



Laura Edmonds <laura.edmonds@knoxplanning.org>

[Planning Commission Comment] File #: 10-E-20-RZ -- concerned resident

1 message

Alicia Freile <afreile@hotmail.com>

Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 3:26 PM

Reply-To: afreile@hotmail.com

To: "commission@knoxplanning.org" <commission@knoxplanning.org>

Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing to you about the upcoming Smithbuilt development at 5913 W. Emory Rd. (File #: 10-E-20-RZ) I am a homeowner in the Northampton Commons neighborhood, living there along with my husband and our toddler. We absolutely love the neighborhood and purposely chose it over others because of the peaceful, quiet and scenic lifestyle.

Like other residents of our neighborhood, I am very concerned about the development proposal of 5913 W. Emory Rd. particularly with Patriot Way being used as a through-road to the new Smithbuilt subdivision. Northampton Commons is an older neighborhood with streets designed for minimal traffic and is generally safe for cars and pedestrians. I often walk my little toddler in his stroller along Patriot Way.

Opening this road up to a new, high-density subdivision with 80+ homes will diminish the road safety for the current residents of Northampton Commons. It is not a road that is meant for additional traffic beyond the needs of the Northampton Commons residents.

I understand the new development at 5913 W. Emory Rd. is going to be built, no matter what. But what I don't understand is why anyone feels it's a good idea to connect an existing road in an older, established neighborhood with a new high-density subdivision. Doing this only reduces the quality of life in our lovely, older neighborhood.

As an active voter, taxpayer, and citizen, the proposed use of Patriot Way as an entrance / exit to the new subdivision (including during the subdivision's construction) makes me feel as though a private development company and future Karns residents are valued more than the tax-paying resident who already live here.

I'm not able to speak at the meeting tomorrow because I care for our toddler, but I did want to voice my concern.

I ask you to please, please not allow Patriot Way to be a cut-through for the new subdivision.

Thank you,
Alicia Freile
Northampton Commons

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This message was directed to commission@knoxplanning.org



Laura Edmonds <laura.edmonds@knoxplanning.org>

[Planning Commission Comment] File No. 10-E-20-RZ, 10/08/2020 Planning Commission Meeting Agenda Item #14 (Commission District 6)

1 message

'Carolyn Greenwood' via Commission <commission@knoxplanning.org>

Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 2:27 PM

Reply-To: cdgreenwood@cs.com

To: "commission@knoxplanning.org" <commission@knoxplanning.org>

RE: Agenda Item #14, File No. 10-E-20-RZ (BEN MULLINS O/B/O PRIMOS LAND COMPANY, LLC) (Commission District 6)

Dear Planning Commissioners:

While property owners have a constitutional right to develop their property, there are certain limits on this right because they are not allowed to harm the surrounding area or deprive others of their rights. So, as noted in the Knox County Planning website description of the Rezoning Process, "the staff is obligated to consider the health, safety, and welfare of the total community as well as the desires of the applicant and neighbors." I am aware that Karns will continue to be developed, but this particular property is uniquely inappropriate for being rezoned to 4 or 5 dwelling units per acre, so even though I live in another part of Karns, I feel the need to add my voice on this one.

The property at [5913 W. Emory Road](#), which the applicant asked to be rezoned to Planned Residential, with up to 5 dwelling units/acre (du/ac), consists of 2.1 acres of commercially-zoned property on Emory Rd and 22.29 acres of agriculturally-zoned property, which is on Blacks Ferry Rd. Maybe someday, after significant road improvements are made in the vicinity, this property can be appropriately developed at this density, but at this time, if it is allowed to be developed at all, it should be zoned for no more than 3 du/ac for the following reasons:

