.

MS. HOGUE: Yeah. I -- yeah. So I think I would like to hear the merits.

MR. YORK: All right. You've heard the discussion. What that means is that the testimony we have today has to be limited to the legal issues involved with whether the application was filed within 30 days of the decision of the zoning administrator and then, subsequently, if more than 60 days have passed, which under state law formulizes the zoning administrator's decision.

So, as I said before, we'll hear from the

applicant first and he'll get ten minutes and then 1 2 we'll hear from the zoning administrator, and then 3 we'll hear from anyone else in the audience who feels they can provide any relevant testimony on these 4 5 legal issues, followed by the attorney for the property owner and, finally, if there's anyone here 6 7 who supports the zoning administrator, they would get 8 their shot. 9 So, Mr. McRoberts, it's up to you now. Do you want to clarify exactly what 10 MR. BENBOW: 11 the discussion is limited to? MR. YORK: I just did that. 12 13 MR. BENBOW: Okay. MR. YORK: The 30-day issue and the 60-day 14 15 issue. MR. MCROBERTS: Honorable Members of the BZA --16 MR. YORK: Oh, before you start, do you want to 17 limit some time for rebuttal? 18 MR. MCROBERTS: Two minutes. 19 MR. YORK: All right. I'll let you know when 20 21 eight minutes are gone. 22 23 STATEMENT BY ANDREW R. MCROBERTS, ESQ. 24 MR. MCROBERTS: All right. Thank you. Honorable Members of the BZA, there's nothing in 25

my letter that isn't, A, legal argument that, as

Mr. Poole said, I'm entitled to make or is addressing
issues already in the appeal, which, of course, we're
entitled to raise, so we would, certainly, object to
being denied the opportunity to address the merits.

But on the 30- and 60-day issue as stated in the letter, there's nothing in the letter that I wasn't planning on telling you, but I, certainly, wanted to be clear for the record.

First of all, the applicants are aggrieved.

They all own or have easements within the same block.

They own fee simple property within the same block or within a block. All of them are affected by this proposed project, including loss of light, air, traffic, et cetera.

Second, the application was timely on the 30-day issue. First of all, the 30 days only begins to run from the order, requirement, decision or determination. It has to be one of those things.

The Supreme Court has said time and time again that to be an order, requirement, decision, determination, or as I call it an ORDD, then you have to meet the term of art that the Supreme Court has said an ORDD must be. It's not just any determination. It's no scrap of paper signed by the

zoning administrator. It's not even things that are zoning verification letters, for example.

And that leads us to the October and the January letters. In the <u>Crucible</u> case, <u>Board of Supervisors</u> of Stafford County versus Crucible, a very similar letter to the one was considered. And in that case the Supreme Court said that's not an ORDD. Why? Because it did not approve the project, it did not give the applicant or the recipient of the letter any rights that they didn't have under the zoning ordinance anyway, didn't state that they could do anything other than what they could have done anyway. In other words, it wasn't a fundamental approval.

That's contrasted with the recent Supreme Court case of Board of Supervisors of Richmond County

versus Rhoads, in which case there was an actual zoning approval. It was an attached zoning confirmation to a building permit that actually allowed the applicants -- changed their rights, allowed them to build a garage, put them in a place different than they were before receiving the zoning determination.

One is an ORDD in the <u>Rhoads</u> case; one is not in the <u>Crucible</u> case. This is much, much similar to the <u>Crucible</u> case. In that case it's a zoning

verification; in this case it's a zoning verification. Those things are nothing like the ORDD in the Rhoads case.

Since they are not ORDDs, they, one, don't trigger 30 days. And then, two, they can't lead to 60-day rights under 2311.C.

As far as the timeliness issue, there's also a due process and fundamental fairness issue. In the case of Ripol versus Westmoreland County, a Judge Jay Swett addressed this very same issue and said aggrieved applicants that have substantial property and contractual rights which need to be addressed by the BZA on appeal, because the zoning administrator erred, need to be heard even though the date of the memo in question was far longer -- far before the 30 days had expired.

In that case, they appealed within 30 days of when they found out about the Zeigler memorandum in the Ripol case, because the fundamental fairness, said Judge Swett, and because of the fact that they determined that they appealed in a timely fashion after they received notice of the zoning matter, then that was timely. And that's 82 Va. Cir. 69 of 2010, Circuit Court case.

The Supreme Court in Lilly versus Caroline

County addressed a similar issue in which the Lillys, who were present at the planning commission meeting and the meetings in which the ORDD itself was a verbal determination given by the zoning administrator. The Lillys claimed, "We didn't get notice and, therefore, we shouldn't have had to appeal within 30 days."

The Supreme Court cited the findings of the trial court in which they said, "You knew within 30 days, and, in fact, you received notice from the zoning administrator that you had the right to appeal." And because of that, they rejected the Lillys' argument.

We are the reverse. Our applicants did not know until such time. As a matter of fact, the only applicants that knew anything about this as far as the zoning determinations that are at issue here was OHNA, the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, and OHHIC, which did, in fact, receive the January letter on January 29th. They didn't even know that the October letter existed until much later, March 20th.

And there are three individual applicants who are named that didn't know of either or any of these zoning determinations until well after March 1st, and because of that, it, certainly, was timely from the

date that they learned of that and became aggrieved.

I'm going to turn to 2311.C. 2311.C, first of all, does not even apply in the City of Richmond. The City of Richmond is controlled by the city charter ultimately. 17-19 allows for aggrieved applicants to appeal to the BZA. It curiously and very significantly omits any kind of reference to 2311.C language, vested rights regarding any kind of recipient of zoning administrator determinations, and it, certainly, is not binding on the BZA in this case.

The Supreme Court has said time and time again that where there is a charter on a subject matter, that charter controls. It is, basically, an amendment of the general law and it applies instead of the general law. And so 2311.C simply doesn't apply.

Second of all, 2311.C requires reasonable reliance by the developer. Reasonable reliance. There is no case law on what "reasonable reliance" means, but I would say the reasonable reliance, certainly, doesn't say that a general letter like the one back in October, that even the zoning administrator said in an e-mail, "It's a general letter. I didn't have even a complete site plan at

the time."

Those letters, if you look through the October and the January letters, they, one, don't approve anything. They ask the developer for more information, different information. They reserve the right to change their opinion. They also say several times the zoning is not compliant with the law. And in the October letter, they specifically said the height is in violation of the zoning.

So I don't see how the developer can say, "Oh, I'm relying on these," if, in fact, there are so many things that are unknown and uncertain. And the staff reserves the right to change what they're saying to the developer. There's no reasonable reliance.

Moreover, if you suggest that the January letter is a more specific, less general letter and maybe that's an ORDD, the fact is this appeal and all of the concerns that were raised were raised well within the 60 days. There has to be a 60-day period after the issuance of the ORDD. And before then, the zoning administrator by 2311.C, if it applies, has the right to change their opinion or reverse it or withdraw it. How can you reasonably rely on something the zoning administrator says if he can simply pull the rug out from under you? And he

could.

And so, as a result, that not only were these issues raised in March and, perhaps, as early as February, we do know that the developer and the developer's attorney was aware of our concerns. We know that the developer's attorney received the March 15th letter the day it was given to the City. We know that the developer's attorney received the March 23rd appeal, the date that it was given and filed in there. Both of those were within the 60 days from January.

So our position is neither of those letters is an ORDD. At most, maybe January is an ORDD, but we don't think so, but even if it is, the appeal and all of the complaints that the developer knew about happened within the 60 days. At that point they've got to understand that the BZA could overturn the zoning administrator, that the fact and ultimately a court could overturn the zoning administrator.

And, lastly, the mention of the stay. I think that the developer's attorney mentioned a stay.

Certainly, that also applies.

How can you have a 60-day time frame run when there's a stay of the zoning matter itself?

MR. YORK: Two minutes.

MR. MCROBERTS: Okay. The bottom line is, the 1 stay applies. The Black's Law Dictionary defines a 2 proceeding, not just as litigation, but also any 3 matter, any sort of a course of conduct. And that 4 involves, also, the right to appeal and to rely. 5 With that, I'll close, and thank you very much. 6 7 Answer any questions. Should we ask questions? MR. YORK: 8 MR. POOLE: I would like to ask him questions. 9 MR. YORK: I'm sure you would. 10 MR. POOLE: Any other member would like to go 11 first? 12 MR. YORK: Well, I would like to start off by 13 14 asking a question. 15 You were citing the charter as trumping the Code of Virginia. Does it always trumps the Code of 16 17 Virginia? MR. MCROBERTS: It trumps the Code of Virginia 18 where it's covering the same subject matter. 19 MR. YORK: Mr. Poole. 20 MR. MCROBERTS: Well, actually, I think the last 21 time I was before this Board, I think I made a 22 similar argument on behalf of the Better Housing 23 Coalition and I think the BZA accepted the argument 24 25 that day.

But, you know, the Supreme Court has said that when there is one subject matter addressed one way in the statute and it's addressed a different way in the charter, the charter controls. It's a specific -- cite specific cities, specific amendment of the general law.

MR. POOLE: A question, Mr. McRoberts. The Certificate of Zoning Compliance, which was issued in October, was issued as a part of the zoning ordinance of the City of Richmond. There's a specific section of the zoning ordinance that permits that letter to be requested, paid for, and received and relied upon.

Do you --

MR. MCROBERTS: I don't believe the Code says anything about reliance, Mr. Poole. And all of my arguments about their lack of reasonable reliance go directly to that.

I mean, the Supreme Court itself really defines what an ORDD is and what it is not. And in this case, you had something that even the letters themselves called -- they didn't call it determination or something that's going to be relied on. What they said was, Here's some quote, information, unquote. They said, here are comments quote, unquote. I'm sorry, information, comments,

that sounds very much like the <u>Crucible</u> zoning verification letter, just like these zoning verification letters.

MR. POOLE: In this <u>Crucible</u> case, was there a specific section of the zoning ordinance that permitted Certificate of Zoning Compliance?

MR. MCROBERTS: There is a specific code section that requires the zoning administrator to issue opinions when asked and so that's what happened in that case, the landowner or -- actually, they hadn't purchased it yet.

The <u>Crucible</u>, who had, basically, they wanted to do a military training center and they went to the Stafford zoning administrator and said, Hey, we want to do this military training school with weapons tactics and secret stuff and tanks and who knows what all. And the zoning administrator looked into --

MR. POOLE: Armored personnel carrier?

MR. MCROBERTS: Perhaps so, Mr. Poole.

I do know that the zoning administrator looked into this. It's required by law to, actually, address those inquiries when they come in and issue what determination within -- or an opinion or whatever within 60 days if, in fact, that applied.

And so in that case, he did. He looked into the

zoning ordinance in Stafford and all it said was, a school is a place where education happens. It's, basically, just that simple. And he said, "Well, you are training people about military tactics and weapons and training is education and it's a school, so schools are allowed by right in the A-1 zone."

And so he said so.

Well, at some point thereafter they purchased the property. Those little stakes that appear at the corners of property happened at that point in time and the neighbors called up the county and said, "What's going on next door? I see the stakes and whatnot."

And they said, "Oh, well, there's going to be military training."

At that point the Board of Supervisors got very concerned and, in fact, raised the appeal. And so at that point, this very issue about timeliness of appeal was raised and they said, "Look, we received this statement from the zoning administrator that our military training center was permitted by right in the A-1 zone months and months ago. I mean, what -- you know, this is not timely."

And the Supreme Court said, "I'm sorry. This thing that you're talking about, this zoning

verification letter, did not approve any project,"
just like this one. It didn't change the rights of
the recipient, just like this one, and it didn't
actually leave the applicant anywhere that they
wouldn't have been under the ordinance originally.

MR. POOLE: How is it, it didn't change the rights of the owner in that the owner relied on the Certificate of Zoning Compliance to then acquire the property?

Why wasn't that a change in position?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, it may very well have been a change of position. What the Supreme Court said was, the optional --

MR. POOLE: Well, why wouldn't that have been in reliance on the Certificate of Zoning Compliance, which is permitted under the Richmond Zoning Ordinance?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, two things, Mr. Poole: First of all, the Supreme Court held that it wasn't an order, requirement, decision, determination in the first place. So reliance or no, it didn't matter. It simply was not the kind of thing that is an official ORDD under the zoning statutes.

And then second, as far as reasonable reliance, the Supreme Court time and time again has said the

zoning verification letter in <u>Crucible</u> is not an ORDD. They said that the zoning approval in the tax approval in Norfolk is not an ORDD. And the Supreme Court said about eight or nine times different things are not ORDDs, including a number of zoning verifications where people went to the zoning administrator and were told one thing and then supposedly changed their position and then argued that it was an ORDD and they were wrong every time --

MR. POOLE: But didn't you just --

MR. MCROBERTS: -- until the Rhoads case.

MR. POOLE: In the <u>Rhoads</u> case, you just in your initial argument --

MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MR. POOLE: -- made a reference to the fact that the letter was attached, the determination letter was attached to the building permit.

Is that what you say is the distinction?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, distinction is that it actually does the three things that the <u>Crucible</u> court sets out needs to be there in case of an ORDD. It was, in fact, an approval of the project in case there was a garage that was being applied for by right in the zoning district and the zoning approval was given. Okay? So it changed what they could do.

Second of all, it actually changed their rights.

Before they got that, along with the building permit,
they couldn't build a garage and now they can.

And then thirdly, it, actually, changed the interests, the legal interests of the recipient and so they were actually --

MR. POOLE: Help me with that. What legal interest changed?

MR. MCROBERTS: What legal interest changed is they had no right under the zoning ordinance to build that garage and then afterwards they did.

And those are the three things that the <u>Crucible</u> Supreme Court case says need to be there in order to find an order, requirement, decision, determination.

As I said at the top of my discussion, not everything that looks like a zoning determination or a document that is signed by the zoning administrator with zoning information -- and to use the words in the October and January letter, information and comments, is, in fact, an order, requirement, decision, determination. It has to meet the term of art the Supreme Court has set out.

MR. POOLE: What's really bothering me here is that when the City puts forward in its zoning ordinance a mechanism for a particular party to come

to the City and ask for a Certificate of Zoning
Compliance, which is exactly what happened in this
case, that then they can't rely on it.

Help me understand why the ordinance is there and why it shouldn't apply in this case.

MR. YORK: Before he answers that question, may I ask him a question?

MR. POOLE: Sure.

MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MR. YORK: You're wandering around about the question of whether the language in the vesting provision would help in this case and you're saying it didn't apply and you talk -- I know we're not supposed to consider this, but you talked about the fact that our charter trumps the state code.

And the case you talked about is interesting because the -- it's in Alexandria and their -- Alexandria's city code is also identical to that of Richmond. The language is also word for word the same. However, that case was in 1999 and the vesting law has been dramatically changed since then, and I was under the impression that if the code and the charter deal with the same issue, whichever is more specific rules. And in this case the vesting law, as it now stands, subsequent to this case that you cite

is infinitely more specific and more detailed and much more draconian than that provision that's in our city code.

So convince me that that's not the case.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, the <u>Lindsey</u> case is not a vesting 2311.C case, so I want to be clear about that. It's cited for the proposition that where you have a charter that addresses a subject matter and a state --

MR. YORK: Yeah, I understand.

MR. MCROBERTS: -- you know, a state code matter that the charter amends the state code.

MR. YORK: Okay.

MR. MCROBERTS: So as far as to address your issue, there's no question that the state, 2311.C, is more specific on that particular topic. As I said, it's the only thing that addresses it. The charter is silent. And so for that reason, I would say that it doesn't apply.

Further on that point, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that the General Assembly knows how to say, even within 15.2-2311, well, notwithstanding any other charter provision, special law, et cetera -- as a matter of fact, if you look in 2311.A, it says that specifically regarding the 30-day notice requirement

that's required to be embedded in each written ORDD.

What it says is, "notwithstanding any charter to the contrary, you have to send the notice."

So the General Assembly knows exactly how to go into 15.2-2311 and say, "Forget what the charter says. Here's what you need to do."

They didn't do that in 2311.C. And so that's my answer to your inquiry, Mr. Chairman.

MR. POOLE: Can we go back to my question?
MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MR. POOLE: Because the most recent case, the Rhoads case, talks about 2311 being passed by the General Assembly for the specific purpose of relieving the draconian -- and I disagree with you that 2311 is to solve the draconian result rather than to put a draconian result. It was there to --

MR. YORK: It depends on whether you're a developer or a neighbor.

MR. POOLE: Well, that's true. That's true. It's whose ox is being gored. I agree. I understand.

But the 2311 case, the <u>Rhoads</u> case, really talks about an applicant who comes and does what he is supposed to do with respect to finding out whether you can use a piece of property to go ahead and

acquire it.

Time after time after time when we have various cases before this Board, we either admonish particular applicants for not having in common asked a particular question of either the zoning administrator or the secretary of the zoning -- of the Board of Zoning Appeals. You know, you need to ask.

And that's exactly what this applicant -- excuse me -- this owner did. They came to the zoning administrator and said, "Here's our project," gave them some plans. "Is this permissible within the B-3 district because it's zoned B-3?"

And one of the key issues that was determined in that letter was the issue with respect to whether it's a transitional site and the determination of the zoning administrator was very specific. "This is not a transitional site." And so a determination was made. And that's going to be a key element in the arguments of this entire case is the transitional site and that decision was made and relied upon by this specific owner.

Help me understand why the <u>Rhoads</u> case doesn't apply to that?

MR. MCROBERTS: Because the Rhoads was an ORDD.

It's completely unlike the letter that was issued in October.

First of all, the zoning administrator himself when this matter was raised by us on March 15th said in an e-mail, my memory of the October memo, it was general at best and we received a site plan that wasn't final.

Second of all, it didn't meet this <u>Crucible</u> test. It was just like the zoning verification in <u>Crucible</u>. And just like in <u>Crucible</u>, I have no doubt the developer attempted to rely or says that they relied on it, but I would say they purchased some of the property in December. They purchased the rest of it after this BZA appeal was filed and after they got notice of the fact that it got filed.

So -- but back to your question, it's not something that the developer should have relied on because it simply didn't meet the Supreme Court's test. There are seven or eight cases that start with Crucible and go all the way through, I think, James versus City of Falls Church and Norfolk 102.

And in every single one, there was exactly that kind of reliance. The developer landed on a recipient of the piece of paper that was signed by the zoning administrator saying, "Yes, this

complies," in fact, or in verbal, said, "Gosh, I relied on this. I change my position. I have a problem with this."

And in every single one, the zoning administrator was allowed to change their position and the Supreme Court said, "That's not an ORDD. It's not an order, requirement, decision, determination."

MR. POOLE: Why isn't it with respect to the issue of transitional site?

MR. MCROBERTS: Okay. Because it's part of a large memo that says a number of different things, including staff reserves the right to change their views and to submit jurisdictional comments. It is not described as an actual determination. It's not of the type of affirmative, clear statement of the law that you would find in, for example, an order, requirement, decision, determination that says something at the top, determination of the zoning administrator and then, actually, states what it is and then gives the notice at the bottom.

MR. POOLE: I know you've read that letter carefully.

MR. MCROBERTS: I have.

MR. POOLE: And you noticed that the zoning

administrator uses different typeface when he makes the determination with respect to the transitional site.

MR. MCROBERTS: When he gives information and comments, because that's what he calls it.

MR. POOLE: When, at least as I perceive it -- MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MR. POOLE: -- he makes a decision that I think meets that O-R-D definition. That's where I'm having my most trouble here, Mr. McRoberts.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, and I would say that what you just described is exactly like what happened in Crucible. They came and said, "Hey, can we do a military training school? We want to know because we want to rely on what the code says." The zoning administrator said, "There's nothing in the definition of school that excludes a military training center. So, yes, you get to do that."

MR. POOLE: But that's not what this zoning administrator said. The zoning administrator said, "I've looked at this issue. I've determined that it's not transitional and transitional doesn't apply."

And that's the crux of this case.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, Mr. Poole, I would agree

that's one of the cruxes of the case. I would say, though, that I would argue that there's no difference between what the zoning administrator did here and there because in both cases they were required to open up the zoning ordinance, determine what the zoning ordinance said, apply to a proposal by the applicant or landowner. And in both cases, the applicant says they changed their position in reliance on it.

I would argue that's not reasonable reliance because of the <u>Crucible</u> case, all those cases leading through <u>Norfolk 102</u>. And because the thing that they received is nothing like the only thing that the Supreme Court has ever held to be an ORDD and that is an actual approval of a project with a zoning approval of it. That's the only thing that the Supreme Court has ever said is an actual ORDD. And lacking an ORDD, there can be no 30-day clock ticking and there's no 60-day clock ticking.

And, certainly, I had other arguments, you recall, about the 30 days, the fact that there's a due process fundamental fairness issue, that until an aggrieved neighbor actually knows about it, how can the clock run on them?

How can they lose their rights?

How can somebody get vested rights to apply the ordinance in a way that's erroneous when, in fact, the neighbor, all they want to do is enforce the law?

I mean, I would argue that this exception is a very narrow one and the Supreme Court has been very, very judicious about how they mete out exceptions to the law.

And in this case, because we have two very clear examples, one, a zoning verification letter that this -- the October and November letters meet that definition of what <u>Crucible</u> says is not an ORDD, and because it's nothing like the <u>Rhoads versus Board of Supervisors</u> case where it clearly is an ORDD, that there is no ORDD, therefore, there is no 30- or 60-day clock ticking.

Further, I would say that if you look at the October letter very carefully where it talks about the transitional issue, Mr. Poole, which you say is the crux, it's not in the portion that's actually addressed to the applicant at all. It's addressed from Mr. Saunders to Leigh Kelley. It's an internal memorandum, if you look. It's attached. And there's an internal memorandum in which Mr. Saunders addresses the transitional site issue.

Okay. And then in the letter --

MR. POOLE: Are you telling me that the zoning administrator in a different typeface didn't make the specific statement that this was not a transitional site?

Am I reading that wrong?

MR. MCROBERTS: He did in January. Yes.

MR. POOLE: No, in October.

MR. MCROBERTS: In January he said that in the letter.

MR. POOLE: In October.

MR. MCROBERTS: In October he said it in the memorandum that was addressed from Mr. Saunders to Mr. Kelley. I don't know if Leigh is a man or a woman. I apologize.

MR. POOLE: He's a man.

MR. MCROBERTS: Okay. So from Mr. Saunders to Mr. Kelley is an internal staff memo. And so what Mr. Saunders says there is not, "please look at this memorandum which is incorporated herein by a reference," or whatever. He says, you know, "See the attached information," is what he calls it. In other words, the actual language about transitional site in October didn't actually get addressed to the applicant in any -- I mean, the developer landowner in any way.

What it says is, "Here is some information for you." Information is an internal memo from Mr. Saunders to Mr. Kelley. It's not actually a determination, decision or anything that's addressed to them. Mr. Saunders describes it as information. In other words, "Hey, we've had this internal discussion. You might want to know about it." That's hardly an ORDD and it's, certainly, not even a zoning verification letter on that issue like it is in Crucible.

And then when you get to January, Mr. Poole, the zoning administrator does, in fact, address the transitional site issue in the body of the document, but, as I said before, even if you want to say, "Well, okay, that's got to be an ORDD," even if that's correct, the fact is within 60 days, the zoning administrator -- excuse me -- the developer no longer had the right to rely on that. Why? Because they received our March 15th letter. They received the March 23rd BZA appeal. We stayed everything.

They, certainly, were on notice that they could no longer reasonably rely on whatever it was, and as a result, since all of that happened within 60 days, they simply don't meet the definition for a vested right.

24

25

Vested rights are construed very narrowly by the courts. As a matter of fact, the courts when asked about vested rights not under 2311.C -- but maybe it is 2311.C -- but, certainly, in 2307, vested rights are construed narrowly. The person that is advocating for vested rights bears the burden to prove clearly that they complied with the requirements for the vested right. This is not something that, well, just, you know, it appears they do, so okay.

It's got to be clear and it's got to be without question, and the Supreme Court has said that in Hales versus Blacksburg BZA and in a bunch of other cases.

MR. POOLE: I'm reading from page 3 of the October 24, 2017, letter signed by the zoning administrator that says --

> MR. YORK: What's the date again? MR. POOLE:

"West Cary Street is identified as a minor arterial roadway in the City's master plan, which is a category above collector (secondary), so the property would not be considered a transitional site."

October 27th (sic).

