

**Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Jim Baxendell, Al Fuller, Ben Malesh, Christina Aldridge, Kush Patel, Dianna Battaglia, George Patchel, Matt Roath, and Amanda Paoletti

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for the June 27, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

New Business:

A. Proposed Road Improvements and Traffic Control Plan – Cedar Meadows. Applicant: Faron Pyles, Northern Bay. Owner: Cedar Corner First, LLC. Tax Maps 29 & 800, Parcels 134 & 667. Zoned R-1.

Ms. Dianna Battaglia introduced the proposed plan to the Planning Commission. She explained that the plan was a traffic control plan that was prepared in accordance with the State and County recommendations. She noted that the overall project was annexed into the town in 2009 with 81 proposed single-family homes.

Mr. Faron Pyles introduced his colleagues, Mr. John Gonzalez (Karins and Associates), Mr. Michael Palmisano (Property Owner), and Mr. Nick Driban (Lenhart Traffic Consulting, Inc.)

Mr. Pyles indicated that this plan and the proposed round-about would determine the future of this project. The round-about and the proposed one-way traffic was the result of recommendations between State Highway Administration and Cecil County in addition to the Traffic Impact Study in order to create a safer situation. He noted that the intersection was included in the Cecil County Roadway Improvements Strategic Plan.

Mr. Michael Palmisano advised the Planning Commission that he purchased the property three years ago. He noted that the one lane bridge underpass was dangerous and exasperated by ongoing development in and around Perryville. He noted that traffic turning onto Cedar Corner Road onto Route 40 is particularly dangerous because a tractor trailer can't stop when it's going 60mph. He stated traffic needs to be one way and his idea for the circle is a better solution than a traffic light.

Mr. Jim Baxendell pointed out that there had only been 2 crashes at the intersection of Cedar Corner Road and Route 40 between 2017 and 2019, zero of which were fatal.

Mr. Pyles noted that Cedar Corner Road up to just east of Ingleside Drive is a County owned road. The traffic engineers needed to look at a lot of different factors when preparing the report.

Ms. Battaglia informed the Planning Commission that the TIS and Cecil County LUDS recommended the one-way road.

Ms. Deborah Bovankovich of Cedar Corner Road stated that her husband was a heart patient. She was concerned as to how EMTs would be able to get to her husband in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Pyles stated that the round-about will be able to handle emergency vehicles.

Mr. Nick Driban described the traffic study. He stated that there are certain parameters that are taken into consideration when doing a traffic study. These include existing conditions, background conditions, and total conditions. There is a

standard calculation to determine the trips created for a subdivision. In this case, 60 morning trips and 80 evening trips during peak hours. Intersections are graded and failing intersections must be mitigated for. A “D” grade is considered passing. In the case of Cedar Meadows, all of the intersections would meet level “D”. He indicated that State Highway had approved the TIS and that Cecil County voiced concerns regarding the median crossing on Route 40 and suggested modifications and additional information including queuing analysis and traffic signal analysis. The traffic signal analysis requires one of nine warrants to be met in order to require a light. At this time, the intersection at Cedar Corner Road and Rt. 222 did not meet a single warrant. These analyses were done in October when school was in session.

Mr. Matthew Jones of Cedar Corner Road asked if future traffic could warrant a signal.

Mr. Driban stated that there is a standard manual for the projected data and that the analysis can’t take all future traffic into consideration. If someone felt that in the future the intersection was dangerous, they would be able to request a traffic signal analysis from State Highway Administration.

Mr. Jones questioned why is the one-way traffic proposal based on projected traffic then and won’t the one-way traffic cause additional traffic at the Cedar Corner/Rt. 222 intersection?

Mr. Driban stated that the study showed no substantial increase and that if it becomes a problem, SHA can take a look at the intersection.

Mr. Tim Deaner of Ingleside Ave. asked if accidents that shut down the I-95 bridge and cause traffic to dump out onto 222 had been taken into consideration during the traffic study. Mr. Driban explained that not every incident that could potentially happen can be taken into consideration during the traffic study. He also stated that the restricted traffic will limit the use of Cedar Corner Road.

Mr. Baxendell stated that during an incident, local residents can not get out onto 222 from Cedar Corner Road. Mr. Ben Malesh asked Mr. Driban if these studies evaluate emergency times. Mr. Driban replied that the studies are conducted during 3-hour increments between 6am-9am and 3:30pm-6:30pm which is considered peak travel time.

Mr. George Galicki of Ingleside Ave. seconded those residents of Gotham Bush are unable to get out onto Rt. 222 during peak times. Mr. Driban replied that they were contracted to come up with safer alternatives for the development. Mr. Galicki further expressed that by limiting the road to one way would deny the community of their only exit when Rt. 222 is at a standstill. He stated it has taken him 15 minutes to get onto 222 when there was an accident.

Ms. Jill Sherrard, representing her mother of Greenspring Ave, stated that the development was too large and that schools are already full. She also stated that in 2016 her mother suffered a severe heart attack and the individual that saved her had to use the one lane underpass to access the house. She fears changing traffic patterns will be devastating to emergency response times.

Ms. Michelle Linkey of Franklin St. stated that in October 2021 not everybody was back to work so traffic was less than normal and wanted to know if that was taken into consideration during the traffic study. Mr. Driban stated that the historic counts, pre-covid, were used in their analysis. Ms. Linkey also asked what the other warrants were the trigger a traffic signal. Mr. Driban stated the warrants had 2 that dealt with traffic volume, a safety warrant, an 8-hour vehicular warrant, a 4-hour volume warrant. He indicated that there was a requirement that there has to have been 3 crashes within a certain distance that could have actively been prevented by a traffic signal. Also, that school crossings and pedestrian traffic also were included in warrants.

