

February 2, 2024

Knox County Commissioners:

I moved to Hardin Valley and onto West Gallaher Ferry Road in 1984. My family moved to this area because of the beauty of the openness and the lake. I grew up on Melton Hill Lake, learning to ski at age five and spending endless hours swimming, canoeing, fishing, and boating on this gem in East Tennessee. We also enjoy the wildlife that calls this area home. In 2010, my husband and I relocated back to this road, an acre away from where I grew up. We wanted our children to enjoy, love, and grow up on Melton Hill and savor it as I had. In fact, I helped open Hardin Valley Middle and currently teach at Hardin Valley Academy. I love this community, and I have loved sharing it with others.

I have seen Hardin Valley grow exponential throughout my lifetime, but especially over the past 15 years. While I actually support smart growth, proposal 2-E-24-RZ of land development is not smart, and we have to draw the line at some point and take into account the current residents.

The proposal of case 2-E-24-RZ at 2600 W. Gallaher Ferry Road is not a smart development. It will remove Hillside Protection and risk the health of Melton Hill Lake and change the zoning from Agricultural to Planned Residential which allows for 2 homes per acre. This property is 112.24 acres, so the maximum number of potential homes would be 224. The current number of homes off W. Gallaher Ferry Road is 88, so this development would potentially see 2.5 times the additional vehicles traveling this road.

West Gallaher Ferry Road is narrow and curvy. At multiple points on the road, two cars have to slow to pass each other. The road is already in dire need of re-paving; it has numerous potholes and uneven pavement. When the road was patched recently (due to construction traffic), we requested a fog line be placed on the sides to help drivers. We were told the road was not wide enough for a fog line. This road in its current state is not adequate to handle the traffic that will come with additional of 200+ homes. Residents are already dealing with the 70+ homes that are coming at the corner of Hickory Creek Road and W. Gallaher Ferry Road, which 14 driveways will connect to W. Gallaher Ferry Road on a blindcurve.

While I support and understand the need for reasonable growth, this proposal is not responsible. Not only are we risking the health of Melton Hill lake by destroying the Hillside Protection, we are asking lifelong residents to deal with the consequences of this development. These consequences will result in additional traffic, impact Melton Hill Lake, and effect wildlife that has already been driven from their homes. We cannot standby and watch another 112 wooded acres disappear.

Residents of W. Gallaher Ferry Road urge you to make a smart growth decision. We need Knox County Commisioners on our side who will protect the beauty that we call home.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

Laura L. Shands
Resident at 2933 W. Gallaher Ferry Road