That sounds to me like more than a memo. That

1 makes no reference to a memo. It specifically says 2 that the determination of the zoning administrator is 3 that this is not a transitional site. 4 MR. MCROBERTS: What it says under height in the 5 October 24, 2017, it says the maximum height is 6 35 feet. And it talks about the yard requirement on 7 Laurel, which I'm certainly prepared to address if 8 needed. 9 "No details were provided to verify that the 10 height requirement has been met with this proposal. 11 And it does appear that the portion of the building 12 in front of Laurel Street exceeds the height limit." 13 That's what it says about height, Mr. Poole. 14 MR. POOLE: Did I just misread something? 15 MR. MCROBERTS: You may have been addressing the 16 January -- reading the January memorandum. 17 MR. POOLE: I just read to you from the 18 October 27th letter. 19 Would you like to see my copy of it? 20 MR. BENBOW: October 24. 21 MR. POOLE: The 24th. Sorry. 22 MR. BENBOW: To Mr. Dave Quinn. 23 MR. YORK: He's the architect? 24 MR. POOLE: It's the letter to the architect 25 representing the potential owner who asked for the JANE K. HENSLEY - COURT REPORTERS

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1 Certificate of Zoning Compliance and paid a fee to do 2 that. I'm happy to share my copy with you, if you'd 3 like. MR. MCROBERTS: Yeah. 4 I'm looking for it. Ι 5 apologize. 6 MR. POOLE: It's Exhibit A. 7 MR. MCROBERTS: I did see Mr. Davidson's letter 8 dated October 24, 2017, addressed to the architect --9 MR. POOLE: Yes. 10 MR. MCROBERTS: -- which addresses --11 MR. POOLE: It's Exhibit A to Mr. Davidson's 12 packet. It's specifically referred to in the 13 argument letter that was submitted by Ms. Mullen as 14 part of the package. It goes on, Mr. Poole, and talks 15 MR. MCROBERTS: 16 about the issue here. I'm not quite sure what I was 17 referring to earlier, but one of these iterations 18 actually attached the internal memo. 19 MR. POOLE: It may be. 20 MR. MCROBERTS: So that's what I'm talking 21 about. 22 MR. POOLE: It may be. I haven't seen that 23 memo, but this is what I'm talking about as far as 24 meeting the issue of the O-R-D and making a 25 determination that then a person or entity could rely

on. I assume it's an entity since it was addressed to ADFPLCC.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, I'm now looking at that language. It's at the bottom of the second page of that letter and then on top of the third page it appears under height. And it, basically, quotes the statute -- excuse me -- the ordinance -- the zoning ordinance about what a transitional site means.

MR. POOLE: Absolutely. It does. And then he goes on to make a decision in the last phrase.

MR. MCROBERTS: And then it says, "And where that frontage is situated along a major, secondary, or collector street as designated in the City's master plan."

And then it goes on and confirms that
West Cary Street is not any of those three, but
instead it's a minor arterial roadway in the master
plan. And they justify this by saying it's a
category above collector. Well, they've admitted
that it's not a collector by saying it's a category
above.

MR. POOLE: That's not the issue we're talking about.

MR. MCROBERTS: Okay.

MR. POOLE: I understand that argument very well

and we may end up having to discuss that, but what we're talking about is whether or not this is an O-R-D and whether or not you are time-barred with respect to the application of the decision of the zoning administrator from this letter. If this letter is an O-R-D, you're time-barred, in my view.

MR. MCROBERTS: There has to be reasonable reliance and all the other things that I mentioned, Your Honor -- excuse me -- Mr. Poole.

MR. POOLE: Well, I appreciate the --

MR. MCROBERTS: You're wearing a dark suit and I think you got a robe on.

MR. YORK: The same issue, just slightly different, just to make it a lot simpler. Let's suppose the architect back then at the beginning of this had written a letter to Chuck simply including a survey and simply asking the question very simply, "Is this a transitional site?" That's all it says. And Chuck wrote back a letter saying, "No. This is not a transitional site, period." That's all he said. And then the answer I want from you is two-fold.

First of all, do you think that starts the 30-day clock?

And, second of all, if the vesting 2311 applied

in this case, would that make a difference?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, again, I mean, this language, even if it does approve a transitional site, also says a bunch of things that means that the zoning ordinance has absolutely been violated here.

But to answer your questions, one, if that hypothetical occurred, it would not be an ORDD for a number of reasons. The specific reason is it would be just like the zoning verification in Crucible again where an applicant or a person that's looking at buying property comes to the zoning administrator and says, "Hey, can you tell me if the zoning would allow me to do this?" Well, that's exactly what's going on here.

And in <u>Crucible</u>, the zoning administrator said, "Yes, you get to do it."

They went out and bought property in reliance of that.

MR. YORK: Subject to a lot of other provisions.
MR. MCROBERTS: Right.

And in that case the Supreme Court set a test, a three-part test, basically, which has been applied throughout all the cases since then, including the Rhoads case. And until they got to Rhoads, they didn't actually find one that actually met the test.

MR. YORK: But in this case, couldn't you make the argument that if the zoning administrator had sent that original letter saying this is a transitional site and, you know, subject to normal requirements of B-3 and so forth, wouldn't that -- couldn't it be argued that with respect to every other zoning requirement, you can still file an appeal, but with that one particular one you can't?

Do you see where I'm going?

MR. MCROBERTS: I'm not sure I understand the question, Mr. Chairman. Maybe you could rephrase it for me.

MR. YORK: Well, can you piecemeal how much of an appeal you can make?

For example, Chuck may have written this letter in October and there may have been something in that letter that was not addressed and he doesn't discover it until a month ago and then you come in and appeal that decision because of something that he didn't mention in the original letter. Clearly, you would have a right to appeal that regardless of what he had said back in October --

MR. MCROBERTS: Well --

MR. YORK: -- because it wasn't raised in October.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, just like in the <u>Crucible</u> case, in that case the zoning administrator, basically, told the potential landowner that, you know, I have the right to change it.

Well, in this case so does, if 15.2-2311.C applied, then the zoning administrator has the right to change that, too. And they, certainly, don't have a right to reasonably rely where the definition itself has not been met.

I don't know if that addressed your issue or not.

MR. YORK: So barring a change in the zoning ordinance or changing the zoning map, there are no facts that could possibly alter the zoning administrator's determination.

MR. MCROBERTS: He could actually after receiving our March 15th letter change his mind or receiving a city attorney memo that pointed out that he was wrong on part of his determination.

MR. YORK: On the law.

MR. MCROBERTS: He might have changed it. But as it is, he's doubled down on an erroneous interpretation, Mr. Chairman.

MR. YORK: All right.

MR. POOLE: I'm done.

1	MR. YORK: Now, I have a question and I don't
2	mean to be impertinent, but the zoning administrator
3	really has to argue the 30-, 60-day issue or is that
4	up to us to decide?
5	MR. BENBOW: Yes.
6	MR. POOLE: Yes.
7	MR. BENBOW: Absolutely.
8	MR. POOLE: He has an opportunity to make his
9	position known. The other members
10	MR. BENBOW: The developer's attorney.
11	MR. POOLE: The developer's attorney
12	MR. YORK: Yeah, of course.
13	MR. POOLE: has a right to be heard on this
14	issue and then we make a decision.
15	MR. YORK: Well, it's just that the
16	MR. POOLE: But by all means, the zoning
17	administrator has a right to be heard.
18	MR. YORK: it's just that a lot of that is
19	not on the
20	MR. POOLE: I think even Mr. McRoberts would
21	agree to that.
22	MR. YORK: Well, of course. I understand that,
23	but it's not it's not a the 30- and 60-day
24	rules are not something that he is responsible for.
25	He can try to defend the position. I'm not

explaining myself properly.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Poole, I would say in response to that issue, you know, once we received the packet, certainly, we knew this is an issue that's been raised by the developer attorney so we're trying to address it, and that's really all it is.

It's legal argument. We believe that they don't have a 2311.C right for a number of reasons: the charter issue, lack of reasonable reliance, the stay of, you know, the zoning itself by the BZA appeal, and the fact that the original October letter certainly was not some sort of a specific approval of anything that meets the ORDD definition. That's really, you know, to sum it up, I mean, the reasoning behind it.

In this case, the only thing that actually met those terms was the March 1st determination, which then may have incorporated earlier statements.

MR. POOLE: Is this your rebuttal?

MR. MCROBERTS: I'm sorry. I'm just answering the question that was raised.

MR. YORK: I didn't specify that, so he still has his two minutes.

All right.

MR. MCROBERTS: Any other questions?

MR. YORK: Mr. Zoning Administrator?

MR. BENBOW: I don't think he's going to give up the podium.

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM C. DAVIDSON

MR. DAVIDSON: William C. Davidson, zoning administrator for the City of Richmond. I think to bring up an important point in that if you determine that my letter and the memos and everything else that went to the developer, whether it went directly to them, handed to them, mailed to them through a secondhand person, they will literally have to have full-scale plans submitted before we can ever do an ORDD saying that you meet every single requirement of the ordinance.

What they're appealing is that, A, it's not a transitional site. That decision was made initially when a letter went out. There were e-mails back and forth with the architect that it wasn't transitional, how you applied the yard requirements, which is the second issue, and the height requirements. I don't know how you make it any simpler in that they're asking, "Here's my plan."

In the Crucible case it was, "Hey, we do

military training. Does this meet the requirements of a school under your ordinance?"

They say, "Oh, yeah, yeah. It's a school."

And they said, "Okay."

And they thought they were good. They bought it and then they said, "Oh, oops, we need to change the regulation and say that's not a school."

And so that's what that issue was.

The Supreme Court has kind of whittled away a number of different very -- you know they've taken certain nuances with different individual cases.

Rhoads cites some of them. We talked about the Norfolk case. Well, you know, it was that they had rights because they had a receipt, a cash receipt saying they could do alcohol sales. They said, no.

But in the <u>Rhoads</u> case, it said that the certificate was a written determination by the zoning administrator that a particular building plan on a particular property complied with the zoning ordinance. It permitted the garage. The only difference here is that the garage isn't built.

But it says your plans are okay, you got a problem with the height there, but here's how you apply it and until you meet that height, you're not going to have the approval, but you could get the

approval meeting these standards. It's not a transitional site, clearly identified. Clearly identified. It says yard requirements are met.

Again, they're challenging the ordinance regarding specific citations of the ordinance. You know, I've looked at the site, said it wasn't transitional. I don't know how I can change my mind. If I'm erroneous and we determined the 60 days had run and wasn't ORDD, then even if I'm wrong, they get to go.

Any questions?

MR. POOLE: That's what the <u>Rhoads</u> case said, because the zoning administrator made an error in the <u>Rhoads</u> case.

MR. DAVIDSON: Absolutely.

MR. POOLE: And they said that they can depend on it because of their reliance.

MR. DAVIDSON: Right. And I think the major distinction, as I indicated, was they physically built the garage and they didn't find out, oh, then the guy went back out and they said, "oh, oops, how did you" -- and, apparently, there was a different zoning administrator, actually, who said, "Hey, you can't have this."

But they said, "Well, we got our permit. We got

our certification, but what do you have to do?" 1 2 MR. POOLE: Just to be clear, you are of the 3 opinion that with respect to your letter, you consider that to be a decision, an ORDD? 4 MR. DAVIDSON: Absolutely. 5 MR. YORK: The October letter? 6 7 MR. DAVIDSON: Yes, because we, actually, had plans for a development of a specific type and how 8 9 you, actually, apply all of the zoning ordinance 10 provisions to it. 11 Now, it did cite certain things saying you got 12 to do this, that, and the other thing in order to 13 comply, but, yes, it said, "This is how you're going 14 to do it. This is how it will meet the 15 requirements." MR. POOLE: So... 16 17 MR. DAVIDSON: Fast-forward to the -- you know, then the POD is filed in December and, you know, we 18 comment on the PODs. 19 20 Well, the original letter that went out from Mr. Kelley did not have our comments built into the 21 22 letter. He sent it out. And our comments followed up later. You know, the discussion about, "Oh, we 23 reserve the right to change our mind and, you know, 24 with new plans and everything else, "that's -- I 25

1 don't think that's in any of my correspondence. 2 think that's part of the general letter from the POD 3 review from Land Use Administration. MR. POOLE: Now, just for clarification, the 4 5 section of the zoning ordinance that you made this --6 that you issued, your October 24th letter, was the 7 Certificate of Zoning Compliance section. 8 MR. DAVIDSON: Right. 9 MR. POOLE: And then it shifted to the POD 10 section, which is the next section of the code. 0ne 11 is 1020 and one is 1030. 12 MR. DAVIDSON: Right. 13 MR. POOLE: Is that correct? 14 So it's a completely different process. The POD 15 process is different, correct? 16 MR. DAVIDSON: Absolutely. MR. POOLE: Who makes the decision on the POD? 17 18 MR. DAVIDSON: The director. The director 19 approves the POD. It is a separate administrator 20 process which deals with orientation, site planning. 21 trees on the property, things of that -- you know, 22 none of the specific legal ordinance requirements. MR. POOLE: Very good. 23 24 MR. DAVIDSON: And I think in one of my 25 e-mails -- and there was a discussion about one of my

e-mails said, "Oh, it's a general letter" or something to that effect, you know, bringing it back to Crucible. Well, I was at home. I was home on leave, so I did not know -- specifically remembered if I had the full-blown plans and the site plan and a survey and everything else. And it was more of a general question: Did we have? I don't recall, blah, blah, blah. I don't recall that we actually had the plans.

And it was then determined that, yes, we had, actually, had plans and we had reviewed them and et cetera.

MR. YORK: I have a question.

MR. DAVIDSON: Okay.

MR. YORK: The October letter did leave one or two things up in the air that wasn't clear.

Is it safe to assume that with respect just to just those matters that when you finally -- at a certain point in time after that October letter, you must have received a plan in a final form in which you made a determination that it complies with all applicable zoning requirements.

Is that the case?

In other words, there would have been certain elements that would have been appealable, even after

the October issue: for example, the height issue, because you hadn't -- you haven't reacted to a specific plan that there was a problem.

MR. DAVIDSON: Well, we had -- we had in general concept, yes, we had. We had made a decision that this is how you apply the height to the property.

MR. YORK: I'm interested in when that was

MR. DAVIDSON: Well, I think -- I think the letter said that there was a discrepancy on one of the corners of the building because of the roof line

MR. YORK: But did you -- was it specific?

MR. DAVIDSON: And you're asking this secondhand. You have to, actually, talk to the person who, actually, made that statement, but my understanding is that there was not, you know, the dimensional information, you know, minor information on the plan that led us to say, definitely, that, yes, it meets the requirement.

MR. YORK: Yeah, I guess what I was getting at

MR. DAVIDSON: Like you don't have north arrow

MR. YORK: -- was there any subsequent, completely new determination that you made that would have started the clock again, or are you satisfied that you covered everything in the original October 24th letter?

MR. DAVIDSON: I mean, those issues were the only ones that were before us. You know, there were some minor issues about screening and landscaping and things of those natures, but nothing else.

MR. YORK: All right.

MR. DAVIDSON: You know, unequivocally, determination was made. That definitely is not a transitional site, number one. In fact, I think in one of the letters it says that it's designated as a local street, Laurel Street. If you actually look, it's not a local street. It's a collector.

Laurel is a collector and Cary Street is an arterial.

But, you know, we got a statement at the end of a lot of those paragraphs. All yard requirements for the property are met with the proposal. So this isn't, you know, pie in the sky, hey --

MR. YORK: I understand.

MR. DAVIDSON: -- if I build it to the ordinance requirements, then is it okay? Well, obviously, you got to build it to the ordinance requirements.

1	We're saying this plan you supplied does not	
2	meet this, meet this, meet this, meet this.	
3	MR. YORK: Mr. McRoberts, you get two more	
4	minutes.	
5	MR. POOLE: Why we don't hear from Ms. Mullen.	
6	MR. YORK: Yeah, that's better. Let's hear from	
7	Ms. Mullen.	
8	MR. POOLE: Mr. McRoberts wants to hear this	
9	before he gives his rebuttal.	
10	MR. YORK: Yes. All right. You get ten minutes	
11	as well.	
12		
13	STATEMENT BY JENNIFER MULLEN, ESQ.	
14	MS. MULLEN: Thank you.	
15	Good afternoon, again. Jennifer Mullen with	
16	Roth Jackson here on behalf of the owners of the	
17	property.	
18	MR. YORK: You want to reserve time for	
19	rebuttal?	
20	MS. MULLEN: Yes, please. Two minutes would be	
21	great.	
22	Thank you.	
23	So, first, I want to start with the standing	
24	issue. Mr. McRoberts opened his set of comments by	
25	saying that they are aggrieved, they own property or	

easements within the same block and that there is a general loss of light, air, and traffic, et cetera.

So just to bring back what standing requires, it requires, one, proximity and, two, a particularized harm. The <u>Friends of the Rappahannock</u> case is very specific in addressing what that is. And the courts have been very specific in providing that a general loss of light, air, and generalized traffic concerns is not sufficient for that particularized harm. It has to be different than the public in general.

So the appellants, again, have provided their addresses, so even if you can get through the proximity, you still need to have the particularized harm. This cannot be an indirect interest and it has to be unique to these appellants.

And so by providing the three statements by Mr. McRoberts, as well as the letters that were included in the packet from the applicant that went out to seek other association support of the zoning and -- or support of this appeal with respect to the zoning administrator's determination regarding the transitional site as being impactful on all of the city, again, that's only a generalized statement. It has nothing to do with the particularized harm of this property.

So I just want to remind you as we go through this that it's not only standing, but also the time issue, so the standing piece and they have the duty to provide that information. They have not provided that in their appeal packet and nor have they provided that in their statements today.

So to get back to the time-bar and I'll walk through my presentation I think probably more along the lines of what has been discussed so far.

So with respect to the <u>Crucible</u> case, I also think it's important -- and we didn't talk about it -- but Section 15.2-2307 in the <u>Crucible</u> case only had six provisions that provided a significant governmental act at that point in time.

So when that case was decided, the seventh provision regarding a zoning determination letter was not included in the state code. The state code was changed in order to provide that seventh provision with a zoning conformance letter.

And as Mr. Davidson provided, this property did provide the zoning conformance letter request with the specific set of plans, unlike the <u>Crucible</u> case, which asked for a generalized statement regarding what the use was and that the use was permitted within that zoning district. You do not have a

vested right, but your zoning district will not change, but you do have a vested right when you have very specific items as referenced in the zoning conformance letter and we did have that.

As Mr. Poole pointed out, it was very specifically referenced regarding the transitional site. In the decision, we relied on that in order to provide for our development. We bought the property and we moved forward with our developmental plan expending significant amounts of money and meeting the three-part test for vested rights.

The additional piece about the state code and the charter interaction, I just want to highlight, too, a portion of the state code provision -- or excuse me -- the charter provision which has that the Board may take appeals within a reasonable time as prescribed by the Board or other general rules.

So here we have a general rule of the state code being 15.2-2311. You also have other provisions of the city code, which allow for a zoning conformance letter and allow for appeal period.

So to say that the state code will wipe out your ability to have a provision of the state code that applies with respect to the 60-day rule, I do not think that is accurate. And I think that the 60-day

rule applies, but it applies in a different way than Mr. McRoberts has described.

The 30-day rule would apply to the provision of being aggrieved. The 60-day rule applies to our provision on the October 24th determination letter, and that is when that clock begins to run, so I think that that piece is important to note.

So as a -- again, as a general comment, we have two pieces here. You have the provision of being time-barred, but also the standing piece and the applicant has not put forward any evidence to overcome the burden of proof for either of those.

This is a case where the owner did follow the law. The owner requested a specific zoning conformance letter with respect to a set of plans. They received that. In reliance on it, they purchased the property and they moved forward to provide for a development in accordance with those plans, submitted their plan of development.

That January 22nd memorandum component has the same information that the October 24th letter has.

The March 1st letter, which checks off on the box that says it is now consistent with the plans, did not provide any additional information. The January letter asked for additional labels to be placed on

1 the plans. It asked for it to show where your bike 2 parking was located. 3 So I think all of those in total provide that 4 not only is the zoning administrator correct and has 5 the presumption of correctness, but that the owner of the property has followed the rules and this case 6 7 should be denied as being both time-barred and the 8 parties lacking standing to move forward. 9 I'll be happy to answer any questions. 10 MR. YORK: Just, for the record, the Crucible 11 case was in 2009. When was the Certificate of Zoning 12 Compliance added to the list? 13 MS. MULLEN: It was also in 2009, but if you 14 looked at --15 MR. YORK: It was later. 16 MS. MULLEN: -- the <u>Crucible</u> case, it talks 17 about the specific components of 2307 and it lists 18 six pieces. The seventh piece was added after that 19 case. 20 MR. POOLE: The appeal case takes two years to 21 get to that level so it was probably an '07 decision 22 when the old statute was in effect. 23 MR. YORK: I got you. Okay. 24 So there's no question that it was added after 25 that case was heard?

MS. MULLEN: Correct. So the General Assembly has a seventh provision specifically regarding zoning conformance letters and a vested rights component now.

MR. YORK: Do you want to argue the issue I raised before about the -- why the -- the argument that Mr. McRoberts made about the vesting provision not applying because our charter has a much simpler language?

MS. MULLEN: So the charter provision that I think he referenced -- I don't have a copy of his letter, but I think he said 17-9 so that is --

MR. MCROBERTS: 19.

MS. MULLEN: I'm sorry, 17-19. And that is the state code provision of 2309, which allows for a Board of Zoning Appeals to exist and to provide for the rules under the Board of Zoning Appeals.

MR. YORK: I'm talking about 2311, the vesting part.

MS. MULLEN: Correct. So he's saying that that section trumps it, correct?

So if you take 17-19 --

MR. YORK: No. I think what he was saying -- and he can correct me when he comes up here -- our city charter has some very weak language concerning

what constitutes being vested and that he's arguing 1 2 the charter trumps the state code, which is much more 3 specific. 4 MS. MULLEN: Well, so 2311 is with respect to 5 being time-barred. 2307, actually, deals with your 6 vesting of your rights. 7 MR. YORK: I'm sorry. I got them confused. 8 MS. MULLEN: That's okay. 9 So there are two separate -- there are two 10 separate provisions with respect to that. 11 MR. YORK: Because the vesting language is a lot 12 stronger. 13 The vesting language --MS. MULLEN: Correct. 14 MR. YORK: But it specifically talks about PODs 15 and zoning compliance letters and so forth? 16 MS. MULLEN: That is correct. That is correct. 17 And I think what Mr. McRoberts is trying to 18 argue is that the state charter -- excuse me -- the 19 city charter in 17-19 provides for the Board of 20 Zoning Appeals to exist and that language is tracked 21 through the city code, and that provides for certain 22 rules. 23 But in that same language, it has that they may 24 be prescribed -- they take an appeal as may be 25 prescribed by the Board or by general rule.

1	case, the general rule is the state code, which falls	
2	under 2311 A, B, and C. And so all of those rules	
3	apply.	
4	MR. YORK: Any other questions?	
5	MR. POOLE: I want to further elaborate on this,	
6	whether the charter subsumes state law.	
7	The charter is passed by the General Assembly.	
8	MS. MULLEN: Correct.	
9	MR. POOLE: So both the charter and 2311 stand	
10	on the same level.	
11	MS. MULLEN: That's correct.	
12	MR. POOLE: Is it not the standard	
13	interpretative language of appellate courts that if	
14	there is more specific statute	
15	MR. YORK: And that's what I was saying.	
16	MR. POOLE: a more specific statute that is	
17	on the same level	
18	MR. YORK: Exactly.	
19	MR. POOLE: that you apply the more specific?	
20	MS. MULLEN: That is correct.	
21	MR. YORK: That was always my understanding.	
22	MS. MULLEN: Yes.	
23	MR. POOLE: Thank you.	
24	MR. YORK: We had a that happened in the	
25	remember the Paper Moon case, the topless place?	
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1	MR. BENBOW: That's been the interpretation
2	that's been handed down by the law department. I
3	think it stayed for more than 20 years.
4	MR. YORK: Yeah. But, nevertheless, the Paper
5	Moon case brought that up and that's how that ruling
6	came down.
7	MS. MULLEN: Thank you.
8	MR. POOLE: And you reserve two minutes?
9	MS. MULLEN: Yes, sir.
10	MR. YORK: Yes. She was well under her time
11	limit.
12	All right. Now Mr. McRoberts gets two more
13	minutes.
14	MR. MCROBERTS: Clarification. The public comes
15	next?
16	MR. YORK: After you.
17	MR. MCROBERTS: After me. Okay.
18	
19	REBUTTAL STATEMENT BY ANDREW R. MCROBERTS, ESQ.
20	MR. MCROBERTS: I'm not quite sure why we're
21	talking about 2307. Certainly, that is a vested
22	rights provision. It's certainly something that the
23	developer has not met, so the first time I've heard,
24	to talk about things that are brought up at the last
25	minute.

2307 would not apply here. Among other reasons, it requires that the 30-day no longer be applicable. And, of course, a written determination if, in fact, October and January are considered determinations, you have to have the written notice in order for the 30-day clock to even begin running, let alone expire. And so for that reason, if no others, 2307 doesn't apply.

2307 also applies when there is a change in the law and there has been a significant affirmative governmental approval, which has not -- it, certainly, hasn't happened here until March 1st. And then, of course, the stay is applicable there. 2307 simply doesn't apply for several reasons.

As far as the question, to go back to the chairman's issue about, well, what if they come in and said, "Is it a transitional site? Yes or no," and Mr. Davidson said, "not a transitional site," how is that any different than the military school coming in and saying, "Am I allowed in the A-1 zone as a school?"

"Let me look in the zoning ordinance. Yes, you're allowed."

That's the exact same process. There's no difference. And so I would, again, suggest that it's

simply the requirement for an ORDD that's simply not met.

As far as the <u>Friends of the Rappahannock</u> case, I'm very familiar with that. My law firm handled it. I would say that <u>Friends of Rappahannock</u>, it requires proximity, which I believe developer's counsel concedes that we do.

In addition, we'll be hearing from a number of the property owners that, in fact, owned the properties. One owns property right across the alley. That's going to be impacted by traffic in the alley. Another one is within 50 feet of the alley and is, in fact, impacted by the traffic from the development.

