

PUBLIC COMMENT

Case 7-B-26-UR

Vulcan Dixie Lee Quarry Expansion and Proposed Graybeal Road Vacation

I am a resident of the Buttermilk Road community and respectfully request that the Planning Commission carefully evaluate the proposed Graybeal Road vacation and quarry expansion in light of the significant changes that have occurred in the area since the prior expansion review in 2009.

My intent is not to advocate a predetermined outcome. Rather, it is to encourage a complete and thoughtful review based on current conditions, adopted plans, objective facts, and the substantial growth that has occurred within the Hardin Valley area over the past sixteen years.

Since 2009, the Hardin Valley area has experienced significant residential growth, utility expansion, transportation planning efforts, and additional approved development. During this same period, Knox County adopted the Hardin Valley Mobility Plan to identify existing transportation deficiencies, project future transportation needs, and recommend investments necessary to address those needs.

The Hardin Valley Mobility Plan specifically identified the Graybeal Road / Buttermilk Road corridor as an area requiring future transportation improvements and evaluated alternatives involving roadway realignment and safety improvements. The plan recognized the need for additional transportation infrastructure to accommodate future growth and improve overall network performance. Closure of Graybeal Road was not identified as one of the transportation improvement alternatives considered in the plan.

In addition, more recent development approvals in the area have emphasized roadway connectivity, transportation safety, and emergency access as important planning objectives. These approvals were made in the context of an existing roadway network that included Graybeal Road.

I am also mindful that our community is located within the Oak Ridge Reservation Emergency Planning Zone and associated emergency planning sectors. While I have not found documentation identifying Graybeal Road as a designated evacuation route, emergency planning relies upon transportation network resiliency, route redundancy, and the availability of multiple access options during unforeseen events. This consideration becomes increasingly important as major energy and nuclear projects continue to be developed within the Oak Ridge region, including advanced reactor projects and TVA's planned small modular reactor initiatives.

Given these long-term regional investments and the continued growth of Hardin Valley, I believe it is appropriate to evaluate the proposed Graybeal Road vacation not only from the standpoint

of traffic operations, but also from the standpoint of transportation resiliency, emergency access, and future infrastructure planning.

I believe additional consideration should be given to the following questions:

- Is the proposed Graybeal Road vacation consistent with the transportation objectives identified in the Hardin Valley Mobility Plan?
- How would the proposed vacation affect future transportation flexibility and the ability to implement roadway improvements previously identified in adopted planning documents?
- Has the impact on roadway connectivity, emergency access, and route redundancy been fully evaluated?
- Have the transportation assumptions associated with recent residential development approvals been reconciled with the proposed Graybeal Road vacation?
- Have sufficient mitigation, monitoring, notification, and pre-blast survey provisions been proposed for nearby residents given the substantial residential growth that has occurred since 2009?
- Has sufficient opportunity been provided for affected residents to review, understand, and comment on the proposal and supporting technical studies?

The applicant has had considerable time to study, prepare, and develop this proposal with the assistance of professional planners, engineers, consultants, and legal counsel. By contrast, many residents first became aware of the proposal only recently and are still organizing, gathering historical records, reviewing planning documents, understanding the technical aspects of the application, and identifying questions that deserve further evaluation. A thorough review benefits the community, the applicant, and decision makers by ensuring that all relevant information is available before irreversible decisions are made.

In addition, CARE has reached out to Vulcan to open a constructive dialogue, and Vulcan has responded positively. Because a meeting date has not yet been set due to the upcoming holiday period, a continuance would allow that dialogue to occur before the Planning Commission is asked to make a final decision.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Planning Commission continue this matter to a later meeting so that affected residents, Planning staff, County officials, and the applicant have adequate time to evaluate the proposed Graybeal Road vacation, consider alternatives, review appropriate mitigation measures, and ensure that any decision is based on a complete record.

The quarry has been an important part of Knox County for many decades, and I recognize the importance of aggregate production to the region's infrastructure and economy. My comments

should not be interpreted as opposition to Vulcan Materials Company or to mining operations generally. Rather, I believe this proposal presents important questions regarding transportation planning, public infrastructure, emergency access, community compatibility, and long-term growth management that deserve careful consideration.

Thank you for your time and your service to Knox County.

Respectfully submitted,

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