I. There is no safe access to and from the site to Emory Road

- A. Blacks Ferry Rd is a narrow, old, winding road that cannot safely support 1,211 vehicle trips per day. Blacks Ferry Rd has had multiple fatalities, since it is so narrow that in places it is difficult for two vehicles driving in opposite directions to stay on the road. Some people also drive faster than they should on such a road, but County Engineering has indicated that traffic calming measures would probably not be implemented there, since traffic calming is typically done only within subdivisions. There are no plans to widen or otherwise improve the road in the foreseeable future.
- B. Even if Blacks Ferry Rd was widened as part of the proposed subdivision project, the corner of Emory Rd and Blacks Ferry Rd has a very dangerous blind curve that makes access from the proposed development to Emory Rd via Blacks Ferry Rd not feasible. A former Planning Commissioner called it a "suicide intersection" and area residents complain that to turn east on Emory Rd, they have to turn into the oncoming traffic lane on Emory to avoid being rear-ended by fast-moving traffic coming from the west on Emory Rd and then they have to move quickly to the correct lane to avoid a head-on collision. In 2011, Ms. Cindy Pionke reported to the Planning Commission at that time that Knox County Engineering had looked into what it would take to grade the corner back to increase visibility, but determined it was not feasible because a house would have to be taken. She also said there were no plans for a traffic signal at that location due to funds being committed to higher priority projects.
- C. Due to the blind curve at Emory Rd and Blacks Ferry Rd, it is likewise infeasible to have direct access from the commercially-zoned part of the proposed development to Emory Rd because it would just add many more cars to an already extremely dangerous blind curve situation. The Emory Rd access to and from this site is too close to the intersection with Blacks Ferry, so the same blind curve is a problem. Having cars entering and exiting Emory Rd at the point of the new development would be dangerous for the new residents and would exacerbate the existing problem. This would also just increase the overall traffic safety problems on Emory Rd due to too many new developments accessing Emory Rd directly.
- D. Using Patriot Way for access to and from the proposed development would directly harm the adjacent Northampton Commons neighborhood, since it would likely be used as a shortcut to Emory Rd. Northampton Commons is a lovely one-street neighborhood of older (built in mid-1970s, about 2-3 du/ac), but well-maintained, homes where children walk and ride bikes along the street and adults walk with their pets. Adding 1,211 daily vehicle trips (or even half that) to the traffic through Northampton Commons would destroy this neighborhood — adding various traffic, noise, and safety issues, and devaluing their homes. If the developer were to build sidewalks, they would need to be on both sides of the street, to keep children from having to cross the thru traffic. The developer suggested at a previous meeting that a sidewalk on even just one side of the street would be prohibitively expensive unless they can get approval for a higher density, but a higher density would increase the damage to the neighborhood and would not be compatible with the surrounding properties, so such a tradeoff should not be made.
- E. Using Patriot Way to Carpenter Rd for access to Emory will just increase the already serious problems on Carpenter Rd, another narrow, winding road. While the intersection of Carpenter Rd, Emory Rd, and Harrell Rd is supposed to be improved at some point, combining the vehicles from the proposed development with all the other traffic on Carpenter will just encourage cars to cut through Northampton Commons instead, if given the option.

II. Zoning this property at any density higher than 3 du/ac would not be compatible with the surrounding properties. While much of Karns has been rezoned to PR, which can allow up to 5 du/ac, La Barrington to the east is 2-3 du/acre, Northampton Commons to the west is 2-3 du/acre, and areas to the north are very rural and low-density with the highest density being 3 du/ac. A density of higher than 3 du/ac will stand out like a sore thumb in this area and, as has been noted, will generate more traffic than can safely be handled in this particular area at this time and for the foreseeable future.

III. The property contains land in the HP (Hillside and Ridgetop Protection) area. The slope analysis supports 3.77 du/ac. This is one more reason that even 4 du/ac is too high of a density for this property.

IV. You cannot assume that acceptable solutions to the unusually difficult safety and access problems with this site can be resolved at the Concept Plan stage. Frequently, applicants and/or commissioners will approve a rezoning with a certain density with the assumption that issues of traffic or safe access can be worked out at the Concept Plan stage. That is probably appropriate in most cases, but not in this case, where Knox County Engineering has already noted that the blind curve at Emory Rd and Blacks Ferry will not be fixed (or mitigated with a traffic signal) in the foreseeable future and there are very limited alternatives, all of which would cause significant harm to the neighbors and/or to the larger Karns Community, many of whom use Emory Rd on a regular basis.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to either deny development of this property until safe access to and from it is possible without harming the neighbors and the larger community, or to approve no more than 3 dwelling units per acre in order to help minimize the inevitable safety problems that will result from this new development in this particularly unsuitable area.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Greenwood
3224 Boomerang Lane
Knoxville, TN 37931