As far as specific discrete impacts, it certainly has to be different than a public in general. These people are different from the public in general. They live on the same block and own interest on that same block.

MR. YORK: Okay. Time.

MR. MCROBERTS: And so that's it.

Are there any questions of me?

MR. POOLE: Yeah. I want to go, if I could.

MR. YORK: Of course.

MR. POOLE: Go back to my argument of what I

refer to as my "silo argument." You have an ordinance in the City of Richmond that permits the Certificate of Zoning Compliance. The October 24th letter was written in that silo. It was requested under that section of the ordinance. Then later after the acquisition of some -- and I failed to ask Ms. Mullen and I intend on her rebuttal to ask her about when all the property was acquired because you raised that.

MR. MCROBERTS: Some in October; some in March after the appeal.

MR. POOLE: You raised that issue and I think that needs to be addressed.

But the POD process is a totally separate section of the ordinance with a totally different party that makes the decision. That's why I'm trying to make the distinction between the October 24th letter being an O-R-D made by the zoning administrator. And whatever happens in the POD -- to my knowledge, the POD has never been approved. The director of the division that's required to make a decision on POD, as best as I know, has not said the POD is approved.

So that decision-making process is not even right for appeal. I'm just looking at the two silos,

and I want you to tell me where I'm wrong.

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, I would say that in both that case as well as <u>Norfolk 102</u>, both, the Supreme Court held, were not ORDDs. There were specific statutory -- specific legal requirements for the zoning administrator to respond to the person that asked.

And in both cases, the zoning administrator said, "Yes, you are permitted."

And in both cases the Supreme Court held it's not an ORDD.

MR. POOLE: But in those cases, they did not have plans that were specific to the location and specific to what was to be built.

MR. MCROBERTS: I would say that it still doesn't meet the test that the Supreme Court stated in <u>Crucible</u> and for that reason, it fails. It is simply not something that changed the rights of the applicant. It simply is information. It is, you know, comments and certainly not --

MR. POOLE: Then why did the City pass the ordinance allowing this process to occur?

MR. MCROBERTS: Your Honor -- excuse me -- Your Honor.

Mr. Poole, you speak so authoritatively that I

really do -- I want to treat you with deference.

But I would say that the City does things from time to time that they believe are appropriate, that they believe are good processes. And they, in fact, try to carry them out with the best that they can.

My heart goes out to the BZA, to the other boards and commissions, to the staff. It's a very difficult job. I normally don't represent applicants in these kind of situations. I normally defend zoning administrators, so including in the <u>Board of supervisors versus Rhoads</u>. And so I certainly understand the difficulty.

But to get back to your issue, cities do things. It doesn't mean that it complies with the Supreme Court's definition of what an ORDD is. And that's my really best answer, is that the City acts in one way and then the Supreme Court has this very high bar that the City has to get over and they simply haven't gotten over here.

This is actually very akin to another case that I cited in my letter that I'll mention at this time. That is the <u>City of Richmond versus Riverside Owner</u>. And this was, basically, about the Troutman Sanders Development down on Brown's Island. Historic tax credits were applied for, abatements, if you will, of

local taxes, and the City had taken the position for a long time, like -- like the zoning administrator here. "Well, I'm going to -- even though the language says this, I'm not going to apply that language because that really makes no sense to me. I'm going to instead apply this other language over here because that's what makes sense to me."

In that case it was abatements and it made no sense to the tax assessor or real estate assessor that in that case you would take the before assessment of the entire property and compare it to the after assessment of the entire property, even though that's what the ordinance actually said, okay, and the authority was.

What he said was, "Well, that makes no sense.

Only a tiny piece of it is historic. You know, just a tiny piece of it is the power plant. The rest is just new construction: Troutman Sanders building, 16 stories; the condo towers, 11, I believe. And so you know, I'm going to exclude that value and your abatement is just this."

Well, that makes sense to the tax assessor, just like Mr. Davidson's interpretation of what a secondary, et cetera, et cetera, makes sense to him here. But in both cases, I would suggest that the

plain meaning of the ordinance itself controls and it's up to council to make those changes and not zoning administrator.

If you look at 15.2-2311.C, there are only two things that he gets to do that are relevant here.

One is interpret and administer the zoning ordinance as written. The other is to actually grant sort of a -- you know, other various things like vested rights or special exceptions to the extent allowed by the ordinance. That's it.

They don't get to make stuff up or take the place of council and act legislatively, which is what he's done here. And that's the concern.

As far as the --

MR. POOLE: I'm very happy that you raised that very issue.

MR. MCROBERTS: Yes, sir.

MR. POOLE: Because it is the power of the zoning administrator, by your own argument, to interpret the zoning ordinance.

MR. MCROBERTS: If interpretation is needed, not where there is plain meaning.

MR. POOLE: I understand.

And the ordinance says as -- and it names three particular types of streets as defined in the master

plan.

MR. MCROBERTS: As designated in the master plan.

MR. POOLE: As designated.

And two of those three are not designated in the master plan so, but the minor -- the definition of West Cary Street is in the master plan and it is -- it's in a -- they say there's levels of streets in the City of Richmond in the 2000 master plan. The collector is the last of the bunch. The minor arterial is the next one up. It doesn't define major or secondary, so doesn't that lead the administrator then to have to interpret those words?

MR. MCROBERTS: No, sir. His job is to look at the plain language he used in the zoning ordinance, which says in order to not be a transitional site, it must be one of those three things as designated in the master plan. What his job is, is to read that language, crack open the master plan, and find those three designations on the street. If it's there, then it's not a transitional site. If it's not there, it is a transitional site. And that's our position.

He doesn't have the ability to make stuff up, which is what he's doing here or to, basically, act

legislatively and say, "Well, surely council must have intended when they amended the master plan to have these other categories that aren't named."

MR. POOLE: So the two words that are not defined or designated in the master plan have no meaning?

MR. MCROBERTS: They are simply not found and so, therefore, they're not designated in the master plan. And when the council changed the master plan, they had that right to make that determination and not Mr. Davidson.

MR. POOLE: So you say that when the ordinance is passed and the city council puts two words in there and says "as designated in the master plan," that they didn't have any meaning?

MR. MCROBERTS: It actually happened, I think, in the reverse. I mean, the language there, those three words were put in the ordinance first and then the city council went and changed the master plan, which on its face --

MR. YORK: Several times.

MR. MCROBERTS: -- which on its face means that the council intended for those things to continue to be transitional sites or become transitional sites.

There's certainly been a very -- a strong drive in

1 2 3 MR. YORK: Are we really getting into this? 4 5 6 7 8 those terms was a city council determination, a 9 legislative one, to simply do away with that 10 exception to it being transitional. 11 MR. POOLE: 12 to answer it. 13 14 merits of the case. 15 MR. POOLE: No, but --16 17 18 19 20 21 MR. MCROBERTS: 22 23 24 25

recent years, Mr. Poole, to protect historic neighborhoods in more significant ways.

MR. MCROBERTS: And, certainly, the change of the master plan has directly led to better protection for historic neighborhoods. And I would suggest to you that the fact that the city council did away with

I asked him the question. He gets

MR. YORK: Well, I know, but you're arguing the

MR. YORK: What if they -- and we don't have this before us, but, what, for example, if the master plan said in some supporting documentation along with the master plan, it had language saying that we are replacing this old term with this new term?

Well, then, that would be a --

MR. YORK: But we don't know that, do we?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, I mean, I would say that if the council, in fact, adopted that, that would be a different set of facts, which are not before us.

MR. POOLE: But doesn't the council empower or doesn't actually state law empower the zoning administrator to make his own determinations of what the words mean?

MR. MCROBERTS: Well, just like --

MR. POOLE: As a matter of fact, aren't they allowed to open up a dictionary and look at its common definition in the dictionary in order to make a determination?

MR. MCROBERTS: And I would say the zoning administrator did, in fact, do that here. What Mr. Saunders did was in his description of this issue both in January as well as in the memorandum -- I mean in October and in the memorandum in January said, "This is not a major, secondary, collector. It is something different." That's what Mr. Saunders said and that --

MR. POOLE: You mean Mr. Davidson?

MR. MCROBERTS: Okay. Mr. Davidson.

I'm probably jumping between October and January.

MR. POOLE: You are.

MR. MCROBERTS: But I would say that wherever it was addressed, it was addressed in that way, that, specifically, there was a finding by the zoning

administrator that it simply didn't meet any of those three terms in the --

MR. POOLE: It went further than that. It said that it's between a collector and a major and because it's between that, it meets the definition and is not transitional.

MR. MCROBERTS: But his statement just like the tax or real estate assessor's sort of policy in Riverside Owner violated the plain statement in the code. I mean, he's allowed to interpret if there is some sort of a question, but there's no question that those -- if this -- this road, West Cary is not a major, a collector or secondary. It's not. As a matter of fact, the zoning administrator had said so.

MR. POOLE: And you've heard him testify that Laurel is a collector?

MR. MCROBERTS: But Laurel has to have a yard and a height limitation for other reasons that really aren't at issue here. So we're really talking about West Cary.

With the South Laurel issue is the fact that for some reason the zoning administrator allowed this sort of half a yard on the block, which makes no sense because Laurel is a front yard and so --

MR. YORK: We're drifting too far away here.

1	MR. POOLE: You're the chairman.
2	MR. MCROBERTS: Then I will not answer that
3	question further.
4	MR. YORK: In fact, I think you're actually
5	hurting yourself because you're providing this
6	testimony, which is giving the other side the
7	opportunity to come back later.
8	MR. MCROBERTS: Well, you know, I think I've
9	addressed everything that opposing counsel has said
10	here. 2307 doesn't apply.
11	I've already addressed the issues of why the 30-
12	and 60-day, you know, things don't apply for various
13	reasons, but if you have questions, I would be glad
14	to answer them.
15	MR. YORK: All right. Now, where are we?
16	MR. DAVIDSON: Do I get a rebuttal?
17	MR. YORK: Pardon?
18	MR. DAVIDSON: Do I get a rebuttal?
19	MR. YORK: Re-rebuttal?
20	MR. BENBOW: No. He hadn't had it yet.
21	MR. YORK: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry.
22	MR. MCROBERTS: I'm sorry. Did the zoning
23	administrator reserve rebuttal?
24	MR. BENBOW: Yes.
25	MR. YORK: Yes, he did.

MR. MCROBERTS: Oh, he did. Okay. Thank you.

MR. YORK: And he has about four-and-a-half minutes.

MR. BENBOW: He has about four minutes, four and a half.

MR. YORK: Which I'm sure you won't take that long.

REBUTTAL STATEMENT BY WILLIAM C. DAVIDSON

MR. DAVIDSON: So all I want to provide the Board is this discussion about 2307. "For the purposes of this section and without limitation, the following were deemed to be significant affirmative governmental acts allowing development of a specific project."

And as counsel for the property owner indicated and, quote, number 7, which was added, "The zoning administrator or other administrative officer has issued a written order, requirement, decision or determination regarding the permissibility of a specific use or density of the landowner's property that is no longer subject to appeal and no longer subject to change," blah, blah, blah.

Well, I'm the zoning administrator. I had a specific plan. I provided it. There was a

discussion that there has to be appeal language in there, that if any time I write something, there has to be appeal language.

I'm not sure that's really what it says for everything I do, because there are four types of these items. And I think I lost it in here.

There's a written order, there's a requirement, there's a decision or determination. To me the written order or requirement is you did something, you got to stop it, and if they appeal, they appeal. I can provide information all the time. That is a decision or a determination.

MR. YORK: Questions?

MR. POOLE: Mr. McRoberts raised the issue of the fact that the master plan is referenced in the ordinance as to the three types of streets, and you made a determination that because it was between a collector and a major arterial, that's why it met the definition.

Am I reading this letter correctly?

MR. DAVIDSON: Yes. That has been applied consistently since I've been here for over 30 years. The master plans have changed, the way they talked about them have changed as far as the designations of streets.

In the '60s master plan, there were three designations: Major, secondary, collector.

In the one from the '80s -- I'm not sure the specific date -- it then has four designations: freeway, the second one -- well, it's got collector, also, and it's got collector and above that is secondary arterial and then the current one -- it's got five: Local, collector, minor arterial, primary arterial, then freeway, whatever the case may be. So, yes, the terms have changed, but the concept is the same.

And how do you apply a statute for something that doesn't exist in the master plan?

That would mean every property -- only unless it's on the collector street would be -- if you're on a collector street, you're not transitional, but if you're on a major road, you are, because it doesn't say major or secondary.

MR. YORK: Mr. Zoning Administrator --

MR. DAVIDSON: It didn't make sense.

MR. YORK: -- the language --

MR. DAVIDSON: It's an obscured result.

MR. YORK: Are the parking requirements about in those cases where something is not defined, you have to --

1 MR. DAVIDSON: No. General rules of 2 interpretation, I think it's 30-1020 maybe, 1010, 3 something like that. 4 1020? 5 MR. YORK: It says that you get to pick the 6 closest --7 MR. DAVIDSON: 1210. 8 MR. YORK: And since transitional site is a 9 definition, in the definition section --10 MR. DAVIDSON: I'm sorry. 1200, Applicability 11 of Article. 12 "Certain words and terms used in this chapter 13 shall be interpreted as set forth in this article. 14 unless otherwise specifically prescribed elsewhere in 15 this chapter. Words and terms not defined in this 16 article shall be interpreted in accordance with such 17 normal dictionary meaning or customary usage as is 18 appropriate to the context." 19 So secondary isn't defined in here. Neither is 20 major. Neither is connector. 21 MR. YORK: So you get to make that decision. 22 Now, are we finished with the zoning 23 administrator? 24 Now, Ms. Mullen gets her two more minutes and 25 then we get to hear from the public.

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REBUTTAL STATEMENT BY JENNIFER MULLEN, ESQ.

MS. MULLEN: Thank you.

Just to address, first, the question of the acquisition of the property, nine of the 12 parcels were acquired in December. The other three parcels were acquired. Subsequently, there was a separate owner so there were two separate contracts. One was contingent upon the other, so once we acquired the nine, we had to acquire the three.

So just so --

MR. POOLE: Both contracts done at the same time or one contingent on the other?

MS. MULLEN: One contingent on the other. Correct.

MR. POOLE: But done at the same time?

MS. MULLEN: Not done at the same time, no. Separate contracts.

Again, just to reiterate, this is an October 24th, letter that was followed under the rule of law. So they requested the letter, they gave specific plans, they received the letter, they relied on it, they acquired the property, and they continued to expend significant amount of money in the development of the property.

This is an interpretation question, as was just

described. This is about the application of a transitional site and getting into the merits of it, which we're happy to do, if you take a look at the difference between the '64 and the 2000, I think Mr. Davidson gave the general overview, but we can talk about that at length if that is something you would like to do.

But there is also case law that says that the zoning regulations as with other laws must be interpreted to not produce an obscured result. So if you did not interpret it to have something above a collector but below a freeway as continuing to be excluded from that transitional site, you end up with something lower, being the one that's the only one excluded. So the interpretation question falls squarely within Mr. Davidson's purview and he has the presumption of correctness.

Back to the <u>Friends</u> case. And I'm going to harp on this because standing is required. As Mr. McRoberts said, his firm represented in the -- they know the <u>Friends</u> case because they were involved in it, but they didn't provide any evidence regarding the particularized harm at all. All they provided is the addresses.

MR. MCROBERTS: That was opposing counsel. We

1 actually prevailed in the case. 2 MS. MULLEN: So he prevailed in the case, but he 3 didn't provide any evidence regarding the 4 particularized harm. 5 MR. MCROBERTS: We defended the case. 6 MR. BENBOW: Whoa, whoa, Roger, what --7 That is something that is required MS. MULLEN: 8 to be done in the appeal. That is in the 9 That is required to be provided. application. 10 have not provided anything in the appeal nor have 11 they provided anything in the testimony to date. 12 Perhaps, we're going to hear from some additional 13 support regarding that, but anything regarding the 14 generalized traffic, related to the height, which is 15 what is at issue, is a generalized harm. That is not 16 a particularized harm. 17 So respectfully request that you deny this 18 appeal and rule in favor of the zoning administrator. 19 Yes, sir. 20 MR. POOLE: He did raise traffic, he did raise 21 height, but he also raised air and light. 22 Can you address that? 23 MS. MULLEN: Sure. 24 So the zoning district is B-3, so it is B-3. 25 This was not rezoned to be B-3. The zoning district JANE K. HENSLEY - COURT REPORTERS

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has a provision that everybody in B-3, you can be at 35 feet in height and then it has additional height as required or as permitted with certain things.

The zoning administrator has made that determination regarding certain things and we're talking about West Cary. So if you're saying that on Laurel, which is close to the neighborhood, you can have additional height and that would be okay, but West Cary because it is not a major street in the 1964 and 2000 master plan, that that's not okay, to me that is counterintuitive.

So you also had testimony from when the applicants requested a petition in order to start a rezoning of the property and testimony of that issue. City council said a few weeks ago that they would have allowed additional height so the buildings on the property would have been saved. That is again counter to the light and air.

You have a site that allows height. You have a site that allows additional height and that is not impacting the light and air of the surrounding properties at all and nor have they provided any evidence to that at all.

MR. POOLE: Thank you.

MR. YORK: Anything else?

Okay. Now, we get to hear from the public. And as I said at the beginning, I'd appreciate it if you would decide amongst yourselves how you want to use the time that's allocated so that you can get as much relative testimony in as possible.

MR. BENBOW: Do you want to explain the time limits so it's fair?

MR. YORK: Yeah. Total it's ten minutes, so the total amount of time. And let me also point out for the benefit of the people who are here, I just emphasize that whatever we do in this case, it has nothing to do with whether we think this is an appropriate development for this property. Only city council would make those decisions.

Our role is strictly to decide whether this gentleman over here interpreted the zoning ordinance correctly.

So go ahead.

STATEMENT BY KELLEY LANE

MR. LANE: I'm Kelley Lane, an aggrieved party in this appeal, owner and resident for over 40 years of 129 South Cherry Street, less than a hundred feet from the proposed property.

The excess height and density of the project is

an adverse impact on me dwarfing my townhouse residential block, destroying quality of life with an exorbitant increase in alley and street traffic, parking, congestion and decrease in light and air.

Specifically, the alley is where the entrance is going to be to the parking and that is less than a hundred feet away from me on an alley that's already congested. It's a major negative personal impact on me, as well as the height of the project. The air is going to hit that and come into my yard and all sorts of things like that.

Neither as a member of the Oregon Hill
Neighborhood Association nor as a board member of the
Oregon Hill Property Improvement Council, I only
became aware on March 6th when a friend notified me
of the October 2017 and January 2018 letters from the
zoning office. That's when my due process rights
started and that's constitutional and that trumps
everything in the law.

Andy Condlin, the developer's attorney, claimed at a City Council Land Use Hearing on April 17th, 2018, that the October 2017 letter from the zoning administrator was, quote, a confirmation of the height and by-right plans and was the basis for -- unquote, and was the basis for purchasing the

property.

The zoning administrator actually wrote in that October letter, quote, "Details were not provided to verify that the height requirement has been met for the proposal, but it appears that the portion of the building fronting South Laurel Street within a hundred feet of the R-7 district to the south exceeds the height limit for the district, unquote."

As a former real estate broker, I know that the developer proceeded at his own risk because the October 2017 letter did not approve the building height.

In the zoning administrator's March 21, 2018, letter e-mailed to Richard Saunders, he states, quote, "Roy talked to Ms. Markham and they feel a ZCL, quote -- that's zoning conformance letter -- that was sent gave them approval, but I don't recall that we had any plans as it was more of a general statement of allowable height."

Factually, the development purchased three of the properties after March 21st, after our appeal was sent.

The zoning administrator on March 19, 2018, received the following e-mail from Neil Gibson of the City Attorney's Office, quote, "I must confess that

by reading the city code, he and his clients appear to have a point --

That's us.

-- "re: The height of the building. Admittedly, I have not seen the POD, but from what I have heard and read, it sounds like the applicant is seeking to justify a building height of over 35 feet by creating a yard 35 feet in the air. Is that what the applicant is actually saying? If so, can the zoning countenance that?"

I urge the BZA to consider on its merits the timely appeal by the adjacent neighbors with clear standing.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY PARKER AGELASTO

MR. AGELASTO: Good afternoon. My name is
Parker Agelasto. I represent the Fifth District on
Richmond City Council. I've been, frankly,
intimately involved in understanding what the case is
before you, because as a representative on city
council, I have to understand the ordinances that are
then subject to the zoning administrator's
interpretation.

And from my position today, I've identified at

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least six areas that we at city council will have to amend as a result of the conversations that you're having today.

However, I ask you several items: Mr. Poole, you constantly through the hearing for an hour and a half referenced a Certificate of Zoning Compliance. Can you prove in your packet that an application was filed for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance?

And if so, do you have a response that specifically responds as to a Certificate of Zoning Compliance?

I do not believe you will find a Certificate of Zoning Compliance in your packet, which could only be submitted by the property owner. And under the rules, if the property changes hands for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance, the new property owner has to submit a new application. If the property changed hands since October, then a new zoning application would have to be filed for a certificate.

What I do believe, however, you might find -but I haven't seen your packet -- is an application
for a zoning confirmation letter, which is a quite
different process giving different individuals access
to similar information but does not hold the same

weight of law. So I ask you to validate the information that you have available to you.

The height, this is my biggest issue. B-3 --

MR. YORK: Well, keep in mind that we're only addressing the timeliness issue today.

MR. AGELASTO: I'm trying to give you this.

And my point on the timeliness is that there are still documents from October and from January that still had questions about the height and whether or not it would comply and conform with the zoning for B-3.

I have since 2013 serving on city council amended the B-3 ordinances and have studied the city and asked that the Planning Department Development Review to look at B-3 throughout the city, to begin rezoning, which they have done in certain neighborhoods because it is a terrible zoning category.

And in this, there is an exception for additional height. There is not a single project in the City of Richmond that has taken advantage of this additional height above 35 feet in the B-3 category as is being sought by the current owner of this property.

This is a first impression. What is determined

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here will set precedent. There is no other precedent.

Have you seen precedent for additional height in the B-3 category? And if you cannot, then you must weigh this consideration.

The determination on height was still in question as late as March. On March the 1st, I was sending e-mails to the zoning administrator asking about the height. Not once did I get a confirmation that there was a letter being sent on March the 1st.

I have been following this. I have been asking the questions. At this moment there will be quite a number of other changes.

Timing: Is an application, whether it's for a certificate, a zoning compliance, or a letter of zoning confirmation publicly accessible?

How would somebody in the public know if there was a request for an application?

They don't, except for FOIA, and they can ask and depending on who you ask, you might not get an answer.

Secondarily, for the determination letter or however we want to call it, a certificate or an ORDD or whatever we want, how would the public know about that?

Is it publicly accessible?

No. You have to file a FOIA for it. So I've already gone down the path of helping you, the BZA, to determine what a 30-day window looks like by introducing an ordinance that says every single application for a zoning confirmation letter or a certificate of zoning confirmation has to be publicly published on the PDR website and that every letter that the zoning administrator issues has to also be published -- published so that the 30-day window can start.

Nobody today can tell you when a 30-day window starts because it is concealed and basically bureaucratic.

Where is the information?

So I'm advising you today, this is first impression. The height has not been addressed. There is a city attorney opinion on the height issue and the plain language reading that contradicts the zoning administrator's opinion. And if you would like it, I would be willing to share it with you, but I have held it in confidentiality since that's what the city attorney has suggested to me.

I understand the city attorney had reached out to the zoning administrator offering to help

represent him in this case, but that was declined.

So I'd ask for your consideration. And if you need additional information, I'm glad to provide it.

Thank you.

MR. BENBOW: A minute and a half, Roger.

MR. YORK: Yeah.

STATEMENT BY BRENT RAPER

MR. RAPER: It's going to be quick.

My name is Brent Raper. I'm one of the aggrieved parties in this appeal. I have lived at 127 South Cherry for over 20 years in a home that I purchased in 1996, just 50 feet, maybe less, from the project at 801 to 815 West Cary Street.

I would be personally impacted by this out-of-scale development that would dwarf all other buildings on my block. It would fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood and diminish my quality of life in terms of parking, noise, traffic, safety, air quality and sunlight.

I'm not a member of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood
Association or the Oregon Hill Home Improvement
Council, and I received no information from the City
or anyone else regarding the property purchase or
zoning rulings on the 800 block of West Cary.

It wasn't until March 20th that I became aware of the October 2017 and January 2018 zoning letters for the project.

This new ruling by the zoning administrator is inconsistent with his previous rulings. In 2003 at the corner site, at 611 to 619 West Cary Street, the same zoning administrator ruled that it was a transitional site with a 35 feet height limit.

I submit, as part of public record, this zoning appeals application, case number 6103, signed by William Davidson, who writes that the original application was disapproved because no building or structure shall exceed 35 feet in height.

The development at the corner of 701 to 703 West Cary was also not allowed to exceed 35 feet --

MR. YORK: We already have -- we actually have all this already in our records.

MR. RAPER: In conclusion, I am a legitimately aggrieved party who submitted a timely appeal. My block is a neighborhood. Residents have gardens. They have pets. Handicapped people use the alleyways, and we always have lots of foot traffic, already have lots of foot traffic by VCU students.