Mr. Deaner asked who requested the study, to which Mr. Driban replied that it was part of the development process. Mr. Bill Faley of Cedar Corner Road extended the question by asking who paid for the survey. Mr. Driban stated that the developer paid for the survey but the study is reviewed by approximately 7 different divisions.

Mr. Jones wanted clarification on how 50-130 cars from the homes won’t impact traffic to which Mr. Driban explained that all of the intersections have met the level of service required by the SHA.

Mr. Robert Radcliff of Cedar Corner Rd. noted that the December 4th review letter stated that the traffic circle was not needed or feasible. He wanted to know what changed from December to now and why two-way traffic is not a possible alternative. Mr. Pyles stated that the changes were based on Cecil County recommendations and that only three homes would be impacted by the change in traffic patterns. Mr. Radcliff asked why they opted to go against SHA recommendations to follow Cecil County recommendations.

Ms. Barb Gilden of Cedar Corner Road asked for clarification on the traffic circle to which several of members of the audience assisted her in viewing the proposed plan.

Ms. Donna Lindenmuth of Greenspring Ave. asked if it was possible to widen Route 40 to provide a turning lane. Mr. Driban stated that the one lane underpass was the main concern at that intersection. Ms. Lindenmuth asked if it were possible to switch the direction of the one-way traffic to make it easier for existing residents.

Ms. Bovankovich asked how they expected emergency vehicles to use an unpaved access road. Mr. Pyles stated that the Town wanted a second access in the event of emergencies. Specifics were not worked out at this time. Mr. Brad Willis, Chief of Perryville Fire Department asked who will maintain the emergency access and what weight limit will it be able to support.

Mr. Jones noted that the intersection of Cedar Corner and Route 222 was currently rated D. How will adding the additional traffic not cause it to become an E? Mr. Driban ensured him that despite the extra traffic, the intersection will still be functional.

Mayor Matt Roath stressed that this is a unique traffic situation in which a boiler plate solution will not apply. He mentioned that drivers crossing the two lanes of traffic face anxiety as it is and wanted to know how the developer could ensure that moving forward with the plan wouldn't negatively affect the current residents.

Mr. Palmisano stated that he'd rather not do the traffic circle or the one way, but those were the recommendations from the State and the County.

Ms. Patti Brittingham asked what the benefit of the circle was which Mr. Palmisano answered "to slow down traffic."

Mr. Stanley Campbell of Ingleside Ave. asked how they intended to stop traffic from using the emergency access. Mr. Pyles explained that it would not be paved and would be identified as "Not a Through Way."

Mr. Palmisano asked his team if it were possible to give the people what they wanted. Mr. Driban stated that they could take these comments to the approving agencies for some traction. Perhaps the Accl/Decel late recommendation could help.

Mr. Al Wein of Cedar Corner Road asked why SHA approval was needed when the development did not access a state highway. Mr. Driban stated that because the development effectively enters at two state highway locations, SHA has approving authority.

Mr. Baxendell asked if it were possible for the Town to take over the section of Cedar Corner Road that is owned by the County and then only Town approval would be required.

Mr. Steven Pearson of Ingleside Ave. stated that the traffic comments being said tonight would be the same regardless of the development. He also noted that traffic stacking on Route 222 was a concern. Mr. Driban stated that traffic stacking was evaluated and did not meet the warrants.

Mr. Skip Ivie of Greenspring Ave. asked why the alternatives were discussed. Initial conversations were with a two-way road, then a one-way road, and then a one-way road in the opposite direction.

Mr. Carl Roberts of Ingleside Ave. asked the crowd “who had received the flyer?” Ms. Christina Aldridge emphasized that the flyer was put out by the community, not by the Town or the County. Mr. Roberts stated that this room would not be filled without this flyer. Why was no consideration given to existing residents? Would there be a vote tonight? Ms. Battaglia stated that there would not be a vote. Mr. Pearson asked what the roll of the Planning Commission was for this night to which Mrs. Battaglia answered that the Planning Commission was asked to review the proposed traffic improvements and that no official vote would be tonight. The next step is for the developer to submit for a Preliminary Plan approval.

Mr. Palmisano told the audience that this meeting should have been held 2 years ago.

Mr. Wein read a prepared speech expressing concerns about projected traffic and the negative effects to the existing community members. He stated that it was no acceptable to negatively affect existing residents and implored that the developers and the Town come to some level of agreement with the County and State.

Ms. Barb Gilden of Cedar Corner Road stated that she recalled having meetings about this project 6 years ago. Mr. Palmisano told her the traffic study wasn’t completed at that time.

Mr. Faley stated that the majority of the traffic on Cedar Corner Road is not residents of Cedar Corner Road, but people using it as a cut through. If traffic is changed to one way, they will need a signalized intersection.

Mr. Palmisano told the community that his project did not cause all of the traffic problems, but admitted that an accel/decel lane could be helpful.

Ms. Linkey thanked the community for their comments and for coming out tonight.

Mr. Willis stated that the Fire Department does not take an official position on projects, but having a single access point to a community is a bad design as well as turning Cedar Corner one way.

Mr. Ed Wishoet asked why the developer couldn’t dump the traffic out behind the high school. Mr. Palmisano stated that he doesn’t own that land.

Mr. Eric Kirk of Ingleside drive stated that there is no benefit to one way traffic. And Ms. Julie Irby of Ingleside Ave. asked if alternatives could be considered.

Ms. Bovankovich asked what the developers could do to ensure the safety of her child walking to school. Mr. Palmisano stated that the community would have sidewalks and would directly access school property.

Adjournment:

With no further comments from the community and without objection the Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda M. Paoletti
Planning Coordinator