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This message was directed to commission@knoxplanning.org



[Planning Commission Comment] 10-E-20-RZ

1 message

Jennifer W <welch384@gmail.com>
Reply-To: welch384@gmail.com
To: commission@knoxplanning.org

Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 12:31 PM

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I want to ask you to consider the impact to Knox County citizens' safety before you approve the development at W. Emory and Blacks Ferry Roads. Please consider the following:

* **BLIND CURVE ON EMORY** Although I know that you approved this proposal the last time it was filed, I ask you to reconsider. Unless you have personally driven this area, you do not understand the danger involved. Please to try to turn left from Blacks Ferry onto Emory Road. I wait until the westbound lane is clear every time I pull out just in case I have to veer into it to avoid being hit when I turn eastbound as people fly around that blind curve. See the hidden driveway sign right between Blacks Ferry and Patriot Way and the other signs warning you of the Blacks Ferry intersection. It is clear that TDOT recognizes this as a very dangerous stretch of Emory Road. This is the area where Smithbilt will be flooding hundreds more vehicles per day per your report. Again, I implore you to drive this and see it firsthand during the day before you subject Knox County citizens to this added danger.

* **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT** This lovely farm area to be developed appears to include some Hilltop and Ridgetop protection area. Please follow the recommendations made in the 2012 MPC plan to protect this area. The reality is that we can't fix the damage that is done to the environment after the fact.

* **COST TO TAXPAYERS** I spoke with a representative from Smithbilt who informed me that it was a benefit to their company that Emory Road is a state road because the state (the taxpayers!) has to pay for the upgrades to the road. If you plan to subject us to the significant danger that will be increased by allowing some 92 homes on this relatively small piece of property, at least require Smithbilt to construct a safe turn lane before they are allowed to begin construction. We as taxpayers should not be forced to be subjected to the additional danger, pollution, noise and traffic of this subdivision while we wait for an untold amount of time before our tax dollars are used to fix a dangerous traffic problem that was created by a company that bears no cost to fix.

In closing, I ask you to:

- (1) **BLOCK THIS PROPOSAL FOR THE SAFETY OF THE CITIZENS.**
- (2) **IF NOT, LIMIT IT TO 2 HOMES PER ACRE TO LIMIT OUR INCREASED DANGER.**
- (3) **REQUIRE SMITHBILT TO BUILD OR FUND A FULL TURN LANE BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO DEVELOP THIS PROPERTY.**

Please, please choose the safety of Knox County citizens over corporations.

Thank you,

Jennifer Welch

[Redacted signature area]

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This message was directed to commission@knoxplanning.org



Laura Edmonds <laura.edmonds@knoxplanning.org>

[Planning Commission Comment] 10-E-20-RZ rezoning 5913 W. Emory RD

1 message

Byron Starkweather <bastarkweather@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 6, 2020 at 5:33 PM

Reply-To: bastarkweather@gmail.com

To: commission@knoxplanning.org

Cc: Liz Albertson <liz.albertson@knoxplanning.org>, terry.hill@knoxcounty.org

Planning Commission Members:

My family and I are concerned about the rezoning request at [5913 W. Emory RD](#) that the County Commission denied both in June and July. Our home is adjacent to this property as we live in the Northampton Commons neighborhood just West of this property. We understand that due to a small change in the property being considered for rezoning, the applicant has reapplied for rezoning. We ask that the Planning Commission follow the wisdom of the County Commission and deny this rezoning request.

This property can be accessed from three different roads. However, we do not think any of these roads provides a safe option for access to a large subdivision.

First, though this property has several hundred feet of frontage on Blacks Ferry RD, this road is less than 20 feet wide and the intersection of Blacks Ferry RD with W. Emory RD has limited line of sight, being at the bottom of a hill.

Second, the property has frontage along W. Emory RD. However, the hill before Blacks Ferry RD to the East, limits the line of sight. Also, multiple residential driveways, two cemetery access roads, a church driveway, and the Northampton Commons neighborhood entrance are all within a few hundred feet of this property.