Currently, most of the structures on the block are turn-of-the-century two-story houses.

1 Please consider the merits of this case and 2 overturn the inconsistent adverse rulings of the 3 zoning administrator. Regarding sunlight, the proposed building will 4 5 literally shade my tomato plants. MR. YORK: Let me ask you a question. 6 7 Would that building shade your tomato plants if 8 it was a three-story building instead of a four-story 9 building? 10 I think it would make a difference, MR. RAPER: and that's why I am fighting to overturn the 11 12 decision. 13 MR. YORK: All right. Thank you. 14 MR. RAPER: There are buildings within sight 15 that are three stories and there's nothing really on the block or in our neighborhood that is this big as 16 17 the proposed building. 18 MR. YORK: The zoning administrator actually has 19 some time left. 20 Do you want to say anything about the other 21 examples he gave or were you even listening? 22 He pointed out another building on Cary Street 23 where you --24 MR. DAVIDSON: If it's not in the letter, then I might have to pull up the case. 25

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1	MR. YORK: Okay, then.
2	All right. Is there
3	MR. POOLE: Mr. Chairman.
4	MR. YORK: We're not finished.
5	Is there anyone else who is
6	MR. POOLE: I'm asking for a break.
7	Can we take a break?
8	MR. BENBOW: Do you want to finish his
9	testimony?
10	MR. YORK: Well, I was just going to ask this
11	will be quick. Is there anybody other than the
12	owners, applicant who wants to speak in support of
13	the zoning administrator?
14	MR. BENBOW: Is this in support or opposition?
15	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is in opposition.
16	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We've used up the ten
17	minutes.
18	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's fine. I just want
18 19	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's fine. I just want to give this to you.
19	to give this to you.
19 20	to give this to you. MR. YORK: All right. We need a break, a brief
19 20 21	to give this to you. MR. YORK: All right. We need a break, a brief one.
19 20 21 22	to give this to you. MR. YORK: All right. We need a break, a brief one. (Short recess, 3:09 p.m 3:18 p.m.)

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1	two cases?
2	MR. POOLE: I absolutely think we should hear
3	this case out of order. I would make a motion that
4	we hear this case out of order.
5	MR. YORK: All those in favor of the motion?
6	MR. POOLE: Aye.
7	MR. SAMUELS: Aye.
8	MR. YORK: Okay. Then we will hear the motion.
9	I mean, we will hear the case.
10	Should we divide it in two: 30-day argument and
11	60-day argument?
12	MR. POOLE: If you wish.
13	MR. YORK: I mean, don't you think that's
14	appropriate?
15	Someone make a motion.
16	MR. POOLE: I'll make a motion to uphold the
17	decision of the zoning administrator.
18	MR. SAMUELS: I second it.
19	MR. POOLE: With respect to his October 24th
20	letter.
21	MR. YORK: And the 30-day time limit within
22	which an appeal has to be filed.
23	MR. POOLE: Correct.
24	MR. YORK: Someone second that for purposes of
25	discussion.
- 1	

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MR. SAMUELS: I will second that.

MR. YORK: All right. Open for discussion. Let's hear your arguments.

MR. POOLE: The first and foremost thing that I want this Board to understand is this Board has authority to deal with the decisions of the zoning administrator and no one else. This appeal is the issues that the zoning administrator made a decision on.

We have no authority to make any decisions with respect to the POD process. What's done in the POD process is subject to the director and his decision-making process is clearly laid out both in his -- both in the ordinance and in his regulations that he's promulgated.

So none of what we do here today has anything to do with anything other than the decision of the zoning administrator. And my motion is to limit that decision to his letter of October the 24th, 2017, and that his decision be upheld.

Clearly, there is a decision made by the zoning administrator in that letter. Clearly, it's his authority to consider the zoning ordinance and when there are discrepancies, when there are words of common language that are in the ordinance, he has the

authority to interpret them. He did so. He said so in his letter.

And I think that his determination, specifically with respect to the transitional site, was clearly a decision by the zoning administrator with plans that were in front of him, that he considered. He made a decision and the appeal period runs after 30 days. That's how I see it.

MR. YORK: And under 15.2-2309, there's a presumption in favor of the zoning administrator.

MR. POOLE: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

MR. YORK: You know, especially on the issue of fairness, it is true. And if you look at all of the things that are in the state code that determine when a decision vest a developer, that a number of those things, one has to know to seek out in order to be able to find out about them.

And a number of people today have spoken about the fact that there really was no notice that they could possibly be aware of, and that's true. But, unfortunately, that is the way the law is written. There are some things that can be done about it, but they haven't been done and we have to go by what the law says.

Clearly, you know, who would have known that

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30 days started with that October 24th letter, but that's just the way it is.

MS. HOGUE: I would like to add, both attorneys, Ms. Mullen and Mr. McRoberts, did a great job. I am more compelled about fundamental fairness for the neighborhood, that they did not, even though October 24th was the first letter, and I don't know what's the best process and that's where your city council person needs to come in, but it doesn't seem like the neighborhood is getting due process and fundamental fairness in not having known about this until much later than October 24th.

And two neighborhood people being 50 feet and a hundred feet away, I do feel I have some direct standing to speak that they did not get notice.

MR. YORK: Anyone else?

MR. SAMUELS: I'm basically agreeing with the opinion as stated as Rodney so stated it. And, again, I agree with Ms. Hogue's opinion about it as also expressed here, but we stand charge with another task directly related overwhelmingly, I think, with the zoning administrator and his opinion and his right to make such an opinion.

MR. YORK: All for the vote?
All those in favor?

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Did you

1 MR. POOLE: Aye. 2 MR. SAMUELS: Aye. 3 MR. YORK: Oppose? 4 Ms. HOGUE: I'm opposed. 5 MR. YORK: Three to one. 6 MR. BENBOW: I didn't hear you, Roger. 7 vote? 8 MR. YORK: Yes. Three to one. 9 MR. BENBOW: Three to one. Okay. 10 MR. YORK: All right. With respect to the 11 60-day notice, the provision about the determination 12 of the zoning administrator may not be altered after 13 60 days from which it was given. 14 MR. POOLE: I would move to support the zoning 15 administrator's decision as written in October 24th, 16 1917 (sic), giving the 60-day limitation of the 17 Virginia State Code. There's clear reliance. 18 There's been testimony as to the reliance of the 19 owner that he did -- they applied under a section of 20 the code or -- excuse me -- a section of the city 21 ordinance that specifically provides for this type of 22 decision-making process. The decision was written by the zoning administrator and more than 60 days has 23 24 passed and reliance has been proven. 25 MR. YORK: And the decision was confirmed, as is

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COPY

I, Jacquelin O. Gregory-Longmire, a fully trained, qualified, and certified court reporter, do hereby certify that the proceedings in the herein matter were taken at the time and the place therein stated; that the proceedings were reported by me, Professional Court Reporter and disinterested person, and that the foregoing contains a true and correct verbatim transcription of all portions of the proceedings.

I certify that I am not related by either blood or marriage to any of the parties or their representatives; that I have not acted as counsel to or for any of the parties; nor am I otherwise interested in the outcome of this complaint.

> WITNESS my hand this _____ day of _____, 2018. My commission expires September 30, 2021. Notary Registration No. 7275579.

> > JACQUELIN O. GREGORY-LONGMIRE

'07 [1] - 75:21 '60s [1] - 95:1 **'64** [1] - 98:4 '80s [1] - 95:3 1 [1] - 22:20 101 [1] - 3:9 1010[1] - 96:2 102 [3] - 45:21; 48:12; 83:3 1020 [2] - 66:11; 96:4 1030 [1] - 66:11 104[1] - 3:10 109[1] - 3:11 11 [2] - 2:17; 85:19 1111[1] - 2:13 119 [1] - 3:12 12[1] - 97:4 1200 [1] - 96:10 1210 [1] - 96:7 127[1] - 109:12 129[1] - 101:23 15.2-2307 [1] - 72:12 15.2-2309 [1] - 115:9 15.2-2311 [4] - 15:5; 42:22; 43:5; 73:19 15.2-2311.C [2] -59:5; 86:4 15.2-2314 [1] - 5:8 15th [5] - 23:15; 33:7; 45:4; 51:19; 59:17 16[1] - 85:19 17-19 [4] - 31:5; 76:14, 22; 77:19 **17-9**[1] - 76:12 17th [1] - 102:21 19 [2] - 76:13; 103:23 1917 [1] - 117:16 1964 [1] - 100:10 1996 [1] - 109:13 1999 [1] - 41:20 1:00 [1] - 1:16 1st [6] - 30:24; 61:18; 74:22; 80:12; 107:7, 10 20 [2] - 79:3; 109:12 2000 [3] - 87:9; 98:4; 100:10 2003 [2] - 10:3; 110:5 2009 [2] - 75:11, 13 2010[1] - 29:23 **2013** [1] - 106:12 2017 [10] - 15:13; 16:3; 52:16; 53:5; 54:8; 102:16, 22; 103:11; 110:2; 114:19 2018 [8] - 1:15, 24; 102:16, 22; 103:13, 23; 110:2; 119:16 2021 [1] - 119:17

20th [2] - 30:21; 110:1 **21**[1] - 103:13 21-18[1] - 1:9 21st [1] - 103:21 22nd [2] - 15:14; 74:20 2307 [10] - 52:4; 75:17; 77:5; 79:21; 80:1, 7, 9, 13; 92:10; 93:11 2309 [1] - 76:15 2311 [8] - 43:12, 15, 22; 56:25; 76:18; 77:4; 78:2, 9 2311.A [1] - 42:24 2311.C [13] - 29.6; 31:2, 8, 16, 18; 32:21; 42:6, 15; 43:7; 52:3; 23218[1] - 2:14 23219 [1] - 2:18 23rd [6] - 15:13; 16:3, 11, 17; 33:9; 51:20 24 [4] - 52:16; 53:5, 20; 54:8 24th [14] - 53:21; 66:6; 69:5; 74:5, 21; 82:3, 17; 97:19; 113:19; 114:19; 116:1, 7, 12; 117:15 26 [1] - 3:3 27th [2] - 52:19; 53:18 29th [1] - 30:20 3 [2] - 11:7; 52:15 30 (27) - 10:10; 12:6; 16:19; 17:20; 20:4; 21:2, 9, 22; 24:7; 25:21; 27:6, 17; 29:5, 16-17; 30:7, 10; 48:21; 49:14; 60:3, 23; 92:11; 94:22; 115:7; 116:1; 119:17 30-1020 [1] - 96:2 30-day [18] - 13:6; 15:4, 6; 25:4; 26:14; 27:16; 42:25; 48:18; 56:24; 74:3; 80:2, 6; 108:4, 10, 12; 113:10, 35 (8) - 53:6; 100:2; 104:7; 106:22; 110:8, 13, 15 3:09[1] - 112:22 3:18[1] - 112:22 3:25[1] - 118:25

40(1) - 101:22

50 [3] - 81:12;

109:13; 116:13

500 [1] - 2:18 5TH[1] - 1:13 6[1] - 1:15 60[11] - 10:11; 25:23; 32:19; 33:11, 16; 36:24; 51:16, 23; 64:8; 117:13, 23 60-day [34] - 10:10, 17-18; 14:15; 15:23; 16:12, 20; 17:21, 25; 18:1, 5; 19:14; 20:5; 21:2, 10, 22; 24:7; 25:5; 26:14; 27:6; 29:6; 32:19; 33:23; 48:19; 49:15; 60:3, 23; 73:24; 74:4; 92:12; 113:11; 117:11, 16 6103[1] - 110:10 611[1] - 110:6 619[1] - 110:6 62[1] - 3:4 69 [1] - 29:23 6th [2] - 11:1; 102:15 7[1] - 93:17 70[1] - 3:5 701 [1] - 110:14 703[1] - 110:14 7275579[1] - 119:18 79[1] - 3:6 800 [1] - 109:25 801 [1] - 109:14 805 [2] - 2:15; 14:5 815[1] - 109:14 82[1] - 29:23 9[1] - 9:21 900 [1] - 1:13 93[1] - 3:7 97[1] - 3:8 A-1 [3] - 37:6, 22; 80:20 abatement[1] -85:21 abatements [2] -84:25; 85:8 ability [3] - 18:7; 73:23; 87:24 able [3] - 13:19; 22:16; 115:17 absolutely [8] - 55:9; 57:5; 60:7; 64:15; 65:5; 66:16; 113:2; 115:11 accept [4] - 10:13; 11:5; 17:22; 20:2 acceptable [1] -15:17 accepted [1] - 34:24 access [1] - 105:24 accessible [2] -

107:16; 108:1 accordance [2] -74:18; 96:16 accurate [1] - 73:25 acquire [3] - 38:8; 44:1; 97:9 acquired [6] - 16:6; 82:8; 97:5, 8, 22 acquisition [2] -82:6; 97:4 act [3] - 72:14; 86:12; 87:25 acted [1] - 119:13 acts [2] - 84:16; 93:14 actual [5] - 28:16; 46:15; 48:15, 17; 50:22 add [1] - 116:3 added [6] - 13:6, 12; 75:12, 18, 24; 93:17 addition [1] - 81:8 additional [17] - 9:4; 12:16; 14:10, 13; 18:3; 73:12; 74:24; 99:12; 100:2, 8, 16, 20; 106:20, 22; 107:3; 109:3 address [14] - 11:3; 21:22, 24; 22:16; 23:17; 24:20; 27:5; 36:22; 42:14; 51:12; 53:7; 61:6; 97:3; 99:22 addressed (20) -29:10, 12; 30:1; 35:2; 49:20; 50:12, 23; 51:4; 54:8; 55:1; 58:17; 59:10; 82:13; 90:24; 92:9, 11; 108:17 addresses [7] -17:14; 42:8, 17; 49:24; 54:10; 71:12; addressing [5] -17:21; 27:2; 53:15; 71:6; 106:5 ADFPLCC [1] - 55:2 adhere [2] - 4:23; 11:14 adjacent [1] - 104:12 administer[1] - 86:6 Administration [1] administrative [1] -93:18 Administrator [3] -2:9; 62:2; 95:19 administrator [107] -4:11, 20; 5:17, 19, 23;

6:5; 7:8; 9:7, 19; 10:21; 13:12; 16:15; 17:3: 19:19: 20:13: 24:9; 25:22; 26:2, 7; 28:1; 29:13; 30:5, 11; 31:9, 24; 32:21, 24; 33:18; 36:8, 14, 17, 20; 37:20; 39:7; 40:17; 44:6, 11, 17; 45:3, 25; 46:5, 20; 47:1, 16, 20; 48:3; 50:2; 51:12, 17; 52:17; 53:2; 56:5; 57:11, 15; 58:2; 59:2, 6; 60:2, 17; 62:8; 63:18; 64:13, 23; 66:19; 75:4; 82:19; 83:6, 8; 85:2; 86:3, 19; 87:12; 90:3, 11; 91:1, 14, 22; 92:23; 93:18, 24; 96:23; 99:18; 100:4; 102:23; 103:2, 23; 107:8; 108:9, 25; 110:4, 7; 111:3, 18; 112:13; 113:17; 114:7, 18, 22; 115:5, 10; 116:22; 117:12, 23 administrator's [11] - 7:1, 13; 8:24; 12:13; 25:24; 59:15; 71:21; 103:13; 104:23; 108:20: 117:15 administrators [1] -84:10 admitted [1] - 55:19 Admittedly [1] -104:4 admonish [2] -11:13: 44:3 adopted [1] - 89:24 advance [1] - 11:20 advantage [1] -106:21 adverse [2] - 102:1; 111:2 advising [1] - 108:16 advocating [1] - 52:6 affected [1] - 27:13 afternoon [2] -70:15; 104:17 afterwards [1] -AGELASTO [3] -104:16: 106:6 Agelasto [1] - 104:18 AGELASTO..... -----[1] aggrieved [13] - 5:8;

10.9, 15:23, 27:10;

29:11; 31:1, 5; 48:23; 70:25; 74:4; 101:21; 109:11; 110:19 ago [3] - 37:22; 58:18; 100:15 agree [5] - 43:20; 47:25; 60:21; 112:23; agreed [1] - 22:2 agreeing [1] - 116:17 agrees [1] - 19:14 ahead [4] - 18:17; 19:11; 43:25; 101:18 air[11] - 27:14; 67:16; 71:2, 8; 99:21; 100:18, 21; 102:4, 9; 104:8; 109:20 akin [1] - 84:20 alcohol [1] - 63:15 Alexandria [1] -41:17 Alexandria's [1] -41:18 allegation [1] - 20:17 allege [1] - 18:5 alley [6] - 81:11; 102:3, 5, 7 alleyways [1] -110:22 allocated [1] - 101:4 allotted [1] - 5:25 ailow [4] - 23:24; 57:13; 73:20 allowable [1] -103:19 allowed [12] - 28:19; 37:6; 46:5; 80:20, 23; 86:9; 90:7; 91:10, 22; 100:16; 110:15 allowing [2] - 83:22; 93:14 allows [4] - 31:5; 76:15: 100:19 alone [2] - 23:4; 80:6 alter[1] - 59:14 altered [1] - 117:12 alternatively [1] -10:14 altogether [1] - 9:11 amend [2] - 13:10; amended [2] - 88:2; 106:13 amendment [2] -31:15: 35:5 amends [1] - 42:12 amount [2] - 97:23; 101:9 amounts [1] - 73:10 Anderson [1] - 2:13

Andrew [1] - 2:12 ANDREW[4] - 3:3, 6; 26:23; 79:19 Andy [1] - 102:20 angle [1] - 10:12 Answer[1] - 34:7 answer [9] - 43:8; 56:21; 57:6; 75:9; 84:16; 89:12; 92:2, 14; 107:21 answering [1] -61:21 answers [1] - 41:6 anyway [2] - 28:11 apologize [2] -50:14: 54:5 appeal [55] - 5:16; 6:10; 8:21; 9:4, 6; 10:11; 14:6, 12, 25; 15:6, 19; 16:11; 23:19; 24:19; 27:3; 29:13; 30:7, 12; 31:6; 32:17; 33:9, 14; 34:5; 37:17, 19; 45:14; 51:20, 58:8, 14, 18, 21; 61:11; 71:20; 72:5; 73:21; 75:20; 77:24; 82:11, 25; 93.22, 94.1, 3, 10; 99:8, 10, 18; 101:22; 103:21; 104:12; 109:11; 110:19; 113:22; 114:7; 115:7 appealable [1] appealed [5] - 19:8; 23:5, 10; 29:17, 21 appealing [1] - 62:17 Appeals [8] - 4:4; 9:5, 12; 17:25; 44:7; 76:16; 77:20 APPEALS [1] - 1:5 appeais (3) - 4:19; 73:16; 110:10 appear [4] - 5:2; 37:9; 53:11; 104:1 APPEARANCES [1] appellant [4] - 5:18, 22; 6:4, 9 appellants [6] - 15:7; 17:5; 18:8; 22:13; 71:11, 15 appellate [1] - 78:13 Applicability [1] -96:10 applicable [7] - 7:1; 10:1; 18:19; 19:16; 67:22; 80:2, 13 applicant [36] - 5:3,

7; 6:19; 7:5, 9; 8:14;

10:24: 11:13: 12:24; 54:8; 56:15; 62:20 16:18; 18:22; 20:7; areas [1] - 105:1 21:1; 23:16, 25; 24:1; argue [9] - 10:25; 26:1; 28:9; 38:4; 20:8; 48:2, 10; 49:4; 43:23; 44:9; 48:7; 49:20; 50:24; 57:10; 71:18; 74:11; 83:19; 104:6, 9, 112:12 applicant's [4] -5:18, 22; 8:18; 20:3 Applicants [1] - 2:11 applicants [13] -12:22; 13:17; 22:13; 27:10; 28:19; 29:11; 30:14, 16, 22; 31:6; 44:4; 84:8; 100:13 application [28] -8:22; 9:3, 6, 13; 11:18: 12:11: 13:1. 10-11; 14:9; 16:9; 17:23; 18:21; 21:2; 25:20; 27:16; 56:4; 98:1; 99:9; 105:7, 17, 19, 22; 107:14, 18; 108:6; 110:10, 12 applied [9] - 36:24; 39 23, 56 25, 57:22, 59:6; 62:21; 84:25; 94:21; 117:19 applies [11] - 15:23; 19:15; 31:15; 32:21; 33:22; 34:2; 73:24; 78:7 74:1, 4: 80:9 apply [24] - 4:18; 31:3, 17; 41:5, 13; 42:19; 44:24; 47:23; 48:6; 49:1; 63:24; 65:9; 68:6; 74:3; 78:3, 19; 80:1, 8, 14; 85:4, 6; 92:10, 12; 95:12 applying [1] - 76:8 appointed [2] - 4:6; appreciate [2] -56:10: 101:2 appropriate [5] -9:14; 84:3; 96:18; 101:13; 113:14 approval (14) -15:18; 28:13, 17; 39:2, 22, 24; 48:15; 61:13; 63:25; 64:1; 80:11; 103:17 approve [6] - 4:8; 28:8; 32:3; 38:1; 57:3; 103:11 approved [3] - 82:20, 23; 118:19 approves [1] - 66:19 April [1] - 102:21 architect [5] - 53:23;

60:3; 76:5; 77:18 argued [2] - 39:8; 58:6 arguing [5] - 16:21; 20:4, 10, 77:1, 89:13 argument [19] -12:12; 17:10; 18:24; 23:15; 27:1; 30:13; 34:23; 39:13; 54:13; 55:25, 58:2, 61:8; 76:6; 81:25; 82:1; 86:19; 113:10 arguments (9) -10:16, 12:16, 19:1; 21:12: 25:3: 35:16: 44:20; 48:20; 114:3 armored [1] - 36:18 arrive [1] - 11:3 arrow [1] - 68:24 art [2] - 27:23; 40:22 arterial (8) - 52:21; 55:17; 69:17; 87:11; 94:18; 95:7 Article [1] - 96:11 article [2] - 96:13, 16 Assembly [5] -42:21; 43:4, 13; 76:1; assessment [2] -85:11 assessor[3] - 85:9, assessor's [1] - 91:8 assistant [2] - 2:10; assisted [1] - 4:10 association [1] -71:19 Association [3] -30:18; 102:13; 109:22 associations [2] -6:12; 7:16 assume [2] - 55:1; attached [7] - 16:2: 28:17; 39:16; 49:22; 50:21; 54:18 attempt [1] - 14:10 attempted [1] - 45:11 Attorney [2] - 2:12, attorney [21] - 8:18; 13:24; 14:18; 16:24; 19:13; 20:3; 22:2; 26:5; 33:5, 8, 21; 59:18; 60:10; 61:6; 102:20; 108:18,

