

## February 12, 2018 Neighborhood Meeting D & W Trail Extension Section 6B

Martinsville City Council held a community informational meeting on February 12, 2018. Those present were Mayor Gene Teague, Council Member Kathy Lawson, Vice Mayor Chad Martin, Council Member Sharon Hodge and Council Member Jennifer Bowles. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Assistant City Manager Wayne Knox, and City Attorney Eric Monday. Mickey Powell of the Martinsville Bulletin was also present.

The informational meeting was held at Druid Hills Elementary School, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville, VA beginning at 7:00 PM, with Mayor Gene Teague presiding. Mayor Teague opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the extension of the Dick & Willie Trail from Spruce Street to Smith River Sports Complex. Leon Towarnicki summarized how the trail project has progressed to this point and noted since the initial City Council meeting on January 9, the County has obtained the ability to execute an option to acquire additional property for the trail project that will allow the trail to be shifted by an average of approximately 100 feet, farther away from the rear property line of homes along Country Club Drive. This is in an effort to address concerns expressed by residents regarding the close proximity of the original trail route to the rear of some of the properties along Country Club Drive.

A number of residents from the neighborhood spoke, most generally not in favor and opposed to the project being in the Country Club Drive neighborhood, and particularly behind the homes. Joe Roach, 1011 Country Club Drive suggested sending a letter to the Harvest Board requesting they pull back the grant funding allocated for the project. Crystal Caldwell, 1303 Country Club Drive noted the City should have known in advance, the details of this project. Joe Ratliff, 1013 Country Club Drive expressed concerns about the traffic the trail would bring to the area and doesn't want the trail at all in this area. Giles Smith 1101 Country Club Drive indicated the trail isn't necessary, suggested cutting off funding for the project and denying the County's request for the trailhead easement. He questioned the impact to City services in regard to the need to respond to emergency calls coming from the trail. Ellen Jesse, 701 Starling Avenue noted the trail is a wonderful amenity for the community and thanked the City/Country for attempting to work together to make the project happen. She noted that the trail location is dependent on landowners who are willing to sell, or allow use of their property. A number of other speakers addressed Council, all generally not in favor of the trail being behind the homes even with the proposed realignment moving the trail farther away from the rear of properties on Country Club Drive; some questioning the impact on property values with a trail located close to private properties; some noting the money being spent on the trail project could be better spent on other community needs, and some noting they do not believe a trail adds any value to a community.

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The consensus from the neighborhood group was for Council to not grant the easement Henry County is requesting for the trailhead development on Spruce Street and to send a letter to Harvest requesting the project be de-funded. They also questioned the impact on tourism and property values.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Leon Towarnicki  
Clerk of Council

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Gene Teague  
Mayor