Third, Patriot Way is a neighborhood road within Northampton Commons that currently serves just over properties. Northampton Commons was established about 1970, and has been a stable neighborhood since that time. A neighborhood pool is at the corner of Patriot Way and Northampton BLVD that serves a lot of patrons during the warm months. With no sidewalks or parking, those who use the pool as well as the several residents who walk in the neighborhood would be placed at significant risk due to the anticipated 1200+ daily trips the proposed subdivision would experience.

Fourth, if Patriot Way is used, then the traffic will increase on Carpenter RD, which is to the West of Northampton Commons. This road has been measured by residents to have several places with widths in the 14-17 foot range. Many places on this road already have been patched. So, increasing the traffic on this road will hasten the worsening of its condition.

Therefore, none of these three roads serve as safe access to a subdivision in which the builder is asking for 5 houses per acre.

The rezoning of [5913 W. Emory RD](#) would result in adverse effects to the Northampton Commons neighborhood and surrounding area if the rezoning occurs and Patriot Way is allowed to be used for access.

First, as mentioned above, the increased risk to safety to the pedestrians and pool patrons alone should be cause for denying this rezoning.

Second, a 5 houses per acre, approximately 120 houses would be ADDED to a neighborhood that contains just over 40 homes, effectively quadrupling the size of this neighborhood to from 40 to 160 homes. Even the 96 homes recommended by the rezoning report would yield just over triple the number of homes. The increase in traffic to our small neighborhood certainly is an adverse effect.

Third, the noise generated both by building the houses AND the continuous flow of traffic would lower the quality of life this neighborhood has enjoyed for 50 years.

Fourth, the intersection of W. Emory RD with Harrell RD and Carpenter RD is already a bottleneck during the morning and afternoon commutes. Getting out of our neighborhood during the morning commute is a challenge now. Adding 1200+ trips to an already busy intersection (regardless of the proposed traffic signal) would only exacerbate the problem.

Fifth, adding this many houses with driveways and roads will impact storm water drainage in a small area of Karns that presently has little flooding issues. With Beaver Creek just a few yards South, even more water will end up in the creek more quickly contributing to significant flooding in other lower lying areas of Karns.

Another requirement of the rezoning report is that the proposed rezoning should be consistent with the surrounding area. Neither Northampton Commons to the West nor Barrington to the East have densities even close to the proposed 5 units per acre the applicant is seeking. Rather, both of these neighborhoods are closer to 1.5 homes per acre using some "back of the envelope" math. With agricultural land to the North and Beaver Creek to the South, 4-5 houses per acre is not consistent with the surrounding area.

The adverse effects of safety, traffic, and drainage that this property presents are, in our opinion, justifiable reasons for the members of the Planning Commission to recognize that rezoning this property to Planned Residential simply will not benefit the Karns community. We recognize that developers want to build in Karns. However, the residents will be left with the unfavorable conditions left behind by developing this property. Why should a developer be allowed to pocket tremendous profit while the residents and tax payers are faced with a lower quality of life due to the development?

Development should bring progress – an improvement to the quality of life in a community. However, rezoning [5913 W. Emory RD](#) to Planned Residential will do the exact opposite. Please deny this rezoning request as this County Commission did earlier this year. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Byron Starkweather

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This message was directed to commission@knoxplanning.org



Laura Edmonds <laura.edmonds@knoxplanning.org>

[Planning Commission Comment] 10-E-20-RZ

1 message

Mike Miller <mgmiller56@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 6, 2020 at 6:02 PM

Reply-To: mgmiller56@gmail.com

To: commission@knoxplanning.org

How can this property even be considered, it was just denied by Country Commission in July 5 -F-20-RZ. This is nothing but a loop hole move trying to stong arm the process. The surrounding property is RA and this property can not be considered as PR per your own planning. There is no PA in profiery. The property has no access to Emory Road SR131 as of yet. If and when they get the approval should be when you consider rezoning.

I live on Patriot Way and have been here 30 years. Why do you want to ruin the lifetime investments of a old and established neighborhood to comply with a development who by even submitting this request is showing his contempt of the process. He added 2.5 acres only to include the already denied property.

There is a argument made by the Knox county engineering department that this property would never be granted assess to West Emory. The same Knox county engineering said they would not approve access to Blacks ferry road. This property is a island and you want destroy Northampton Commons to develop it. The traffic count is over 1100 trips per day how would you like that added to your street. This is wrong and it should be denied.

Mike Miller

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