23-24; 118:1 Attorney's [2] - 4:13; 103:25 attorneys [1] - 116:3 audience [1] - 26:3 authoritatively [1] -83:25 authority [6] - 6:24; 85:14; 114:6, 10, 23; 115:1 available [2] - 22:10; 106:2 avoid [5] - 7:20; 19:7; 24:23 aware [4] - 33:5; 102:15; 110:1; 115:20 Aye [6] - 25:10; 113:6; 117:1; 118:15 aye [2] - 25:11; 118:14 B-3 [13] - 44:12; 58:5; 99:24; 100:1; 106:3, 11, 13, 15, 22; 107:4 bar[3] - 15:3; 72:7; 84:17 barred [9] - 15:3; 17:9; 19:3, 24; 56:3, 6; 74:10; 75:7; 77:5 barring [1] - 59:12 base [1] - 9:8 based [7] - 14:7, 12; 15:6, 9; 16:6; 18:14 basic [1] - 25:6 basis [2] - 102:24 bears [1] - 52:6 became [3] - 31:1; 102:15; 110:1 become [2] - 17:2; 88:24 begin [2] - 80:6; 106:15 beginning [3] - 6:21; 56:15; 101:2 begins [2] - 27:17; 74:6 behalf [3] - 14:5; 34:23; 70:16 behind [1] - 61:16 below [1] - 98:12 BENBOW [37] - 7:14, 18; 8:4, 7; 11:6; 13:3, 5; 21:6, 14, 16, 19, 22; 22:3, 6, 8; 26:10, 13; 53:20, 22; 60:5, 7, 10; 62:3; 79:1; 92:20, 24; 93:4; 99:6; 101:6; 109:5; 112:8, 14; 117:6, 9; 118:8, 10, Benbow [1] - 2:7

benefit [1] - 101:10 best [5] - 45:6; 82:22: 84:5, 16: 116:8 better [2] - 70:6; 89:5 Better [1] - 34:23 between [8] - 17:20; 48:3; 82:17; 90:20; 91:4; 94:17; 98:4 beyond [2] - 10:17; 12:10 big [1] - 111:16 biggest [1] - 106:3 bike [1] - 75:1 binding [1] - 31:10 Black's [1] - 34:2 Blacksburg [1] -52:13 blah [6] - 67:8; 93:23 block [13] - 27:11-13; 71:1; 81:18; 91:23; 102:2; 109:17, 25; 110:20, 24; 111:16 blood [1] - 119:11 blown [1] - 67:5 BOARD [1] - 1:5 board [1] - 102:13 Board [40] - 2:2; 4:3, 9, 16, 5:10, 13, 24; 6:13, 19-20; 9:5, 11, 25; 17:25; 19:4, 17; 20:22; 22:12; 23:21; 24:18; 25:2; 28:4, 15; 34:22; 37:16; 44:3, 7; 49:12; 73:16; 76:16; 77:19, 25; 84:10; 93:11; 114:5 Board's [4] - 4:14, 22; 6:16, 24 boards [1] - 84:7 body [3] - 6:22; 11:9; 51:13 bordering (1) - 17:15 bothering [1] - 40:23 bottom [3] - 34:1; 46:21; 55:4 bought [4] - 16:4; 57:17; 63:5; 73:8 box[1] - 74:22 break [3] - 112:6, 20 BRENT [2] - 3:11; 109:8 Brent [1] - 109:10 Brian [1] - 2:10 brief [1] - 112:20 bring [2] - 62:9; 71:3 bringing [2] - 18:3; 67:2 brings [1] - 13:15 BROAD [1] - 1:13

broker [1] - 103:9

brought [2] - 79:5, Brown's [1] - 84:24 build (5) - 28:20; 40:3, 10; 69:23, 25 building [18] - 28:18; 39:17; 40:2; 53:11; 63:18; 68:11; 85:18; 103:6, 11; 104:4, 7; 110:12; 111:4, 7-9, 17, 22 buildings [3] -100:16; 109:17; 111:14 built [4] - 63:21; 64:20; 65:21; 83:14 bunch [4] - 16:19; 52:13: 57:4: 87:10 burden [2] - 52:6; 74:12 bureaucratic [1] -108:14 buying [1] - 57:11 BY [10] - 1:22; 26:23; 62:6; 70:13; 79:19; 93:9; 97:1; 101:20; 104:16; 109:8 by-right[1] - 102:24 BZA [17] - 11:22; 14:3, 12; 26:16, 25; 29:13; 31:6, 10; 33:17; 34:24; 45:14; 51:20; 52:13; 61:11; 84:6; 104:11; 108:3 cannot [3] - 16:15; 71:14; 107:4 care [1] - 8:1 carefully [2] - 46:23; 49:17 Caroline [1] - 29:25 carrier[1] - 36:18 carries [1] - 19:20 carry [1] - 84:5 Cary [13] - 52:20; 55:16; 69:17; 87:7; 91:12, 20; 100:6, 9; 109:14, 25; 110:6, 15; 111:22 case [131] - 4:24; 5:6, 10, 16-17, 21; 6:1, 14, 24; 8:5, 11; 9:10; 10:4; 11:3, 11, 15, 24; 12:6; 13:14; 16:13; 17:17; 19:8, 25; 20:6, 24; 22:15; 23:9, 16; 24:8; 25:6; 28:4, 6, 15-16, 23-25; 29:1, 3, 9, 17, 19, 24; 31:11, 20; 35:20; 36:4, 10, 25; 39:11, 21-22;

40:13; 41:3, 5, 12, 16,

20, 24-25; 42:4-6; 43:11, 22; 44:20, 23; 47:24: 48:1, 11: 49:8, 13, 57:1, 21, 24, 58:1; 59:2, 5, 61:17; 62:25; 63:13, 16; 64:12, 14; 67:23, 71:5; 72:10, 12, 15, 22; 74:13; 75:6, 11, 16, 19-20, 25; 78:1, 25; 79:5; 81:3; 83:3; 84:20; 85:8, 10; 89:14; 95:9; 98:8, 18, 21; 99:1, 5; 101:11; 104:20; 109:1; 110:10; 111:1, 25; 112:25; 113:3, 9 CASE[1] - 1:9 case-in-chief [3] -5:21; 6:1; 8:5 cases [22] - 5:1; 6:13; 9:25; 16:19, 21; 18:20; 22:20; 44:3; 45:19; 48:4, 7, 11; 52:14; 57:23; 63:11; 83:8, 10, 12; 85:25; 95:24; 113:1; 118:20 cash[1] - 63:14 categories [1] - 88:3 category [6] - 52:22; 55:19; 106:18, 22; 107:4 center [3] - 36:13; 37:21; 47:18 century [1] - 110:25 certain [11] - 4:20, 23; 63:11; 65:11; 67:19, 24; 77:21; 96:12: 100:3, 5: 106:16 Certainly [1] - 33:22 certainly [22] - 11:3; 27:4, 8; 30:25; 31:10, 22; 48:20; 51:8, 21; 52:4; 53:7; 59:7; 61:4, 13; 79:21; 80:12; 81:16; 83:20; 84:11; 88:25; 89:4 certificate [5] -63:17; 105:20; 107:15, 23; 108:7 Certificate [14] -35:8; 36:6; 38:8, 15; 41:1; 54:1; 66:7; 75:11; 82:3; 105:6, 8, 10, 12, 16 certification [1] -CERTIFICATION.....[1] -3:12

certified [1] - 119:5

80:16 challenges [1] -24:10 challenging [1] -64:4 chance [4] - 8:19; 12:19; 18:13; 24:10 change [25] - 10:21; 16:5, 15; 32:6, 13, 22; 38:2, 6, 10, 12; 46:2, 5, 13; 59:4, 7, 12, 17; 63:6; 64:7; 65:24; 73:2; 80:9; 89:4; 93:23; 109:17 changed (18) -28:19; 39:8, 25; 40:1, 4, 8-9; 41:21; 48:8; 59:21; 72:18; 83:18; 88:9, 19; 94:23; 95:10; 105:18 changes [3] - 86:2; 105:15; 107:13 changing [1] - 59:13 chapter [2] - 96:12, character[1] -109:18 charge [1] - 116:20 charter [29] - 4:15; 11:23; 14:17; 31:5, 13-14; 34:15; 35:4; 41:15, 23; 42:8, 12, 17, 23; 43:2, 5; 61:10; 73:13, 15; 76:8, 10, 25; 77:2, 18-19; 78:6, check [1] - 21:7 checks [1] - 74:22 Cherry [2] - 101:23; 109:12 CHESTERFIELD [1] -119.2chief [3] - 5:21; 6:1; choose [5] - 6:17; 7:24; 10:13; 11:14; 12:5 Chuck [5] - 12;18; 13:3; 56:16, 19; 58:15 Church [1] - 45:21 Cir[1] - 29:23

certify [2] - 119;5, 11

cetera [7] - 9:16;

71:2; 85:24

42:20; 92:1

27:15; 42:23; 67:12;

Chairman [7] - 2:3;

11:2; 43:8; 58:11;

59:23; 61:2; 112:3

chairman's [1] -

Circuit [3] - 4:6; 6:23: 29:24 citations [2] - 12:16; 64:5 chairman [3] - 13:23; cite [5] - 20:6; 23:1; 35:5; 41:25; 65:11 cited [8] - 10:5; 16:19; 22:19, 22, 24; 30:8; 42:7; 84:21 cites [1] - 63:12 cities [2] - 35 5; 84:13 citing [2] - 9:25; 34:15 citizens [1] - 4:5 CITY [2] - 1:4, 12 City [25] - 4:4, 12; 15:11; 16:9; 31:3; 33:7; 35:10; 40:24; 41:1; 45:21; 62:8; 82:2; 83:21; 84:2, 16, 18, 22; 85:1; 87:9; 102:21; 103:25; 104:19: 106:21: 109:23 city [34] - 4:15; 14:17; 16:24; 19:13; 22:2; 31:4; 41:18; 42:3; 59:18; 71:23; 73:20; 76:25; 77:19, 21, 88:13, 19, 89:7, 100:15; 101:13; 104:1, 21; 105:1; 106:12, 15; 108:18, 23-24, 116:8, 117:20; 118:1 City's [2] - 52:21; 55:13 claimed [2] - 30:5; 102:20 clarification [3] -5:14: 66:4: 79:14 clarify [1] - 26:10 clear [12] - 16:22; 17:24; 27:9; 42:6; 46:16; 49:9; 52:11; 65:2; 67:16; 104:12; 117:17 clear-cut [1] - 16:22 clearly (11) - 10:17; 49:13; 52:7; 58:20; 64:2; 114:13, 21-22; 115:4, 25 clients [2] - 15:24; 104:1 clock [8] - 48:18, 24; 49:15; 56:24; 69:3; 74:6; 80:6 close [2] - 34:6; 100:7 closest[1] - 96:6

Coalition [1] - 34:24 Code [7] - 4:15; 5:8; 34:15, 18, 35:14, 117:17 code [29] - 4:16; 14:16; 16:14; 36:7; 41:15, 18, 22; 42:3, 11-12; 47:15; 66:10; 72:17; 73:12, 14, 18, 20, 22-23; 76:15; 77:2, 21; 78:1; 91:10; 104:1: 115:14: 117:20, 118:1 collective [1] - 7:18 collector [19] -52:22; 55:13, 19-20; 69:16; 87:10; 90:15; 91:4, 13, 16, 94:18; 95:2, 5-6, 8, 15-16; 98:12 coming [2] - 23:5; 80:19 comment [3] - 15:15; 65:19; 74:8 comments [11] -15:17; 16:9; 35:24; 40:20; 46:14; 47:5; 65:21; 70:24; 83:20 commission [2] -30:2; 119:17 commissions [1] common [3] - 44:4; 90:8; 114:25 compare [1] - 85:11 compelled [1] -116:5 compensation [1] -4:7 complaint[1] -119:14 complaints [1] -33:15 complete [1] - 31:25 completely [3] -45:1; 66:14; 69:2 compliance [2] -77:15; 107:15 Compliance [14] -35:8; 36:6; 38:8, 15; 41:2; 54:1; 66:7; 75:12; 82:3; 105:6, 8, 11, 13, 16 compliant [1] - 32:7 complied [2] - 52:7; 63:19 complies [3] - 46:1; 67:21; 84:14 comply [2] - 65:13; 106:10 component [2] -

74:20: 76:3 components [2] -15:3; 75:17 comprised [1] - 4:5 concealed [1] -108:13 concedes [1] - 81:7 concept [2] - 68:5; 95:10 concern [2] - 9:24; 86:13 concerned [3] -20:16; 24:20; 37:17 concerning [1] -76:25 concerns [3] - 32:18; 33:5; 71:8 concluded [1] -118:25 conclusion [2] -5:11; 110:18 Condlin [2] - 2:17; 102:20 condo [1] - 85;19 conduct [1] - 34;4 confess | 11 - 103:25 confidentiality [1] -108:22 confirmation [7] -28:18; 102:23; 105:23; 107:9, 16; 108:6 confirmed [1] -117:25 confirms (2) - 19:13; conform [1] - 106:10 conformance [9] -16:1, 3: 72:19, 21; 73:4, 20; 74:15; 76:3; 103:16 confused (1) - 77:7 congested [1] -102:8 congestion[1] -102:4 connector[1] -96:20 consider[11] - 11:8. 10: 18:13: 19:22: 24:7: 25:3: 41:14: 65:4: 104:11: 111:1: 114:23 consideration [2] -107:5; 109:2 considered [6] -

19:10; 20:11; 28:6;

52:23; 80:4; 115:6

consistent [1] -

74:23

consistently [1] -94:22 consisting (1) - 6:11 constantly [1] -105:5 constituency [1] -6:11 constitutes [2] -1:25; 77:1 constitutional [1] -102:18 construction [1] -85:18 construed [2] - 52:1, contained (2) -10:25: 15:12 contains [1] - 119:9 context[1] - 96:18 contingent [3] -97:8, 12 continuance [2] -9:9; 13:22 continue [6] - 10:13; 11:11, 14; 20:24; 88:23 continued [2] -20:18: 97:22 continues [1] - 18:6 continuing [2] -18:6; 98:12 contracts [3] - 97:7. 11, 17 contractual [1] contradicts [1] -108:19 contrary [1] - 43:3 contrasted [1] -28:14 controlled [1] - 31:4 controls [3] - 31:14; 35:4; 86:1 conversations [1] -105:2 convince [1] - 42:4 copy [4] - 14:1; 53:19; 54:2; 76:11 copying [1] - 1:24 copyright [1] - 1:24 comer [2] - 110:6, 14 corners (2) - 37:10; 68:11 Correct [5] - 76:1, 20; 77:13; 97:14; 113:23 correct [14] - 7:3; 22:6: 51:16: 66:13. 15; 75:4; 76:21, 24;

77:16; 78:8, 11, 20;

119:9 correction [1] - 5:13 correctly [2] - 94:20; 101:17 correctness [5] -17;4, 7; 19:20; 75:5; 98:17 correspondence [1] - 66:1 council [17] - 86:2, 12; 88:1, 9, 13, 19, 23; 89:7, 24; 90:1; 100:15; 101:14; 104:22; 105:1; 106:12; 116:9 Council [4] - 102:14, 21; 104:19; 109:23 Counsel [2] - 2:11, 15 counsel [5] - 81:6; 92:9; 93:16; 98:25; 119:13 countenance [1] -104:10 counter[1] - 100:18 counterintuitive [1] -County [4] - 28:5, 15; 29:9; 30:1 county [1] - 37:11 COUNTY [1] - 119:2 course [8] - 16:20; 27:3; 34:4; 60:12, 22; 80:3, 13; 81:24 court [6] - 6:22; 30:9; 33:19; 39:21; 112:24; 119:5 Court [31] - 4:6; 6:23; 27:20, 23; 28:7, 14; 29:24; 30:8; 31:12; 35:1, 18; 37:24; 38:12, 19, 25; 39:4; 40:13, 22; 46:6; 48:14, 17; 49:5; 52:12: 57:21: 63:9: 83:4, 10, 16; 84:17; 119:8 Court's [2] - 45:18; 84:15 courts [4] - 52:2; 71:6: 78:13 covered [1] - 69:4 covering (1) - 34:19 crack [1] - 87:19 creating [1] - 104:7 credits [1] - 84:25 critical [1] - 13:13 Crucible [29] - 28:4, 24-25; 36:1, 4, 12; 39:1, 20; 40:12; 45:8, 10, 20; 47:13; 48:11;

49:11: 51:10: 57:9 15: 59:1: 62:25: 67:3: 72:10, 12, 22; 75:10, 16; 83:17 Crux [2] - 47:24; 49:19 cruxes [1] - 48:1 curiously [1] - 31;6 current [2] - 95:7; 106:23 customary [1] -96:17 cut[1] - 16:22 dark [1] - 56:11 date [7] - 24:25; 29:14; 31:1; 33:9; 52:18; 95:4; 99:11 dated [1] - 54:8 Dave [1] - 53:22 DAVIDSON [42] -3:7; 9:21, 24; 10:7, 11; 12:21; 13:6; 21:25; 22:7, 9, 18; 62.6, 64:15, 18, 65:5, 7, 17, 66:8, 12, 16, 18, 24; 67:14; 68:4, 9, 15, 24; 69:6, 11, 23; 92:16, 18; 93:9; 94:21; 95:20, 22; 96:1, 7, 10; 111:24 Davidson [9] - 2:9; 62:7, 72:20; 80:18; 88:11; 90:18; 98:5; 110:11 Davidson's [4] -54:7, 11; 85:23; 98:16 DAVIDSON.....[1] - 3:4 days [21] - 12:6; 25:21, 23; 27:17; 29:5, 16-17; 30:7, 10; 32:19; 33:11, 16; 36:24: 48:21: 51:16. 23: 64:8: 115:7: 116:1; 117:13, 23 deal [3] - 25:1; 41:23; dealing [1] - 16:19 deals [2] - 66:20; 77:5 December [3] -45:13; 65:18; 97:5 decide [15] - 6:14; 8:17; 11:4; 18:13; 19:21, 23-24; 20:22, 25; 23:20, 24; 25:2; 60:4; 101:3, 15 decided [7] - 16:13; 17:2; 18:1, 5; 23:9; 72:15 deciding [1] - 6:25

decision [59] - 5:16; 6:20; 7:4; 8:24; 9:9; 10:21; 11:9; 13:25; 15:20; 16:17; 19:4, 14, 22; 25:21, 24; 27:18, 21; 38:20; 40:14, 21; 44:21; 46:7, 18; 47:8; 51:4; 55:10; 56:4; 58:19; 60:14; 62:18; 65:4; 66:17; 68:5; 73:7; 75:21; 82:16, 22, 24; 93:19; 94:8, 12; 96:21; 111:12; 113:17; 114:8, 13, 17, 19-21; 115:5, 7, 15; 117:15, 22, 25; 118:3 decision-making [4] - 19:22; 82:24; 114:13; 117:22 decisions [4] - 4:19; 101:14; 114:6, 10 declare [1] - 5:24 declined [1] - 109:1 decrease [1] - 102:4 deem [1] - 9:14 deemed [1] - 93:13 defend [2] - 60:25; defended [1] - 99:5 defer [2] - 11:24; 12:6 deference [1] - 84:1 deferral [1] - 13:21 define [1] - 87:11 defined [5] - 6:8; 86:25; 88:5; 95:24; 96:15, 19 defines [2] - 34:2; 35:18 definitely [2] - 68:20; 69:12 definition [13] - 47:9, 17; 49:11; 51:24; 59:8; 61:14; 84:15; 87:6: 90:8: 91:5: 94:19; 96:9 delay [2] - 14:10; 20:19 deliberation [1] -6:16 denied [2] - 27:5; 75:7 density [2] - 93:21; 101:25 deny [1] - 99:17 department [1] -Department [1] -106:14 described [4] -

46:15; 47:12; 74:2; 98:1 describes [1] - 51:5 description [1] designated [9] -55:13; 69:14; 87:2, 4-5, 17; 88:5, 8, 14 designations [4] -87:20; 94:24; 95:2, 4 destroying [1] -102:2 detail [1] - 17:12 detailed [2] - 16:2; 42:1 details [1] - 53:9 Details (1) - 103:3 determination [46] -16:15; 27:19, 22, 25; 28:22; 30:4; 35:22; 36:23; 38:20; 39:16; 40:14, 16, 21; 44:16, 18; 46:8, 15, 18-19; 47:2; 51:4; 53:2; 54:25; 59:15, 19; 61:18; 63:17; 67:21; 69:2, 12; 71:21; 72:16; 74:5; 80:3; 88:10; 89:8; 90:9; 93:20; 94:8, 12, 17; 100:5; 107:6, 22; 115:3; 117:11 determinations [5] -30:17, 24; 31:9; 80:4; determine [4] - 48:5; 62:9; 108:4; 115:14 determined [6] -29:21; 44:14; 47:21; 64:8; 67:10; 106:25 determines (1) -24:19 develop [1] - 18:7 developed [1] - 16:8 developer [18] -13:24: 31:19: 32:4. 10, 14, 33, 4, 15; 43:18; 45:11, 17, 23; 50:24; 51:17; 61:5; 62:11; 79:23; 103:10; 115:15 developer's [8] -33:5, 8, 21; 60:10; 81:6; 102:20 Development [2] -84:24; 106:14 development [13] -14:11; 16:8; 65:8; 73:8; 74:18: 81:14; 93:14; 97:24; 101:13;

103:20; 109:16;

110:14 developmental [1] -73:9 devoted [1] - 5:25 Dictionary [1] - 34:2 dictionary [3] - 90:7; 96:17 difference [6] - 48:2; 57:1; 63:21; 80:25; 98:4; 111:10 different [24] - 10:22; 28:21; 32:5; 35:3; 39:4; 46:12; 47:1; 50:2; 56:14; 63:10; 64:22; 66:14; 71:10; 74:1; 80:19; 81:16; 82:15; 89:25; 90:16; 105:24 difficult [1] - 84:8 difficulty [1] - 84:12 dig [1] - 21:18 dimensional (1) -68:19 diminish [1] - 109:18 direct [2] - 11:18; 116:14 directly [4] - 35:17; 62:11; 89:5; 116:21 director [4] - 66:18; 82:21; 114:12 disagree [2] - 20:21; 43:14 disapproved (1) -110:12 discover[1] - 58:17 discrepancies [1] -114:24 discrepancy [1] -68:10 discrete (1) - 81:15 discretion [1] - 5:12 discuss [1] - 56:1 discussed [1] - 72:9 discussion [16] -22:9; 24:13, 15-16; 25:18; 26:11; 40:15; 51:7; 65:23; 66:25; 93:11; 94:1; 113:25; 114:2; 118:4, 7 disinterested [1] -119:8 dispositive [1] -19:18 distinction [5] -17:20; 39:18; 64:19; 82:17 District [1] - 104:18 district [8] - 39:24; 44:13; 72:25; 73:1; 99:24; 103:7

divide [1] - 113:10 division [1] - 82:21 docket [3] - 5:2; 6:16; 12:24 document [2] -40:17; 51:13 documentation [1] -89:18 documented [1] -68:8 documents (2) -15:11; 106:8 Donald [1] - 12:23 done [12] - 24:23; 28:12; 59:25; 86:13; 97:11, 15-16; 99:8; 106:16; 114:11; 115:22 door[1] - 37:12 doubled [1] - 59:22 doubt[1] - 45:10 down [5] - 59:22; 79:2, 6; 84:24; 108:3 draconian [4] - 42:2; drag (1) - 23:6 dramatically [1] -41:21 drawings [1] - 9:16 drifting [1] - 91:25 drive [1] - 88:25 due [4] - 29:8; 48:22; 102:17: 116:10 duly [1] - 8:12 duty [1] - 72:3 dwarf [1] - 109:16 dwarfing (1) - 102:1 e-mail [3] - 31:24; 45:5; 103:24 e-mailed [1] - 103:14 e-mails [4] - 62:19; 66:25; 67:1; 107:8 early [1] - 33:3 easements [2] -27:11; 71:1 East [1] - 2:13 EAST[1] - 1:13 education [2] - 37:2, effect [2] - 67:2; 75:22 effort [1] - 20:18 eight [3] - 26:21; 39:4; 45:19 either [7] - 10:13; 19:1; 30:23; 44:3, 5; 74:12; 119:11 elaborate [1] - 78:5

elaboration [1] -

8:23

elaborations [1] element [1] - 44:19 elements [1] - 67:25 elevation [1] - 9:16 elsewhere [1] -96:14 embedded [1] - 43:1. emphasize [1] -101:11 empower[2] - 90:1 encourage [1] - 7:19 end [4] - 23:5; 56:1; 69:18; 98:13 enforce [1] - 49:3 entire [3] - 44:20; entitled [2] - 27:2, 4 entity [2] - 54:25; entrance [1] - 102:5 erred [1] - 29:14 erroneous [3] - 49:2; 59:22; 64:8 error [1] - 64:13 especially [1] -ESQ [4] - 26:23; 70:13; 79:19; 97:1 estate [3] - 85:9; 91:8; 103:9 et [7] - 9:16; 27:15; 42:23; 67:12; 71:2; 85:24 evidence [8] - 17:6; 19:17, 23; 24:5; 74:11; 98:22; 99:3; 100:23 exact[1] - 80:24 exactly [9] - 11:6; 26:10; 41:2; 43:4; 44:9; 45:22; 47:12; 57:13; 78:18 example [6] - 8:21; 28:2; 46:17; 58:15; 68:1; 89:17 examples [2] - 49:9; 111:21 exceed (3) - 5:15; 110:13, 15 exceeds [2] - 53:12; 103:7 except[1] - 107:19 exception [4] - 5:6; 49:4; 89:10; 106:19 exceptions [3] -4:21; 49:6; 86:9 excess [1] - 101:25 exclude [1] - 85:20 excluded [2] - 98:13,

excludes [1] - 47:17 exclusion (1) - 9:10 exclusively [1] -21:10 excuse [8] - 44:9; 51:17; 55:7; 56:9; 73:15; 77:18; 83:23; 117:20 Excuse [2] - 7:14; 14:23 exercise [1] - 11:23 Exhibit [2] - 54:6, 11 exist[3] - 76:16; 77:20; 95:13 existed [1] - 30:21 exorbitant[1] -102:3 expecting [2] - 4:24; 8:12 expend [1] - 97:23 expended [1] - 16:7 expending [1] -73:10 expire [1] - 80:6 expired [1] - 29:16 expires [1] - 119:17 explain [2] - 7:17; 101:6 explaining [1] - 61:1 explanation [1] -23:16 expressed [1] -116:20 extent [2] - 10:15; 86:9 extra [1] - 13:13 extraordinarily (1) face [2] - 88;20, 22 fact [37] - 29:20; 30:10, 15, 19; 32:11, 17; 33:18; 36:24; 37:17; 39:15, 22; 40:20; 41:15; 42:20, 24; 45:15; 46:1; 48:21; 49:2; 51:12, 16: 52:2; 61:12; 69:13; 80:3; 81:9, 13; 84:4; 89:7, 24; 90:6, 11: 91:14, 21: 92:4: 94:15:115:19 facts [4] - 12:10, 15; 59:14; 89:25 factual [1] - 5:14 factually [1] - 103:20 failed [2] - 23:18; 82:6 fails [1] - 83:17 fair[1] - 101:7

fairness [6] - 29:8, 19; 48:22; 115:13; 116:5, 11 falls [3] - 15:4; 78:1; Falls [1] - 45:21 familiar [2] - 17:18; 81:4 far [18] - 9:22; 22:1, 14; 24:19; 29:7, 15; 30:16; 38:24; 42:14; 54:23; 72:9; 80:15; 81:3, 15; 86:14; 91:25; 94:24 fashion [1] - 29:21 fast [1] - 65:17 fast-forward [1] favor[9] - 5:3; 12:11; 19:19; 25:9; 99:18; 113:5; 115:10; 116:25; 118:13 February [1] - 33:4 fee [2] - 27:12; 54:1 feet [15] - 53:6; 81:12; 100:2; 101:23; 102:7; 103:7; 104:7; 106:22; 109:13; 110:8, 13, 15; 116:13 fellow [1] - 4:5 few[1] - 100:15 field [1] - 4:9 Fifth [1] - 104:18 fighting [1] - 111:11 file [2] - 58:7; 108:2 filed (9) - 13:5; 25:20; 33:10; 45:14; 65:18; 105:8, 19; 113:22 filing [1] - 23:18 final [3] - 9:8; 45:7; 67:20 finally [3] - 5:4; 26:6; 67:18 findings [1] - 30:8 fine [1] - 112:18 finish [1] - 112:8 finished [2] - 96:22; 112:4 firm [3] - 14:4; 81:4; 98:20 first [24] - 5;2, 17; 7:6, 24; 8:14; 9:18; 10:7; 26:1; 27:10, 17; 31:2; 34:12; 38:19, 21; 45:3; 56:23; 70:23; 79:23; 88:18; 97:3; 106:25; 108:16; 114:4; 116:7 five (6) - 4:5; 5:15;

