

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(2)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT MEETING DATE: September 5, 2006

TITLE: Report on Request for Creation of Smith Level Road Task Force

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ NO <u>X</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Petition C. Letter on Homestead Road/High School Road Task Force D. Minutes of June 20, 2006 meeting of the Board of Aldermen E. June 26 Letter to NCDOT Re: Lee-Moore driveway permit F. Entranceway resolutions G. Map	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia McGuire – 918-7327 Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

On June 20, Terri Buckner submitted a petition requesting that the Board of Aldermen consider establishing a task force to identify measures to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety on Smith Level Road. The Board of Aldermen referred the petition to staff for consideration. A resolution accepting the staff report is recommended for the Board's adoption.

INFORMATION

During the "requests from visitors and speakers from the floor" segment of the meeting on June 20, 2006, Ms. Buckner described the historic and scenic nature of Smith Level Road and some of the vehicular and pedestrian safety and access concerns that are facing residents presently, some of which might benefit from action prior to the opening of Carrboro High School in August 2007. Ms. Buckner presented a petition signed by 100 residents of the neighbors directly or indirectly served by Smith Level Road (Attachment B). The petition requests the appointment of a task force that would work to identify proactive safety measures to do the following:

1. Protect the fragile resources within the University Lake watershed,
2. Provide a safe, non-vehicular trail or sidewalks to Carrboro High School to children living along Smith Level Road between the Carrboro town limit and U.S. 15-501, and
3. Provide safe access for residents whose driveways or subdivisions are located on or along Smith Level Road.

Independent of the petition, Ms. Buckner also requested that the Town take a formal position with NCDOT regarding the Lee-Moore Oil Company driveway permit that no more negotiations

undertaken until the task force has an opportunity to meet and make recommendations. A resolution related to this request was adopted by the Board of Aldermen and a letter was sent on June 26 (Attachment E).

The Board of Aldermen accepted the petition and briefly discussed how it might follow the format used recently by the Homestead-High School Road task force, which was established in the winter of 2003/2004 to cooperatively seek solutions to safety and access at the intersection of Homestead Road and High School Road and has representatives from the county, two towns, and city school system. The letter from the County Commissioners requesting that Carrboro participate in that task force is attached (Attachment C).

The petition was referred to staff (Minutes from June 20th meeting - Attachment D) for consideration, with the expectation that the Board of Aldermen would review the request in the early fall.

Follow-up to June 20th

The following notes provide additional information regarding the Smith Level Road corridor:

1. The southernmost portion of Carrboro's Town Limits is the Carrboro High School property. However, Carrboro's planning jurisdiction extends to US 15-501. In the area south of Ray Road, Carrboro's planning jurisdiction is on the west side of Smith Level Road and Chapel Hill's planning jurisdiction is on the east side (Attachment G).
2. In 1995, entranceway resolutions were adopted by the Board of Aldermen and Chapel Hill Town Council to establish principles for the protection of the Smith Level Road area (Attachment F).
3. NCDOT Project U-2803 is intended to provide bike lanes and sidewalks along Smith Level Road between Morgan Creek and Rock Haven Road. Funding for the Smith Level Road project is included in the 2006-2012 TIP, with right-of-way acquisition scheduled for 2007 and construction scheduled for 2010. The draft 2007-2013 TIP is scheduled to be released in early September and may contain revised right-of-way and construction dates.
4. In reviewing the Chapel Hill Greenways Master Plan and the proposed Carrboro Recreation and Parks Master Plan Update, the closest currently proposed trail to the southern part of Smith Level Road Corridor is the Fan Branch Trail, which currently connects to Southern Village and is proposed to be extended to Chapel Hill's Southern Community Park. This trail will also connect to the Morgan Creek Trail to provide a somewhat circuitous connection to Smith Level Road near Frank Porter Graham Elementary School.
5. Sidewalks are often provided with new development projects. For instance, sidewalks will be provided adjacent to Smith Level Road as part of Carrboro High School. However, south of Ray Road, much of the area adjacent to Smith Level Road is in the University Lake watershed and there is likely to be little new development for which sidewalks would be required.

6. The Board of Aldermen has discussed applying for an NCDOT bicycle planning grant in December 2006 and has set aside the required matching funds. Bicycle connections to the southern Smith Level Road corridor could be studied as part of this planning process if Carrboro receives a grant.

In regard to petitioner concerns about traffic safety, Town staff has been in communication with NCDOT Traffic Engineering staff in Greensboro to request assistance with scoping out the data collection mechanisms and road-related strategies that would respond appropriately to the petition. NCDOT staff have noted that they would likely be able to prepare an accident report for Smith Level Road. Further information on this and recommendations associated with vehicle types and speeding will be provided as it is available.

FISCAL IMPACT

Advertising and other administrative costs would be expected in relation to the establishment and support for a new task force. Ongoing planning activities associated with protecting the character and safety of Smith Level Road are expected to be covered by existing staff and resources, and within the scope of several activities currently underway.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution (Attachment A) that accepts this report and commit to continued efforts in support of the environmental protection and safety measures for Smith Level Road that were requested by petitioners in June 2006.