10:7; 11:22; 12:3;

95:8 flawed [1] - 15:8 floor (1) - 9:15 FLOOR[1] - 1:13 focused [1] - 7:4 FOIA [2] - 107:19; 108:2 fold [1] - 56:22 folks [1] - 12:10 follow[1] - 74:13 followed [6] - 7:7, 12; 26:5; 65:22; 75:6; 97:19 following [4] - 6:4; 93:13; 103:24; 107:11 foot [2] - 110:22 forcing [1] - 24:25 foregoing [1] - 119:9 foremost [1] - 114:4 Forget [1] - 43:5 form [1] - 67:20 former[1] - 103:9 formulizes [1] -25:23 forth [6] - 4:15; 12:20; 58:5; 62:20; 77:15; 96:13 forward [10] - 16:7; 20:23; 21:9; 22:4; 40:24; 65:17; 73:9; 74:11, 17; 75:8 four [7] - 12:1; 93:2, 4: 94:5: 95:4: 111:8 four-and-a-half [1] four-story [1] - 111:8 frame [1] - 33:23 frankly [2] - 9:18; 104:19 freeway (3) - 95:5, 9; 98:12 friend [1] - 102:15 Friends [5] - 71:5; 81:3, 5; 98:18, 21 front [6] - 8:25; 10:4; 22:20; 53:12; 91:24; 115:6 frontage [1] - 55:12 fronting [1] - 103:6 full [3] - 15:10; 62:14; 67:5 full-blown [1] - 67:5 full-scale (1) - 62:14 fully [1] - 119:4 fundamentai [6] -28:13; 29:8, 19; 48:22; 116:5, 11 fundamentally [1] -109:17 garage [7] - 28:20;

39:23; 40:3, 11; 63:20; 64:20 gardens [1] - 110:20 general [24] - 31:15, 22, 24; 32:16; 35:6; 45:6; 66:2; 67:1, 7; 68:4; 71:2, 7, 10; 73:17; 74:8; 77:25; 78:1; 81:17; 96:1; 98:5; 103:18 General [5] - 42:21; 43:4, 13; 76:1; 78:7 generalized [5] -71:8, 23; 72:23; 99:14 gentleman [1] -101:16 gentlemen [1] - 4:2 Gibbons [1] - 2:17 Gibson [1] - 103:24 given [7] - 9:7; 20:17; 30:4; 33:7, 9; 39:25; 117:13 glad [2] - 92:13; 109:3 goal [1] - 18:8 gored [1] - 43:20 Gosh [1] - 46:1 governmental [3] -72:14; 80:11; 93:14 grant [5] - 4:9, 17, 19-20; 86:7 great [2] - 70:21; 116:4 greater [1] - 8:23 Gregory [1] - 119:4 GREGORY [2] -1:23; 119:21 **Gregory-Longmire** m - 119:4**GREGORY-**LONGMIRE (2) - 1:23; 119:21 grounds [1] - 9:4 Group [2] - 2:15; group [1] - 7:25 guess [3] - 9:24; 17:16; 68:22 guy [1] - 64:21 Hales [1] - 52:13 half [5] - 91:23; 93:2, 5; 105:6; 109:5 HALL[1] - 1:12 hand [2] - 8:11; 119:16 handed [2] - 62:12; 79:2 handicapped [1] -110:21 handled [1] - 81:4

hands [2] - 105:15, happy [5] - 15:1; 54:2; 75:9; 86:15; 98:3 hardly [1] - 51:8 harm [8] - 71:5, 9, 14, 24; 98:23; 99:4, 15 harp [1] - 98:18 hear [22] - 5:2; 6:16; 19:12; 25:5, 16, 25; 26:2; 70:5, 8; 96:25; 99:12; 101:1; 112:25; 113:2, 4, 8-9; 114:3; 117:6 heard [16] - 5:1; 6:13: 8:3, 10: 13:24: 14:7. 9: 25:17: 29:14: 60:13, 17; 75:25; 79:23; 91:15; 104:5 Hearing [1] - 102:21 hearing [5] - 12:10; 18:18; 20:1; 81:8; 105:5 heart [1] - 84:6 heavily [1] - 19:19 height [41] - 32:9; 53:4, 10, 12-13; 55:6; 62:22; 63:23; 68:1, 6; 91:18; 99:14, 21; 100:2, 8, 16, 19-20; 101:25; 102:9, 24; 103:4, 8, 12, 19; 104:4, 7; 106:3, 9, 20, 22; 107:3, 6, 9; 108:17; 110:8, 13 held [5] - 38:19; 48:14; 83:4, 10; 108:22 help [4] - 40:7; 41:12; 44:23; 108:25 Help[1] - 41:4 helping (1) - 108:3 hereby (1) - 119:5 herein [2] - 50:19; 119:6 high [1] - 84:17 highlight[1] - 73:13 Hill [5] - 30:18; 102:12, 14; 109:21 himself [1] - 45:3 Historic [1] - 84:24 historic [3] - 85:16; 89:1, 6 hit[1] - 102:10 Hogue [1] - 2:5 HOGUE [5] - 25:13, 15; 116:3; 117:4; 118:17 Hogue's [1] - 116:19

hold [1] - 105:25 home [3] - 67:3; 109:12 Home [1] - 109:22 honestly [1] - 12:8 Honor [4] - 13:9; 56:9; 83:23 Honorable [2] -26:16, 25 hour[1] - 105:5 houses [1] - 110:25 Housing [1] - 34:23 hundred [4] -101:23; 102:7; 103:7; 116:14 hurting (1) - 92:5 hypothetical [1] identical [1] - 41:18 identified [4] - 52:20; 64:2; 104:25 impact [2] - 102:1, 8 impacted [3] - 81:11, 13; 109:15 impactful [1] - 71:22 impacting [1] -100:21 impacts [1] - 81:15 impertinent [1] -60:2 important [3] - 62:9; 72:11: 74:7 impression (3) -41:22; 106:25; 108:17 Improvement [2] -102:14; 109:22 included [3] - 16:16; 71:18; 72:17 including [7] - 9:14; 27:14; 39:5; 46:13; 56:16; 57:23; 84:10 inconsistencies [1] inconsistent [3] -21:13; 110:5; 111:2 incorporated [2] -50:19; 61:19 increase [1] - 102:3 indicated [2] - 64:19; 93:16 indicating [1] - 20:2 indirect [1] - 71:14 individual [4] -10:24; 13:16; 30:22; 63:11 individuals [1] -105:24 infinitely [1] - 42:1 informai [1] - 4:22 information [34] -

9:8, 10, 14; 14:8, 13; 15:12, 14, 22; 18:3; 22:10; 32:5; 35:24; 40:18; 47:4; 50:21; 51:1, 5; 68:19; 72:4; 74:21, 24; 83:19; 94:11; 105:25; 106:2; 108:15; 109:3, 23 initiai [1] - 39:13 inquiries [1] - 36:22 inquiry [1] - 43:8 instead (4) - 31:15; 55:17; 85:6; 111:8 instructions [1] - 9:3 intend [2] - 10:25; 82:7 intended [2] - 88:2, 23 interaction [1] -73:13 interest [4] - 40:8; 71:14: 81:19 interested [4] - 6:5, 8; 68:7; 119:14 interesting [1] -41:16 interests (2) - 40:5 internal [6] - 49:21. 23; 50:17; 51:2, 6; 54:18 interpret [6] - 86:6, 20; 87:13; 91:10; 98:11; 115:1 interpretation [12] -7:1; 21:13; 25:4; 59:23; 79:1; 85:23; 86:21; 96:2; 97:25; 98:15; 104:24 interpretative [1] -78:13 interpreted [4] -96:13, 16; 98:10; 101:16 intimately [1] -104:20 introducing [1] involved [3] - 25:20; 98:21: 104:20 involves [1] - 34:5 irrelevant [2] - 19:5, 25 Island [1] - 84:24 issuance [1] - 32:20 Issue [76] - 8:16; 16:20; 17:21; 18:19; 19:3, 7, 11, 18, 21; 20:24; 21:2, 10, 23;

23:4, 6, 11, 17-18, 20,

104:7

24-25; 24:7; 26:14;

27:6, 17; 29:7, 10;

30:1, 17; 36:8, 22; 37:18; 41:23; 42:15; 44:15; 46:10; 47:21; 48:22; 49:18, 24; 51:9, 13; 54:16, 24; 55:22; 56:13; 59:10; 60:3, 14; 61:3, 5, 10; 62:22; 63:8; 68:1; 70:24; 72:3; 76:5; 80:16; 82:12; 84:13; 86:16; 90:12; 91:19, 21; 94:14; 99:15; 100:14; 106:3, 5; 108:18: 115:12 issued [5] - 35:8; 45:1; 66:6; 93:19 issues [20] - 7:4, 20; 8:20; 10:22; 11:8; 14:25; 18:15; 19:5; 22:16; 25:19; 26:5; 27:3; 33:3; 44:14; 69:6, 8; 92:11; 108:9; 114:8 items [6] - 10:25; 16:16; 22:19; 73:3; 94:6; 105:4 iterations [1] - 54:17 itself [7] - 14:17; 30:3; 33:24; 35:18; 59:9; 61:11; 86:1 Jackson [3] - 2:17; 14:4; 70:16 JACQUELIN [2] -1:23; 119:21 Jacquelin [1] - 119:4 James [1] - 45:21 January [25] - 15:11, 14, 21; 28:3; 30:19; 32:3, 15; 33:11, 13; 40:19; 50:6, 8; 51:11; 53:16; 74:20, 24; 80:4; 90:13, 21; 102:16; 106:8; 110:2 Jay [1] - 29:9 Jennifer [3] - 2:16; 14:3; 70:15 JENNIFER [4] - 3:5, 8; 70:13; 97:1 job [5] - 24:5; 84:8; 87:14, 18; 116:4 joint[1] - 118:3 Jr[1] - 2:3 Judge [2] - 29:9, 20 judicious [1] - 49:6 jumping [1] - 90:20 June [1] - 11[1 JUNE [1] - 1:15 jurisdictional [1] -46:14 justify [2] - 55:18;

keep[1] - 106:4 keeping [3] - 6:1; 7:21: 19:12 KELLEY [2] - 3:9; 101:20 Kelley [6] - 49:21; 50:13, 17; 51:3; 65:21; 101:21 Kenneth [1] - 2:4 key [2] - 44:14, 19 kind [6] - 31:7; 38:22; 45:23; 63:9; 84:9 knowledge [1] -82:20 known [4] - 18:23; 60:9; 115:25; 116:11 knows [4] - 36:16; 42:21; 43:4; 48:23 labels [1] - 74:25 lack [2] - 35:16; 61:10 lacking [2] - 48:18; ladies [1] - 4:2 laid [1] - 114:13 Land [2] - 66:3; 102:21 landed [1] - 45:23 landowner (4) -36:10; 48:7; 50:24; 59:3 landowner's [1] -93:21 landscaping [1] -69:8 LANE [2] - 101:20 Lane[1] - 101:21

LANE.....[1] - 3:9 language [27] - 9:17; 14:14; 31:8; 41:11, 19; 50:22; 55:4; 57:3; 76:9, 25; 77:11, 13, 20, 23; 78:13; 85:4-6; 87:15, 19; 88:17; 89:19; 94:1, 3; 95:21; 108:19; 114:25 large [1] - 46:12 last [5] - 11:15; 34:21; 55:10; 79:24; 87:10 lastly [1] - 33:20 late [2] - 13:4; 107:7 Laurel [10] - 53:7, 12; 69:15, 17; 91:16, 21, 24; 100:7; 103:6 law [31] - 10:8; 14:4; 15:25; 16:13; 20:6; 25:23; 31:15, 20;

32:7; 35:6; 36:21; 41:21, 24; 42:23; 46:17: 49:3, 7: 59:20: 74:14; 78:6; 79:2; 80:10; 81:4; 90:2; 97:20; 98:8; 102:19; 106:1; 115:21, 24 Law [3] - 2:12, 16; 34:2 laws [1] - 98:9 lead [2] - 29:5; 87:12 leading [1] - 48:11 leads [1] - 28:3 learned [1] - 31:1 least [2] - 47:6; 105:1 leave [6] - 6:17; 21:17; 38:4; 67:4, 15 led [2] - 68:20; 89:5 left[1] - 111:19 legal [11] - 12:8, 12; 25:19; 26:5; 27:1; 40:5, 7, 9; 61:8; 66:22: 83:5 legislative [1] - 89:9 legislatively [2] -86:12: 88:1 legitimately [1] -110:18 Leigh [2] - 49:21; 50:13 length [2] - 15:2; 98:6 lengthy [1] - 8:19 less |5| - 12:2: 32:16: 101:23; 102:6; 109:13 letter[114] - 8:19; 11:1; 12:21; 13:1; 14:1, 14; 15:13, 15-16, 19; 16:1, 3-4, 6, 17; 18:4, 12; 23:15; 24:11; 27:1, 7; 28:6, 9; 30:19, 21; 31:22, 25; 32:8, 15-16; 33:7; 35:11; 36:2; 38:1; 39:1, 16; 40:19; 44:15, 45:1, 46:22, 49:9, 17, 25; 50:9; 51:9, 19, 52:16; 53:18, 24; 54:7, 13; 55:5; 56:5, 16, 19; 58:3, 15, 17, 20; 59:17; 61:12; 62:10, 19; 65:3, 6, 20, 22; 66:2, 6; 67:1, 15, 19; 68:10; 69:5; 72:16, 19, 21, 73:4, 21, 74:5, 15, 21-22, 25, 76:12; 82:4, 18; 84:21; 94:20; 97:19-21; 102:22; 103:3, 11, 14, 16; 105:23; 107:10,

15, 22; 108:6, 8; 111:24; 113:20; 114:19, 22; 115:2; 116:1, 7 letters [14] - 28:2, 4; 32:2; 33:12; 35:20; 36:3; 49:10; 69:14; 71:17; 76:3; 77:15; 102:16; 110:2 level [3] - 75:21; 78:10, 17 levels [1] - 87:8 life [2] - 102:2; 109:19 light[7] - 27:14; 71:2, 8; 99:21; 100:18, 21; 102:4 Lilly [1] - 29:25 Lillys [2] - 30:1, 5 Lillys' [1] - 30:13 limit [10] - 10:17; 20:9; 26:18; 53:12; 79:11: 103:8: 110:8: 113:21; 114:18 limitation [3] - 91:18; 93:12; 117:16 limited [6] - 4:14; 5:13; 6:25; 9:15; 25:19; 26:11 limits [1] - 101:7 Lindsey [1] - 42:5 line [2] - 34:1; 68:11 lines [1] - 72:9 list[1] - 75:12 listening [1] - 111:21 lists [1] - 75:17 literally [2] - 62:13; litigation [1] - 34:3 live [1] - 81:18 lived (1) - 109:11 LLC [2] - 2:15; 14:5 local [4] - 69:15; 85:1; 95:8 located [2] - 17:13; location [1] - 83:13 Longmire [1] - 119:4 LONGMIRE [2] -1:23; 119:21 look [14] - 24:10; 32:2; 42:24; 49:16, 22, 50:18, 69:15; 80:22; 86:4; 87:14; 90:7; 98:3; 106:15; 115:13 Look [1] - 37:19 looked [6] - 36:17, 20, 25, 47:21; 64:6;

75:14

looking [4] - 54:4; 55:3; 57:10; 82:25 looks [3] - 10:6; 40:16; 108:4 looped [1] - 21:8 lose [2] - 19:9; 48:25 loss [3] - 27:14; 71:2, 8 lost [1] - 94:6 lower[1] - 98:14 LSR [1] - 1:23 mail [3] - 31:24; 45:5; 103:24 mailed [2] - 62;12; 103:14 mails [4] - 62:19; 66:25; 67:1; 107:8 Main [1] - 2:13 major[13] - 55:12; 64:18; 87:11; 90:15; 91:4, 13, 94:18, 95:2, 17-18; 96:20; 100:9; 102:8 man [2] - 50:13, 15 map [1] - 59:13 March [25] - 15:15, 22; 16:11; 23:15; 30:21, 24; 33:3, 7, 9; 45:4: 51:19: 59:17: 61:18; 74:22; 80:12; 82:10; 102:15; 103:13, 21, 23; 107:7, 10; 110:1 Markham (1) -103:15 marriage [1] - 119:12 Mary [1] - 2:5 master [24] - 52:21; 55:14, 17; 86:25; 87:2, 6-7, 9, 18-19; 88:2, 5, 8-9, 14, 19; 89:5, 17, 19; 94:15, 23; 95:1, 13; 100:10 material [5] - 7:22; 11:10, 15; 16:5; 17:22 materially [1] - 15:24 materials [3] - 11:20; 12:9; 18:17 matter [20] - 12:21, 23; 14:7; 23:9; 29:22; 30:15; 31:13; 33:24; 34:4, 19; 35:2; 38:21; 42:8, 11, 24; 45:4; 52:2; 90:6; 91:14; 119:6 matters [1] - 67:18 maximum [1] - 53:5 MCROBERTS [96] -3:6; 11:2, 17; 12:2, 7,

17; 13:9, 15, 20;

26:16, 19, 23-24;

34:1, 18, 21; 35:14; 36:7, 19; 38:11, 18; 39:11, 14, 19; 40:9; 41:9; 42:5, 11, 14; 43:10; 44:25; 46:11, 24; 47:4, 7, 11, 25; 50:6, 8, 11, 16; 53:4, 15; 54:4, 7, 10, 15, 20; 55:3, 11, 24; 56:7, 11; 57:2, 20; 58:10, 23; 59:1, 16, 21; 61:2, 21; 62:1; 76:13; 79:14, 17, 19-20; 81:21: 82:10: 83:2. 15, 23; 86:17, 21; 87:2, 14; 88:7, 16, 22; 89:4, 21, 23; 90:5, 10, 19, 23; 91:7, 17; 92:2, 8, 22; 93:1; 98:25; 99:5; 118:22 McRoberts [17] -2:12; 20:20; 26:9; 35:7; 47:10; 60:20; 70:3, 8, 24; 71:17; 74:2; 76:7; 77:17; 79:12; 94:14; 98:20; 116:4 McRoberts' [1] -18:24

MCROBERTS..... -----[1] -3:3 mean [29] - 10:7; 12:14; 18:18; 21:3, 17, 25; 22:9, 12, 18, 22; 25:1; 35:18; 37:22; 49:4; 50:24; 57:2; 60:2; 61:15; 69:6; 84:14; 88:17; 89:23; 90:4, 14, 18; 91:10; 95:14; 113:9, meaning [6] - 16:14; 86:1, 22; 88:6, 15; 96:17 means [7] - 22:11; 25:18; 31:21; 55:8; 57:4; 60:16; 88:22 meaty [1] - 18:11 mechanism [1] -40:25 meet [16] - 27:23; 40:21; 45:8, 18; 49:10; 51:24; 62:15; 63:1, 24; 65:14; 70:2; 83:16; 91:1 meeting [5] - 4:3; 30.2; 54:24, 64.1; 73:10 meetings [1] - 30:3 meets [4] - 47:9;

61:14; 68:21; 91:5 member [6] - 10:24; 23:21; 34:11; 102:12; 109:21 Members [3] - 2:2; 26:16, 25 members [6] - 6:23; 11:22; 12:1; 14:3; 60:9 memo (10) - 29:15; 45:5; 46:12; 50:17; 51:2; 52:25; 53:1; 54:18, 23; 59:18 memorandum [9] -29:18; 49:22; 50:12, 19; 53:16; 74:20; 90:13 memory [2] - 14:20; 45:5 memos [1] - 62:10 mention [4] - 7:15; 33:20; 58:20; 84:21 mentioned [4] - 8:22; 21:5; 33:21; 56:8 merit [1] - 22:14 merits [13] - 8:23; 14:9; 19:9, 12; 23:6; 24:8; 25:6, 16; 27:5; 89:14; 98:2; 104:11; 111:1 Merser [1] - 2:10 met [10] - 53:10; 57 25; 59 9; 61:17; 64:3; 69:20; 79:23; 81:2; 94:18; 103:4 mete [1] - 49:6 might [5] - 51:7; 59:21; 105:21; 107:20; 111:25 military [9] - 36:13, 15; 37:4, 15, 21; 47:14, 17; 63:1; 80:19 mind [6] - 7:21; 19:12; 59:17; 64:7; 65:24; 106:4 minimum [1] - 11:11 minor[7] - 52:20; 55:17; 68:19; 69:8; 87:6, 10; 95:8 minute [3] - 20:8; 79:25; 109:5 minutes [24] - 519, 15, 20, 25; 6:6; 7:7, 9, 15; 24:2; 26:1, 19, 21; 33:25; 61:24; 70:4, 10, 20; 79:8, 13; 93:3;

96:24; 101:8; 112:17

misread [1] - 53:14

money [2] - 73:10;

97:23

moment[1] - 107:12

month [1] - 58:18 monthly [1] - 4:3 months [2] - 37:22 Moon (2) - 78:25; 79:5 Moreover [1] - 32:15 most [5] - 23:14; 33:13; 43:11; 47:10; 110:24 mostly [1] - 12:12 motion [11] - 24:6, 12; 25:3; 113:3, 5, 8, 15-16; 114:18; 118:5 move [3] - 20:23; 75:8; 117:14 moved [2] - 73:9; 74:17 moves [2] - 14:16; 118:8 MR [480] - 4:2; 7:14, 17-19; 8:4, 6-7, 9, 13; 9:2, 21-22, 24; 10:6, 10-12, 18, 20, 22; 11:2, 4, 6-7, 17, 25; 12:2, 4-5, 7, 14, 17-18, 21, 25, 13:3-6, 8-9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 23; 14:1, 20, 23; 16:18; 17:1, 15-17, 19; 18:9, 11, 15; 19:6, 16; 20:1, 7, 13-14; 21:1, 6, 11, 14-17, 19-20, 22, 25; 22:3, 5-9, 14, 18; 23:3, 8, 12, 14, 23; 24:1, 6, 12, 14, 16-18, 22; 25:7, 10-12, 14, 17; 26:10, 12-14, 16-17, 19-20, 24; 33:25; 34:1, 8-11, 13, 18, 20-21, 35:7, 14; 36:4, 7, 18-19; 38:6, 11, 14, 18; 39:10-12, 14-15, 19, 40:7, 9, 23; 41:6. 8-10; 42:5, 10-11, 13-14; 43:9-11, 17, 19, 44:25; 46:9, 11, 22, 24-25; 47:4, 6-8, 11, 19, 25; 50:1, 6-8, 10-11, 15-16; 52:15, 18-19, 53:4, 14-15, 17, 20-24; 54:4, 6-7, 9-11, 15, 19-20, 22, 55:3, 9, 11, 22, 24-25; 56:7, 10-11, 13; 57:2, 19-20; 58:1, 10, 13, 23-24; 59:1, 12, 16, 20-21, 24-25; 60:1, 5-8, 10-13, 15-16, 18, 20, 22, 61:2, 20-21, 23, 62:1-3, 7, 64:12,

15-16, 18; 65:2, 5-7, 16-17; 66:4, 8-9, 12-13, 16-18, 23-24; 67:13-15; 68:4, 7, 9, 13, 15, 22, 24; 69:1, 6, 10-11, 22-23; 70:3, 5-6, 8, 10, 18; 75:10, 15, 20, 23; 76:5, 13, 18, 23; 77:7, 11, 14; 78:4, 9, 12, 15-16, 18-19, 21, 23-24; 79:1, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16-17, 20; 81:20, 23-25; 82:10, 12; 83:2, 12, 15, 21, 23; 86:15, 17-18, 21, 23; 87:2, 4, 14; 88:4, 7, 12, 16, 21-22; 89:3, 11, 13, 15-16, 21-23; 90:1, 5-6, 10, 18-19, 22-23; 91:3, 7, 15, 17, 25; 92:1, 4, 8, 15-22, 24-25; 93:1, 4, 6, 10; 94:13, 21; 95:19-23; 96:1, 5, 7-8, 10, 21; 97:11, 15; 98:25; 99:5, 20; 100:24; 101:6, 8, 21; 104:17; 106:4, 6; 109:5, 9; 110:16, 18; 111:6, 10, 13-14, 18, 24; 112:1, 3-4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 20, 23; 113:2, 5-8, 12-13, 16, 18-19, 21, 23-24; 114:1, 4; 115:9, 11-12; 116:16, 24; 117:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 14, 25; 118:2, 5-6, 8-16, 18, 22 MS [35] - 14:2, 22, 24; 16:23; 17:2, 23; 18:10; 25:13, 15; 70:14, 20; 75:13, 16; 76:1, 10, 14, 20; 77:4, 8, 13, 16; 78:8, 11, 20, 22; 79:7, 9; 97:2, 13, 16; 99:2, 7, 23; 116:3; 118:17 Mullen [11] - 2:16; 14:4, 23; 19:2; 54:13; 70:5, 7, 15; 82:7; 96:24; 116:4 MULLEN [35] - 3:5, 8; 14:2, 22, 24; 16:23; 17:2, 23; 18:10; 70:13, 20; 75:13, 16; 76:1, 10, 14, 20; 77:4, 8, 13, 16; 78:8, 11, 20, 22; 79:7, 9; 97:1, 13, 16; 99:2, 7, 23 Mullen's [1] - 20:17

multiple [2] - 14:24; must [7] - 27:24; 67:20; 87:17; 88:1; 98:9; 103:25; 107:4 name [2] - 104:17; 109:10 named [2] - 30:23; 88:3 names [1] - 86;24 narrow [1] - 49:5 narrowly [2] - 52:1, 5 natures [1] - 69:9 need [12] - 8:4, 7; 24:20; 29:12, 14; 40:13: 43:6: 44:7: 63:6; 71:13; 109:3; 112:20 needed [2] - 53;8; 86:21 needs [4] - 21:8; 39:21; 82:13; 116:9 negative [1] - 102:8 neighbor[3] - 43:18; 48:23; 49:3 neighborhood [12] -6:10: 7:16, 25: 100:7: 109:18; 110:20; 111:16; 116:6, 10, 13 Neighborhood [3] -30:18; 102:13; 109:21 neighborhoods [3] -89:2, 6; 106:17 neighbors [3] - 6:11; 37:11; 104:12 Neil [1] - 103:24 never[2] - 11:20; nevertheless [1] -79:4 new [12] - 10:16; 12:9, 15; 15:21; 65:25; 69:2; 85:18; 89:20; 105:16-18; 110:4 next [4] - 37:12; 66:10; 79:15; 87:11 nine [3] - 39:4; 97:4, NO [1] - 1:9 nobody [1] - 108:12 noise (1) - 109:19 none [3] - 12:9; 66:22; 114:16 Norfolk [5] - 39:3; 45:21; 48:12; 63:13;

83:3

96:17

normal [2] - 58:4;

normally [2] - 84:8

north [1] - 68:24 Notary [1] - 119:18 note [1] - 74:7 Note [1] - 118:22 nothing [10] - 26:25; 27:7; 29:2; 47:16; 48:13; 49:12; 69:9; 71:24; 101:12; 111:15 notice [15] - 15:8, 10; 16:11; 29:22; 30:6, 10; 42:25; 43:3; 45:15; 46:21; 51:21; 80:5; 115:19; 116:15; noticed [1] - 46:25 notified [1] - 102:15 notify [1] - 6:19 notwithstanding [2] - 42:22: 43:2 November [1] -49:10 nuances [1] - 63:11 number[14] - 8:20; 22:20; 39:5; 46:12; 57:8; 61:9; 63:10; 69:13; 81:8; 93:17; 107:13: 110:10: 115:15, 18 object [1] - 27:4 objection [1] -118:22 obscured [2] - 95:22; 98:10 obviously [2] -14:25; 69:24 occur[1] - 83:22 occurred [1] - 57:7 October [57] - 15:13, 20; 16:3, 17; 28:3; 30:21; 31:23; 32:2, 8; 35:9; 40:19; 45:2, 5; 49:10, 17; 50:7, 10-11, 23; 52:16, 19; 53:5, 18, 20; 54:8; 58:16, 22, 25; 61:12; 65:6; 66:6; 67:15, 19; 68:1; 69:5; 74:5, 21; 80:4; 82:3, 10, 17; 90:14, 20; 97:19; 102:16, 22; 103:3, 11; 105:18; 106:8; 110:2; 113:19; 114:19; 116:1, 7, 12; 117:15 OF [4] - 1:4; 119:1 offering [1] - 108:25 Office [2] - 4:13; 103:25 office [2] - 15:16; 102:17 officer [1] - 93:18

officiai [1] - 38:23

OHHIC [1] - 30:19 OHNA [1] - 30:18 old [2] - 75:22; 89:20 omits [1] - 31:7 once [3] - 61:4; 97:8; 107:9 one [67] - 9:24; 10:20, 23; 13:1, 25; 14:16; 16:12; 17:12; 18:18; 21:8; 23:21; 27:19; 28:6, 23; 29:4; 31:23; 32:3; 35:2; 38:2; 39:7; 44:14; 45:22; 46:4; 48:1; 49.5, 9, 54:17; 57:6, 25; 58:8; 66:10, 24-25; 67:15; 68:10; 69:13; 71:4; 81:10. 12: 84:16: 86:6: 87:11, 17; 89:9; 95:3, 5, 7; 97:7, 12-13; 98:14; 109:10; 112:21; 114:7; 115:16; 117:5, 8-9; 118:18 One [3] - 12:21; 14:25; 15:4 ones [1] - 69:7 oops [2] - 63:6; open [5] - 48:5; 68:14; 87:19; 90:7; 114:2 opened [1] - 70:24 opined [1] - 14:18 opinion [11] - 19:13; 32:6, 22; 36:23; 65:3; 108:18, 20; 116:18, opinions [1] - 36:9 opportunity [4] -16:21; 27:5; 60:8; Oppose [2] - 117:3; opposed [1] - 117:4 opposing [3] - 1:24; 92:9; 98:25 opposition [3] - 5:5; 112:14 optional [1] - 38:13 ORD [5] - 47:9; 54:24; 56:3, 6; 82:18 ORDD [36] - 27:22, 24; 28:7, 23; 29:2; 30:3; 32:17, 20; 33:13; 35:19; 38:23; 39:2, 9, 21; 43:1; 44:25; 46:6; 48:14, 17-18; 49:11, 13-14; 51:8, 15; 57:7; 61:14;

62:15; 64:9; 65:4; 81:1; 83:11; 84:15; 107:23 ORDDs [3] - 29:4; 39:5; 83:4 order [26] - 5:1; 7:19; 17:6; 19:6; 27:18, 21; 38:20; 40:13, 20; 46:7, 17; 65:12; 72:18; 73:7; 80:5; 87:16; 90:8; 93:19; 94:7, 9; 100:13; 112:25; 113:3; 115:16 ordinance [48] -14:17; 28:11; 35.9, 11; 36:5; 37:1; 38:5; 40:10, 25; 41:4; 48:5; 49:2; 55:7; 57:5; 59:13; 62:16; 63:2, 20; 64:4; 65:9; 66:5, 22; 69:23, 25; 80:22; 82:2, 5, 15; 83:22; 85:13; 86:1, 6, 10, 20, 24; 87:15; 88:12, 18; 94:16; 101:16; 108:5; 114:14, 23, 25; 117:21 Ordinance [1] -38:17 ordinances (2) -104:22; 106:13 Oregon [5] - 30:18; 102:12, 14; 109:21 orientation [1] original [7] - 14:9; 58:3, 20; 61:12; 65:20; 69:4; 110:11 originally [1] - 38:5 otherwise [2] -96:14; 119:14 ourselves [1] - 8:17 out-of-scale [1] -109:16 outcome [1] - 119:14 overcome (1) - 74:12 overturn [4] - 33:17. 19; 111:2, 11 overview [1] - 98:5 overwhelmingly [1] -116:21 own [8] - 16:24; 27:11; 70:25; 81:18; 86:19; 90:3; 103:10 owned [1] - 81:9 Owner [2] - 84:22; owner (20) - 6:9; 7:11; 13:24; 14:5; 26:6; 38:7; 44:10, 22; 53:25; 74:13; 75:5;

93:16; 97:7; 101:22; 105:14, 17; 106:23; 117:19 owners [3] - 70:16; 81:9; 112:12 owns [1] - 81:10 ox [1] - 43:20 P.M [1] - 1:16 p.m [3] - 112:22; 118:25 package [1] - 54:14 packet [18] - 11:19; 12:13; 14:19; 15:9; 16:25; 17:11; 18:25; 22:7, 12-13; 54:12; 61:4; 71:18; 72:5; 105:7, 13, 22 PAGE[1] - 3:2 page [5] - 9:21; 11:7; 52:15; 55:4 pages [1] - 10:7 paid [2] - 35:12; 54:1 Paper [2] - 78:25; paper [3] - 20:11; 27:25; 45:24 paragraphs [1] -69:19 parcel [1] - 20:18 parcels [2] - 97;4 pardon [1] - 92:17 Parker [1] - 104:18 PARKER [2] - 3:10; parking [5] - 75:2; 95:23; 102:4, 6; 109:19 part [18] - 9;6; 17:12; 18:21; 20:3, 18; 21:21; 22:5, 14; 35:9; 46:11; 54:14; 57:22; 59:19; 66:2; 73:11; 76:19; 110:9 participants [1] particular [10] - 4:19; 6:24; 40:25; 42:16; 44:4; 58:8; 63:18; particularized [7] -71:4, 9, 13, 24; 98:23; 99:4, 16 particularly [1] -20:17 parties [7] - 1:24; 6:5, 8; 75:8; 109:11; 119:12 party [5] - 10:8; 40:25; 82:16; 101:21; 110:19 pass [1] - 83:21

passed [5] - 25:23; 43:12; 78:7; 88:13; 117:24 past [3] - 19:6, 10; 24:23 path [1] - 108:3 PDR [1] - 108:8 people [9] - 7:12; 8:10; 37:4; 39:6; 81:17; 101:10; 110:21; 115:18; 116:13 perceive [1] - 47:6 perhaps [3] - 33:3; 36:19; 99:12 period [8] - 10:11; 13:7; 15:7; 20:9: 32:19; 56:20; 73:21; 115:7 permissibility [1] -93:20 permissible [1] -44:12 permit[4] - 28:18; 39:17; 40:2; 64:25 permits (2) - 35:11; 82:2 permitted (11) - 5:9. 12, 20; 6:6; 36:6; 37:21; 38:16; 63:20; 72:24; 83:9; 100:3 person [9] - 13:13; 52:5; 54:25; 57:10; 62:13; 68:17; 83:6; 116:9; 119:8 personal [1] - 102:8 personally [1] -109:15 personnel [1] - 36:18 persons [3] - 4:23; pertaining [1] - 25:4 petition [1] - 100:13 pets [1] - 110:21 phrase [1] - 55:10 physically [1] - 64:19 pick [1] - 96:5 pictures [1] - 9:16 pie [1] - 69:21 piece [9] - 43:25; 45:24; 72:3; 73:12; 74:7, 10; 75:18; 85:16 piecemeal [1] -58:13 pieces [2] - 74:9; 75:18 piracy [1] - 1:25 place [6] - 28:20;

37:2; 38:21; 78:25;

86:12; 119:7

placed [1] - 74:25 plain (5) - 86:1, 22; 87:15: 91:9: 108:19 plan [36] - 16:8; 31:25; 45:6; 52:21; 55:14, 18; 62:24; 63:18; 67:5, 20; 68:3, 20; 70:1; 73:9; 74:19; 87:1, 3, 6-7, 9, 18-19; 88:2, 5, 9, 14, 19; 89:5, 18-19; 93:25; 94:15; 95:1, 13; 100:10 Planning [1] - 106:14 planning [3] - 27:8; 30:2: 66:20 plans [22] - 9:15; 16:1; 44:12; 62:14; 63:22; 65:8, 25; 67:5, 9, 11; 72:22; 74:15, 19, 23; 75:1; 83:13; 94 23; 97 21; 102 24; 103:18; 115:5 plant [1] - 85:17 plants [2] - 111:5, 7 POD [15] - 15:17; 65:18; 66:2, 9, 14, 17, 19, 82:14, 19-20, 22-23; 104:5; 114:11 podium [1] - 62:4 PODs [2] - 65:19; 77:14 point [13] - 24:8; 33:16; 37:8, 10, 16, 18; 42:20; 62:9; 67:19; 72:14; 101:9; 104:2: 106:7 pointed [3] - 59:18; 73:5; 111:22 policy [1] - 91:8 political [1] - 6:22 Poole [18] - 2:6; 9:1; 27:2; 34:20; 35:15; 36:19; 38:18; 47:25; 49:18; 51:11; 53:13; 54:15; 56:9; 61:3; 73:5; 83:25; 89:1; 105:4 POOLE [129] - 9:2; 10:18, 22; 11:7; 12:4; 13:23; 14:20, 23; 17:16, 19; 18:9, 15; 19:16; 20:7, 14; 23:8, 14; 24:1, 12, 18; 25:7, 10; 34:9, 11; 35:7; 36:4, 18; 38:6, 14; 39:10, 12, 15; 40:7, 23; 41:8; 43:9, 11, 19; 46:9, 22, 25; 47:6, 8, 19, 50:1, 7, 10, 15; 52:15, 19, 53:14, 17,

21, 24; 54:6, 9, 11, 19, 22; 55:9, 22, 25; 56:10: 59:25: 60:6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20; 61:20; 64:12, 16; 65:2, 16; 66:4, 9, 13, 17, 23; 70:5, 8; 75:20; 78:5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23; 79.8; 81:23, 25; 82:12; 83:12, 21; 86:15, 18, 23; 87:4; 88.4, 12; 89:11, 15; 90:1, 6, 18, 22; 91:3, 15; 92:1; 94:14; 97:11, 15; 99:20; 100:24; 112:3, 6; 113:2, 6, 12, 16, 19, 23; 114:4; 115:11; 117:1, 14; 118:2, 14 portion [4] - 49:19; 53:11; 73:14; 103:5 portions [1] - 119:10 position [20] - 7:13; 16:5, 20:4, 12, 15; 21:24; 22:1, 4; 33:12; 38:10, 12; 39:8; 46:2, 5; 48:8; 60:9, 25; 85:1; 87:23; 104:25 possible [1] - 101:5 possibly [2] - 59:14; 115:20 potential [2] - 53:25; 59:3 power [4] - 4:10, 17; 85:17; 86:18 powers [1] - 4:14 precedent [3] - 107:1 prepared (4) - 9:23: 11:8: 22:16: 53:7 preponderance [2] -17:5 prescribed [4] -73:17; 77:24; 96:14 present [5] - 4:12; 5:10, 20; 6.6, 30:2 presentation [4] -5:11, 24; 20:16; 72:8 presentations [1] presented [5] - 5:14; 9:5; 10:16; 18:21; 21:25 presuming [1] presumption [6] -17:4, 7; 19:20; 75:5; 98:17; 115:10 pretty [1] - 18:11 prevailed [2] - 99:1 previous [2] - 9:25; 110:5

primary [1] - 95:8 problem (6) - 16:18: 19:8: 23:3: 46:3: 63:23: 68:3 proceed [1] - 18:14 proceeded [1] -103:10 proceeding [2] -34:3; 118:25 proceedings [4] -4:22; 119:6, 10 process [20] - 18:21; 19:22; 20:19; 29:8; 48:22; 66:14, 20; 80:24; 82:14, 24; 83:22: 102:17: 105:24; 114:11-13; 116:8, 10; 117:22 processes [1] - 84:4 produce [1] - 98:10 Professional [1] -119:8 prohibit[1] - 13:18 project [12] - 27:14; 28:8; 38:1; 39:22; 44:11; 48:15; 93:15; 101:25; 102:9; 106:20; 109:14; 110:3 promulgated [1] -114:15 proof [1] - 74:12 properly [1] - 61:1 properties [5] - 14:6; 22:25; 81:10; 100:22; 103:21 property [54] - 4:17, 19; 6:8; 7:2, 11; 14:11; 16:4, 6; 18:7; 26:6; 27:12; 29:11; 37:9; 38:9; 43:25; 45:13; 52:23; 57:11, 17; 63:19; 66:21; 68:6: 69:20: 70:17. 25: 71:25: 72:20: 73:8; 74:17; 75:6; 81:9; 82:8; 85:11; 93:16, 21; 95:14; 97:4, 22, 24; 100:14, 17; 101:13, 24; 103:1; 105:14-16, 18; 106:24; 109:24 Property [1] - 102:14 proponents [1] - 5:7 proposal [4] - 48:6; 53:10; 69:20; 103:5 proposed [4] -27:14; 101:24; 111:4, 17 proposition [1] -42:7 protect [1] - 89:1

protection [1] - 89:5 prove [3] - 20:20; 52:7; 105:7 proven [1] - 117:24 provide [18] - 17:5; 18:16; 21:3; 24:3; 26:4; 72:4, 18, 21; 73:8; 74:18, 24; 75:3; 76:16; 93:10; 94:11; 98:22; 99:3; 109:3 provided [15] - 14:8; 17:14; 53:9; 71:11; 72:4, 6, 13, 20; 93:25; 98:23; 99:9-11; 100:22; 103:3 provides [4] - 14:14; 77:19, 21; 117:21 providing [3] - 71:7, 16; 92:5 provision [19] -16:14: 41:12: 42:2. 23; 72:16, 18; 73:14, 23; 74:3, 5, 9; 76:2, 7, 10, 15; 79:22; 100:1; 117:11 provisions [6] - 15:9; 57:19; 65:10; 72:13; 73:19; 77:10 proximity [4] - 17:13; 71:4, 13; 81:6 public [9] - 71:10; 79:14; 81:16; 96:25; 101:1; 107:17, 24; 110:9 publicly [3] - 107:16; 108:1, 7 published [3] -108:8. 10 pull [2] - 32:25; 111:25 purchase [1] -109:24 purchased [7] -36:11: 37:8: 45:12: 74:17; 103:20; 109:13 purchasing [1] purports [1] - 18:4 purpose [2] - 24:16; 43:13 purposes [4] - 24:13; 93:12; 113:24 purview [1] - 98:16 put [4] - 28:20; 43:16; 74:11; 88:18 puts [4] - 20:12, 14; 40:24; 88:13 qualified [1] - 119:5 quality [3] - 102:2; 109:19 questions [14] -

5:11; 34:7-9; 57:6; 62:1; 64:11; 75:9; 78:4; 81:22; 92:13; 94:13; 106:9; 107:12 quick [2] - 109:9; 112:11 quickly [1] - 12:14 quietly [1] - 6:18 Quinn [1] - 53:22 quite [5] - 9:17; 54:16; 79:20; 105:23; 107:12 quote [8] - 35:23, 25; 93:17; 102:23; 103:3, 15-16, 25 quotes [1] - 55:6 R-7[1] - 103:7 raise [6] - 8:11; 21:1; 23:18; 27:4; 99:20 raised [19] - 7:5, 21; 22:17; 24:10; 32:18; 33:3; 37:17, 19; 45:4; 58:24; 61:5, 22; 76:6; 82:9, 12; 86:15; 94:14; 99:21 raises [1] - 8:20 RAPER [5] - 109:8; 110:18; 111:10, 14 Raper[1] - 109:10 RAPER.....[1] -3:11 Rappahannock [3] -71:5; 81:3, 5 rather [2] - 8:18; 43:15 re [2] - 92:19; 104:4 re-rebuttal [1] reached [1] - 108:24 reaching [1] - 6:2 reacted [1] - 68:2 read [9] - 9:2, 19, 22; 12:14; 21:21; 46:22; 53:17; 87:18; 104:6 reading [6] - 50:5; 52:15; 53:16; 94:20; 104:1; 108:19 real [3] - 85:9; 91:8; 103:9 really [16] - 21:8; 35:18; 40:23; 43:22; 60:3; 61:7, 15; 84:1, 16; 85:5; 89:3; 91:18; 94:4; 111:15; 115:19 reason [6] - 24:22; 42:18; 57:8; 80:7; 83:17; 91:22 reasonable [11] -

31:18-21; 32:14;

35:16; 38:24; 48:10;

56:7; 61:10; 73:16 reasonably [3] -32:23; 51:22; 59:8 reasoning [1] - 61:15 reasons [6] - 57:8; 61:9; 80:1, 14; 91:18; 92:13 rebut [2] - 17:6 REBUTTAL (3) -79:19; 93:9; 97:1 Rebuttal [1] - 5:12 rebuttal [17] - 5:15, 21; 6:1, 3; 7:15; 8:4, 16; 26:18; 61:20; 70:9, 19; 82:7; 92:16, 18-19, 23 REBUTTAL).....[1] - 3:6 REBUTTAL).....[1] - 3:7 REBUTTAL).....[1] - 3:8 receipt [2] - 63:14 receive [3] - 15:10; 16:10; 30:19 received [24] - 7:3, 22; 11:19; 12:25; 15:8; 16:2, 9; 22:11; 29:22; 30:10; 33:6, 8; 35:12; 37:19; 45:6; 48:13; 51:19; 61:4; 67:20; 74:16; 97:21; 103:24, 109:23 receiving [3] - 28:21; 59:17 recent [3] - 28:14; 43:11; 89:1 recently [1] - 11:21 recess [1] - 112:22 recipient [5] - 28:9; 31.9; 38.3; 40.5; 45:24 record [5] - 20:3; 27:9; 75:10; 110:9; 118:23 records [2] - 21:18; 110:17 refer [1] - 82:1 reference [4] - 31:7; 39:15; 50:20; 53:1 referenced [5] -73:3, 6; 76:11; 94:15; 105:6 references [1] -12:22 referred [1] - 54:12 referring[1] - 54:17 refresh [1] - 14:20 regard [1] - 25:6 regarding [16] - 31:8;

42:25; 64:5; 71:21; 72:16, 23; 73:6; 76:2; 93:20; 98:22; 99:3. 13; 100:5; 109:24; 111:4 regardless [2] -23:13; 58:21 Registration [1] -119:18 regular [1] - 4:3 regulation [1] - 63:7 regulations [3] -4:21; 98:9; 114:14 reiterate [1] - 97:18 reject [1] - 19:11 rejected [1] - 30:12 related [4] - 22:21; 99:14; 116:21; 119:11 relative [1] - 101:5 relevant [4] - 9:8, 17; 26:4; 86:5 reliance (21) -31:19-21; 32:14; 35:15; 38:15, 21, 24; 45:23: 48:9: 56:8: 57:17: 61:10: 64:17: 74:16; 117:17, 24 relied (10) - 16:4; 35:12, 22; 38:7; 44:21; 45:12, 17; 46:2; 73:7; 97:21 relies [1] - 23:16 relieving [1] - 43:14 rely [10] - 24:4; 32:23; 34:5; 41:3; 45:11; 47:15; 51:18, 22; 54:25; 59:8 relying [1] - 32:11 remainder [2] - 6:15; 19:24 remember [1] - 78:25 remembered [1] -67:4 remind [1] - 72:1 repetition (1) - 7:20 rephrase [1] - 58:11 replacing [1] - 89:20 REPORTED [1] -1:22 reported [1] - 119:7 reporter [2] - 112:24; 119:5 Reporter [1] - 119:8 REPORTER'S [1] represent (3) - 84:8; 104:18: 109:1 representative [4] -

4:12; 5:19, 22; 104:21

representatives [1] -

119:12 represented [1] -98:20 representing [1] -53:25 represents [1] -12:22 request [5] - 5:7; 14:7; 72:21; 99:17; 107:18 requested [7] -13:11; 15:25; 35:12; 74:14; 82:4; 97:20; 100:13 required [11] - 4:8; 5:23; 36:21; 43:1; 48:4; 82:21; 98:19; 99:7, 9; 100:3; 118:1 requirement [18] -27:18, 21; 38:20; 40:14, 20; 42:25; 46:7, 18; 53:6, 10; 58:7; 62:15; 68:21; 81:1; 93:19; 94:7, 9; 103:4 requirements [16] -4:18; 7:2; 52:8; 58:5; 62:21; 63:1; 64:3; 65:15; 66:22; 67:22; 69:19, 24-25; 83:5; requires [6] - 31:18; 36:8; 71:3; 80:2; 81:5 reserve [6] - 8:15; 32:5; 65:24; 70:18; 79:8; 92:23 reserves [2] - 32:13; 46:13 resident[1] - 101:22 residential [1] -102:2 residents [1] -110:20 resources [1] - 16:7 respect [23] - 14:15, 25; 15:4; 16:16; 17:24; 43:24; 44:15; 46:9; 47:2; 56:4; 58:6; 65:3; 67:17; 71:20; 72:10; 73:24; 74:15; 77:4, 10; 113:19; 114:11; 115:4; 117:10 respectfully [1] -99:17 respond [3] - 21:15, 20; 83:6 responds [1] -105:10 response [4] - 11:18; 12:12; 61:3; 105:9 responsible [1] -

60.24 rest [3] - 45:13; 85:17: 118:23 result (a) - 9:9; 33:2; 43:15; 51:23; 95:22; 98:10; 105:2 results [1] - 23:13 reverse [3] - 30:14; 32:22; 88:17 review [2] - 16:21; 66:3 Review [1] - 106:15 reviewed [1] - 67:11 revised [1] - 16:9 rezone [1] - 4:17 rezoned [1] - 99:25 rezoning [2] -100:14; 106:16 Rhoads [17] - 28:16, 23; 29:3; 39:11; 43:12, 22; 44:23, 25; 49:12; 57:24; 63:12, 16; 64:12, 14; 84:11 Richard [1] - 103:14 Richmond [16] -2:14, 18; 4:4, 16; 28:15; 31:3; 35:10; 38:16; 41:19; 62:8; 82:2, 84:22; 87:9; 104:19; 106:21 RICHMOND [2] - 1:4, rights [22] - 28:10, 19; 29:6, 12; 31:8; 38:2, 7; 40:1; 48:25; 49:1; 52:1, 3-4, 6; 63:14; 73:11; 76:3; 77:6; 79:22; 83:18; 86:9; 102:17 Ripol [2] - 29:9, 19 risk [1] - 103:10 Riverside (2) - 84:22; 91:9 road [2] - 91:12; 95:17 roadway [2] - 52:21; robe [1] - 56:12 Rodney [3] - 2:6; 116:18; 118:12 Roger (5) - 2:3; 7:14; 99:6; 109:5; 117:6 role [1] - 101:15 roof [1] - 68:11 Roth [3] - 2:17, 14:4; 70:16 Roy [3] - 2:7; 13:2; 103:15 RPR[1] - 1:23 rug [1] - 32:25

rule [19] - 14:15; 15:4, 6: 16:12: 17:25: 18:1, 5; 19:15; 20:5; 23:3; 73:18, 24; 74:1, 3-4; 77:25; 78:1; 97:19; 99:18 ruled [3] - 10:3; 13:3; 110:7 rules [17] - 4:23; 9:1; 10:10; 11:14; 17:24; 18:16, 20; 41:24; 60:24; 73:17; 75:6; 76:17; 77:22; 78:2; 96:1; 105:15; 112:24 ruling [3] - 19:7; 79:5; 110:4 rulings [3] - 109:25; 110:5: 111:2 run [5] - 27:17; 33:23; 48:24; 64:9; 74:6 running [1] - 80:6 runs [1] - 115:7 safe [1] - 67:17 safety [1] - 109:20 sales [1] - 63:15 Samuels [3] - 2:4; 118:10, 12 SAMUELS [9] -24:16; 25:11; 113:7, 18; 114;1; 116:17; 117:2; 118:5, 15 Sanders [2] - 84:23; 85:18 Sands [1] - 2:13 satisfied [1] - 69:3 Saunders [10] -49:21, 23; 50:12, 16, 18; 51:3, 5; 90:12, 16; saved [1] - 100:17 scale (3) - 62:14: 68:25; 109:16 scan (1) - 8:19 scanned [1] - 10:16 school [10] - 36:15; 37:2, 5; 47:14, 17; 63:2, 7; 80:19, 21 schools [1] - 37:6 scrap[1] - 27:25 screening [1] - 69:8 second [16] - 15:2; 24:14; 27:16; 31:18; 38:24; 40:1; 45:8; 55:4; 56:25; 62:22; 95.5; 113:18, 24; 114:1; 118:6, 8 secondarily [1] -107:22

secondary (10) -

52:22; 55:12; 85:24;

87:12; 90:15; 91:13; 95:2, 7, 18; 96:19 secondhand [2] -62:13; 68:16 secondly [1] - 11:13 secret [2] - 23:8; 36:16 Secretary [1] - 2:7 secretary [2] - 4:10; 44:6 section [14] - 35:10; 36:5, 7; 66:5, 7, 10; 76:21; 82:5, 15; 93:12; 96:9; 117:19 Section [1] - 72:12 sections [1] - 22:22 See [1] - 50:20 see [10] - 12:15; 18:25; 21:7; 32:10; 37:12; 53:19; 54:7; 58:9; 115:8 seek [2] - 71:19; 115:16 seeking [1] - 104:6 seem [1] - 116:9 send [1] - 43:3 sending [1] - 107:8 sense [10] - 12:7; 13:22; 85:5, 7, 9, 15, 22, 24; 91:24; 95:20 sent [7] - 19:8; 24:25; 58:3; 65:22; 103:17, 22; 107:10 separate (7) - 66:19; 77:9; 82:14; 97:6, 17 September [1] -119:17 serve [1] - 4:6 serving [1] - 106:12 set [10] - 4:14; 16:8; 40:22; 57:21; 70:24; 72:22; 74:15; 89:25; 96:13; 107:1 sets [1] - 39:21 seven [1] - 45:19 seventh [4] - 72:15, 18; 75:18; 76:2 several [4] - 32:6; 80:14; 88:21; 105:4 shade [2] - 111:5, 7 shall [9] - 5:9, 13, 19, 23, 25; 6:5; 96:13, 16; 110:13 share [2] - 54:2; 108:21 shifted [1] - 66:9 Short[1] - 112:22 shot[1] - 26:8 show[1] - 75:1

sic [1] - 117:16

sic) [1] - 52:19 side [2] - 19 2; 92:6 sight[1] - 111:14 signed [5] - 27:25; 40:17; 45:24; 52:16; 110:10 significant [6] -72:13; 73:10; 80:10; 89:2; 93:13; 97:23 significantly [1] -31:7 silent [1] - 42:18 silo [2] - 82:1, 4 silos [1] - 82:25 similar (5) - 28:5, 24; 30:1; 34:23; 105:25 similarly [1] - 13:17 simple [2] - 27:12; simpler[3] - 56:14; 62:23; 76:8 simply [17] - 31:16; 32:25; 38:22; 45:18; 51:24; 56:16; 80:14; 81:1; 83:18; 84:18; 88:7; 89:9; 91:1 single [6] - 17:10; 45:22; 46:4; 62:15; 106:20, 108.5 site [40] - 9:15; 31:25: 44:16, 18, 21: 45:6: 46:10: 47:3: 49:24; 50:4, 22; 51:13; 52:24; 53:3; 55:8; 56:18, 20; 57:4; 58:4; 62:18; 64:2, 6; 66:20; 67:5; 69:13; 71:22; 73:7; 80:17; 87:16, 21-22; 96:8; 98:2, 13; 100:19; 110:6, 8; 115:4 sites [2] - 88:24 situated [2] - 13:17; 55:12 situation [2] - 10:2; 22:23 situations [1] - 84:9 six [4] - 5.9; 72:13; 75:18; 105:1 sky [1] - 69:21 slightly [1] - 56:13 so.. [1] - 65:16 solve [1] - 43:15 someone [3] - 24:14; 113:15, 24 sorry [9] - 35:25; 37:24; 53:21; 61:21; 76:14; 77:7; 92:21; sort [6] - 34:4; 61:13; 86:7; 91:8, 11, 23

sorts [1] - 102:10 sought [1] - 106:23 sounds [4] - 13:21; 36:1; 52:25; 104:6 south [1] - 103:7 South [5] - 2:17; 91:21, 101:23, 103.6 109:12 SPEAKER [3] -112:15, 18 speaking [1] - 12:11 special [3] - 5:6; 42:23; 86:9 specific (46) - 4:18; 9:25; 14:15; 16:1; 22:18; 32:16; 35:4, 10; 36:5, 7; 41:24; 42:1, 16; 43:13; 44:17, 22; 50:3; 57:8; 61:13, 64:5; 65:8; 66:22; 68:3, 13; 71:6; 72:22, 73:3; 74:14, 75:17; 77:3; 78:14, 16, 19, 81:15; 83:4, 13-14, 93:14, 21, 25 95:4; 97:21 specifically [14] -32:8; 42:25; 53:1; 54:12; 67:4; 73:6; 76:2; 77:14; 90:25; 96:14; 102:5; 105:10; 115:3; 117:21 specify [1] - 61:23 spoken [1] - 115:18 spokesperson[1]-7:24 squarely (1) - 98:16 staff [4] - 32:12; 46:13; 50:17; 84:7 Stafford [3] - 28:5; 36:14; 37:1 stakes [2] - 37:9, 12 stance [1] - 22:1 stand (3) - 8:11; 78:9; 116:20 standard [1] - 78:12 standards [1] - 64:1 standing [11] - 15:1; 17:10: 70:23: 71:3: 72:2; 74:10; 75:8; 98:19; 104:13; 116:15 stands [1] - 41:25 start [6] - 26:17; 34:13; 45:19; 70:23; 100:13; 108:11 started [3] - 69:3; 102:18; 116:1 starts [4] - 20:4; 56:23; 108:13 state [23] - 8:4; 14:16; 25:23; 28:11;

41:15: 42:9, 11-12, 15; 72:17; 73:12, 14, 18, 22-23; 76:15; 77:2, 18; 78:1, 6; 90:2; 115:14 State [1] - 117:17 STATE [1] - 119:1 STATEMENT [9] -26:23; 62:6; 70:13; 79:19; 93:9; 97:1; 101:20; 104:16; 109:8 statement [10] -37:20; 46:16; 50:3; 68:17; 69:18; 71:23; 72:23; 91:7, 9; 103:19 STATEMENTS [1] -3.2 statements [3] -61:19; 71:16; 72:6 states [2] - 46:20; 103:14 statute [7] - 23:1; 35:3; 55:7; 75:22; 78:14, 16; 95:12 **statutes** [1] - 38:23 statutory [1] - 83:5 stay [8] - 6:15; 18:6; 33:20, 24; 34:2; 61:10; 80:13 stayed [3] - 14:11; 51:20; 79:3 still [10] - 12:5; 19:11; 23:12; 58:7; 61:23; 71:13; 83:15; 106:8: 107:6 stop [2] - 20:5; 94:10 stories [2] - 85:19; 111:15 story (3) - 110:25; 111:8 **STREET**[1] - 1:13 Street [13] - 2:13, 17; 52:20; 53:12; 55:16; 69:15, 17; 87:7; 101:23; 103.6; 109:14; 110:6; 111:22 street [8] - 55:13; 69:15; 87:20; 95:15; 100:9; 102:3 streets [4] - 86:25; 87:8; 94:16, 25 **strictly** [1] - 101:15 strikes [1] - 23:14 strong [2] - 68:25; stronger[1] - 77:12 structure [1] -110:13 structures [1] -110:24

students [1] - 110:23

studied [1] - 106:13 stuff [4] - 18:11; 36:16; 86:11; 87:24 Subject [1] - 57:19 subject [14] - 6:10; 7:2, 11; 9:10; 14:6; 31:13; 34:19; 35:2; 42:8; 58:4; 93:22; 104:23; 114:12 submit [3] - 46:14; 105:17; 110:9 submitted [8] - 8:18; 11:16; 16:8; 54:13; 62:14; 74:19; 105:14; 110:19 subsequent [3] -24:11; 41:25; 69:1 subsequently [2] -25:22; 97:6 substantial [2] -12:8: 29:11 subsumes [1] - 78:6 sufficient [1] - 71:9 suggest [5] - 13:23; 32:15; 80:25; 85:25; 89:6 suggested [2] -16:25; 108:23 suggesting [2] -16:22, 24 suggestion [1] - 21:6 suit(1) - 56:11 Suite [1] - 2:18 sum [1] - 61:15 sunlight [2] - 109:20; Supervisors [4] -28:4, 15; 37:16; 49:13 supervisors [1] -84:11 supplement [1] -9:13 supplied [1] - 70:1 support [10] - 7:9, 11-12; 13:22; 71:19; 99:13; 112:12, 14; 117:14 supporting [1] -89:18 supports [1] - 26:7 suppose [1] - 56:15 supposed [3] -15:25, 41:14, 43:24 supposedly [1] -39:8 Supreme [29] -27:20, 23; 28:7, 14;

29:25; 30:8; 31:12;

38:12, 19, 25; 39:3;

35:1, 18: 37:24;

40:13, 22; 45:18; 46:6; 48:14, 17; 49:5; 52:12; 57:21; 63:9; 83:3, 10, 16; 84:14, surely [1] - 88:1 surrounding [1] -100:21 survey [2] - 56:17; 67:6 surveys [1] - 9:15 swear [2] - 8:8 Swett [2] - 29:10, 20 sworn [2] - 4:24; 8:12 table [1] - 13:16 tactics [2] - 36:16; talks [7] - 43:12, 22; 49:17; 53:6; 54:15; 75:16; 77:14 tanks [1] - 36:16 task [1] - 116:21 tax [5] - 39:2; 84:24; 85:9, 22; 91:8 taxes [1] - 85:1 ten [11] - 5:20; 6:6; 7:6, 9, 15; 20:8; 24:1; 26:1; 70:10; 101:8; 112:16 ten-minute (1) - 20:8 term [4] - 27:23; 40:21; 89:20 terms [7] - 61:18; 89:8; 91:2; 95:10; 96:12, 15; 109:19 terrible [1] - 106:17 test [8] - 17:12; 45:9, 19; 57:21, 25; 73:11; 83:16 testify [4] - 4:24; 8:12; 23:25; 91:15 testifying [1] - 17:17 testimony [17] -5:14; 7:3; 9:11; 11:5; 21:3; 24:4, 7; 25:5, 18; 26:4; 92:6; 99:11; 100:12, 14, 101:5; 112:9; 117:18 themselves [1] thereafter [1] - 37:8 therefore [3] - 30:6; 49:14; 88:8 therein [1] - 119:7 they've [3] - 33:16; 55:19; 63:10 third [1] - 55:5 thirdly [1] - 40:4 three [27] - 4:8; 12:1;

25:14; 30:22; 39:20; 40:12; 55:16; 57:22; 71:16; 73:11; 86:24; 87:5, 17, 20; 88:18; 91:2; 94:16; 95:1; 97:5, 9; 103:20; 111:8, 15; 117:5, 9; 118:18 Three [1] - 117:8 three-part [2] -57:22; 73:11 three-story [1] -111:8 throughout [2] -57:23; 106:15 ticking [3] - 48:18; time-bar (2) - 15:3; 72:7 time-barred [9] -15:3; 17:9; 19:3, 24; 56:3, 6; 74:10; 75:7; 77:5 timeliness [10] -8:21; 19:7, 11; 23:4, 17, 20; 29:7; 37:18; 106:5, 7 timely (9) - 13:5; 24:19; 27:16; 29:21, 23; 30:25; 37:23; 104:12; 110:19 timing [2] - 20:16; 107:14 tiny [2] - 85:16 TO [1] - 119:2 today [15] - 5:18; 7:3, 23; 20:1; 21:24; 25:19; 72:6; 104:25; 105:3; 106:5; 108:12, 16; 114:16; 115:18; 118:21 tomato [2] - 111:5, 7 top [3] - 40:15; 46:19; 55:5 topic [1] - 42:16 topless [1] - 78:25 total [5] - 5:9, 20; 6:6; 75:3; 101:9 Total [1] - 101:8 totally [2] - 82:14 towers [1] - 85:19 townhouse [1] -102:1 track [1] - 6:2 tracked [1] - 77:20 traffic [11] - 27:15; 71:2, 8; 81:11, 13; 99:14, 20, 102:3; 109:19; 110:22 trained [1] - 119:4 training (9) - 36:13,

15; 37:4, 15, 21; 47:14, 18: 63:1 transcription [1] -119:10 transitional [41] -44:16, 18, 20; 46:10; 47:2, 22; 49:18, 24; 50:3, 22; 51:13; 52:23; 53:3; 55:8; 56:18, 20; 57:3; 58:4; 62:18, 20; 64:2, 7; 69:13; 71:22; 73:6; 80:17; 87:16, 21-22; 88:24; 89:10; 91:6; 95:16; 96:8; 98:2, 13; 110:8; 115:4 Traser [2] - 12:23; 13:12 treat [1] - 84:1 trees [1] - 66:21 trial [1] - 30:9 trigger [1] - 29:5 trouble [1] - 47:10 Troutman (2) -84:23; 85:18 true [6] - 17:1; 43:19; 115:13, 20; 119:9 trumping (1) - 34:15 trumps [6] - 34:16, 18; 41:15; 76:21; 77:2; 102:18 try [2] - 60:25; 84:5 trying [5] - 17:19; 61:6; 77:17; 82:16; 106:6 turn [2] - 31:2; 110:25 turn-of-the-century [1] - 110:25 Twelfth [1] - 2:17 two [35] - 10:22; 12:25; 13:16; 15:3; 17:12; 18:15; 26:19; 29:5; 33:25; 38:18; 49.8; 56.22; 61.24; 67:16; 70:3, 20; 71:4; 74:9; 75:20; 77:9; 79:8, 12: 82:25: 86:4: 87:5; 88:4, 13; 96:24; 97:7; 110:25; 113:1, 10; 116:13 two-fold [1] - 56:22 two-part [1] - 17:12 two-story [1] -110.25 type [3] - 46:16; 65:8; 117:21 typeface [2] - 47:1; 50:2 types [3] - 86:25; 94:5, 16

ultimate [1] - 18:8 ultimately [2] - 31:5; 33:18 uncertain [1] - 32:12 under [26] - 5:8; 11:23; 15:5, 25; 23:1; 25:23; 28:10; 29:6; 32:25; 38:5, 16, 23; 40:10; 41:22; 52:3; 53.4; 55.6; 63:2; 76:17; 78:2; 79:10; 82:5; 97:19; 105:14; 115:9; 117:19 unequivocally [1] -69:11 unfortunately [1] -115:21 UNIDENTIFIED [3] -112:15, 18 unique [1] - 71:15 unknown [1] - 32:12 unless [2] - 95:14; 96:14 uniike [2] - 45:1; 72 22 unquote [4] - 35:24; 102:25: 103:8 untenable [2] -20:12, 15 up [30] - 19:21; 20:4, 22; 21:14, 16; 23:5, 21; 24:4; 25:1; 26:9; 37:11; 48:5; 56:1; 60:4; 61:15; 62:3, 9; 65:23; 67:16; 76:24; 79:5, 24; 86:2, 11; 87:11, 24; 90:7; 98:13; 111:25; 112:16 upheld [1] - 114:20 uphold [1] - 113:16 upload [1] - 15:10 urge [1] - 104:11 usage [1] - 96:17 uses [1] - 47:1 Va[1] - 29:23 validate [1] - 106:1 value [1] - 85:20 variance[2] - 4:9; variances [1] - 4:17 various [3] - 44:2; 86:8; 92:12 **VCU** [1] - 110:23 verbal [2] - 30:4; verbatim[1] - 119:9 verification [11] -28:2: 29:1: 36:2: 38:1: 39:1; 45:9; 49:9; 51:9; 57:9

verifications [1] -39:6 verified [1] - 12:20 verify [2] - 53:9; 103:4 vers (1) - 12:25 versed [1] - 7:23 versions [1] - 13:1 versus [9] - 28:5, 16; 29:9, 25; 45:21; 49:12; 52:13; 84:11, vest[1] - 115:15 vested [16] - 23:1; 31:8; 49:1; 51:24; 52:1, 3-4, 6, 8; 73:1, 11; 76:3; 77:1; 79:21; 86:8 vesting [11] - 10:8; 41:11, 20, 24; 42:6; 56:25; 76:7, 18; 77:6, 11, 13 view [2] - 11:12; 56:6 views [2] - 6:7; 46:14 violated [2] - 57:5; violation [1] - 32:9 Virginia [9] - 2:14, 18, 4:4, 15, 5:8; 34:16-18; 117:17 VIRGINIA [3] - 1:1, 14: 119:1 vote [4] - 4:13; 116:24; 117:7; 118:18 votes [2] - 4:8; 25:14 voting [2] - 4:10; 25:12 waited [2] - 15:15, 19 waive [1] - 112:24 walk [1] - 72:7 wandering[1] -41:10 wants [5] - 8:15; 20:8; 24:2; 70:8; 112:12 warn [1] - 6:2 ways (2) - 15:8; 89:2 weak [1] - 76:25 weapons [2] - 36:15; 37:5 wearing [1] - 56:11 website [1] - 108:8 weeks [1] - 100:15 weigh [2] - 24:5; 107:5 weighs [1] - 19:19

weight [1] - 106:1

welcome [1] - 6:15

well-versed [1] -

West [13] - 2:15; 14:5; 52:20; 55:16; 87:7; 91:12, 20; 100:6, 9; 109:14, 25; 110:6, 14 Westmoreland [1] -29:9 whatnot [1] - 37:13 whichever[1] -41:23 whittled [1] - 63:9 Whoa [1] - 99:6 whoa [3] - 18:15; 99:6 whole [1] - 19:3 William [3] - 2:9; 62:7; 110:11 WILLIAM [4] - 3:4, 7; 62:6; 93:9 willing [2] - 21:9; 108:21 window [3] - 108:4, 10, 12 wipe [1] - 73:22 wish [5] - 5:3; 7:12; 8:10; 113:12; 118:23 wishes [2] - 7:8, 10 WIT [1] - 119:2 withdraw [1] - 32:23 withhold [1] - 5:10 WITNESS [1] -119:16 woman [1] - 50:14 word [2] - 41:19 words [13] - 28:13; 40:18; 50:22; 51:6; 67:24; 87:13; 88:4, 13, 18; 90:4; 96:12, 15; 114:24 write [1] - 94:2 writes [1] - 110:11 writing [1] - 6:19 written [14] - 43:1; 56:16; 58:15; 63:17; 80:3, 5; 82:4; 86:7; 93:19; 94:7, 9; 115:21; 117:15, 22 wrote [2] - 56:19; 103:2 yard [9] - 53:6; 62:21; 64:3; 69:19; 91:17, 23-24; 102:10; 104:8 years [6] - 75:20; 79:3: 89:1: 94:22: 101:22: 109:12 YORK [167] - 4:2; 7:17, 19; 8:6, 9, 13; 9:22; 10:6, 10, 12, 20; 11:4, 25, 12:5, 14, 18

25; 13;4, 8, 13, 18; 14:1; 16:18; 17:1, 15, 17; 18:11; 19:6; 20:1, 13; 21:1, 11, 15, 17, 20; 22:5, 14; 23:3, 12, 23; 24:6, 14, 17, 22; 25:8, 12, 14, 17; 26:12, 14, 17, 20; 33:25; 34:8, 10, 13, 20; 41:6, 10; 42:10, 13; 43:17; 52:18; 53:23; 56:13; 57:19; 58:1, 13, 24; 59:12, 20, 24, 60:1, 12, 15, 18, 22, 61:23; 62:2; 65:6; 67:13, 15; 68:7, 13, 22; 69:1, 10, 22; 70:3, 6, 10, 18; 75:10, 15, 23; 76:5, 18, 23; 77:7, 11, 14; 78:4, 15, 18, 21, 24; 79:4, 10, 16; 81:20, 24; 88:21; 89:3, 13, 16, 22; 91:25; 92:4, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25; 93:2, 6; 94:13; 95:19, 21, 23; 96:5, 8, 21; 100:25; 101:8; 106:4; 109:6; 110:16; 111:6, 13, 18; 112:1, 4, 10, 20, 23; 113:5, 8, 13, 21, 24; 114:2; 115:9, 12; 116:16, 24; 117:3, 5, 8, 10, 25, 118:3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18 York [2] - 2:3; 14:3 yourself [1] - 92:5 yourselves [1] -101:3 ZCL[1] - 103:16 Zeigler[1] - 29:18 zone [3] - 37:6, 22; 80:20 zoned [1] - 44:13 **ZONING** [1] - 1:5 zoning [209] - 4:11, 18, 20-21; 5:17, 19, 23; 6:5, 25; 7:2, 7, 13; 8:24; 9:6, 19; 10:21; 12:13; 13:11; 15:16; 16:1, 14; 17:3; 19:19; 20:13; 21:7; 24:9; 25:21, 24; 26:2, 7; 28:1, 10, 17, 21, 25; 29:1, 13, 22; 30:4, 11, 17, 24; 31:9, 23; 32:7, 9, 21, 24; 33:18, 24; 35:9, 11; 36:1, 5, 8, 14, 17, 20, 37:1, 20, 25; 38:23; 39:1, 5-6, 24; 40:10, 16-18, 24;

44:5, 10, 17; 45:3, 9, 25; 46:4, 19, 25; 47:15, 19-20, 48:3, 5-6, 15, 49:9, 50:1; 51:9, 12, 17; 52:16; 53:2; 55:7; 56:5; 57:5, 9, 11-12, 15; 58:2, 7; 59:2, 6, 12-14; 60:2, 16, 61, 11; 62:2, 7, 63:17, 19; 64:13, 23; 65:9; 66:5; 67:22; 71:19, 21; 72:16, 19, 21, 25, 73:1, 3, 20; 74:14; 75:4; 76:2; 77:15, 80:22, 82:18, 83:6, 8; 84:10; 85:2; 86:3, 6, 19-20; 87:15; 90:2, 10, 25; 91:14, 22; 92:22; 93:17, 24; 95:19; 96:22; 98:9; 99:18, 24-25; 100:4; 101:16; 102:17, 22; 103:2, 13, 16, 23; 104:9, 23; 105:19, 23; 106:10, 17; 107:8, 15-16; 108:6, 9, 20, 25; 109:25; 110:2, 4, 7, 9; 111:3, 18; 112:13; 113:17; 114:6, 8, 18, 21, 23, 115:5, 10; 116:22; 117:12, 14, 23 Zoning [24] - 2:9; 4:3; 9:5, 12; 17:25; 35:8; 36:6; 38:8. 15-16; 41:1; 44:7; 54:1; 66:7; 75:11; 76:16; 77:20; 82:3; 105:6, 8, 10, 13, 16