

Scott Clark

From: Steven Rosenfield <attyrosen@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 6:30 PM
To: Scott Clark
Subject: Asking questions regarding presentation by LES

Categories: SP Public Comments

CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.

In the event that there is not an opportunity to ask questions, I would like LES to explain any scholarship plan or other plan to bring minorities to the program. Their two pictures show possibly one person of color. Otherwise staff appear all white and children one minority.

I hope down the road that you will keep addressing our societies issues surrounding integration.

Thanks, Steve

Steven D. Rosenfield
Attorney at Law, Emeritus
The Virginia Prisoner Project
P.O. Box 222
Batesville, VA 22924
Tel 434-882-2288

sent from the all new AOL app for Android

938 Aperro Way
El Dorado Hills, CA, 95762

August 5, 2021

RE: Proposal for Living Earth School/TMP 08600-00-00-017C0, File number SP2021-00013

Albemarle Planning and Site Development Office (via email)
Attn: Scott Clark
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Mr. Clark and members of the Planning Commission:

The purpose of this letter is to express concern about the potential traffic related to the Living Earth School on Pounding Creek Road. This is a rural residential road that was not designed for or maintained for the volume of traffic proposed by the applicant. As others indicated in the informational meeting, the road is very narrow.

We are the new owners of the 40-acre tract TMP 85-29A9, located on Pounding Creek just past Stillhouse Ridge Road. One of the reasons we purchased this land is because we were attracted to the quiet, rural setting and surroundings. Each time we have driven down Pounding Creek Road, we encountered wild turkey, deer, and a hawk in the middle of the road. We also met neighbors who were out walking and exercising. We took great care to drive very slowly and minimize dust.

The applicant's materials predict 100 to 174 campers in the prime season and while their attempts to encourage carpools is a good step, there is no way to guarantee that. While the staff may be living on site during the year, they most certainly would have additional trips and deliveries in order to receive supplies that were not accounted for in the presentation.

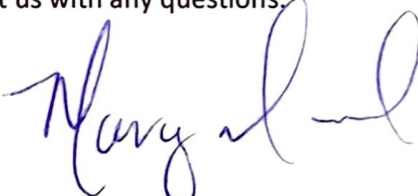
Why not suggest that the Living Earth School establish a staging area and a bus that the day campers are required to ride? This is how Camp Roanoke was when we lived in Roanoke, VA. Our kids were required to ride the bus and only one bus went up and down a similar rural gravel road. The bus could be contracted and the nominal expense could be passed on to the campers. The parents in Roanoke were happy to pay for the bus because it picked campers up nearer to where the families lived.

We ask that if the request is approved, the number of trips be limited and that they should be directed to ask all of the visitors to use a bus and/or the unpopulated road between the camp and Dick Woods Road as their travel pattern. Additionally, we would like to see the applicant address steps taken to minimize the speed and dust created by visitors. As you may be aware, there is growing evidence that dust has a negative impact on air quality and can have an impact on the health of the community.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,


Bradley A. & Marcy L. Daniel



Scott Clark

From: Sara Brumfield <sbrumfie@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 8, 2021 12:25 PM
To: Scott Clark
Subject: Comments on the Living Earth School proposal for Pounding Creek Road
Attachments: Dick woods pounding creek intersection.jpg

Categories: SP Public Comments

CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.

I am writing today regarding the Special Use Permit submitted by the Living Earth School to operate a Camp on Pounding Creek Road in Albemarle County.

Our main concerns are regarding the traffic impact to the area with additional concerns related to the proposed "pond" on the site. How are they planning on filling this pond? Will it use well water and our limited natural resources in a drought year?

While the program directors claim that the majority of Pounding Creek Road does not have housing on it and so the community would not be affected by the traffic, this is not entirely true. There are several homes and even a neighborhood on that road which would be greatly impacted by the additional traffic. The rest of the Batesville community that lives or who must commute on Miller School Road and Dick Woods Road where Pounding Creek intersects would also be impacted.

Pounding Creek Road is a one lane road that Batesville community members use as a safer place to walk and ride bicycles for recreation. There are many reasons not to add any additional cars to this road, let alone for 200 participants. Living Earth School has tried to estimate the amount of cars that will be on the road assuming a large amount of carpooling. They have listed 174 participants making 30 trips down the road. If you figure half of those are trips in and the other half would be trips out, $174 / 15 = 11.6$ people per car. That is not even close to a reasonable estimate. If you have 200 participants it is more realistic to anticipate that you will have closer to 1-2 participants per car. That would mean closer to 100-200 trips in and out of Pounding Creek Road. That is a substantial traffic burden for any road but especially for a gravel road that is only wide enough for one car. The road is washed out and has been for years, it is poorly maintained, and it has blind turns both on the Miller School side as well as the Dick Woods Road side. I have included a photograph of the Dick Woods to Pounding Creek intersection from my daily morning commute. This photo is typical of the extremely poor visibility in the morning when it is proposed people would be arriving for camp. Pounding Creek Road is not set up or appropriate for two way traffic. The Living School indicated that they would "change the google map directions" to get there. This is not an actual option. The Batesville community has been trying to get mapping programs to reroute around us for years and has never been successful. I would hope that this would not be seen by the county as a serious solution.

Pounding Creek aside, the extra traffic on Miller School Road and Dick Woods Road is difficult to support. There has already been a large new entrance for the Miller School built on a blind curve of Miller School Road that has a high traffic burden and has significantly decreased the safety of the road. Cars on Miller School and Dick Woods drive in the middle of the road and speed daily with no patrol or intervention from Albemarle County police. Adding 100 additional cars in and out of that road will only make these problems worse. I realize we were assured that every parent bringing a child to the Living Earth school will drive like an Angel, I have my doubts. I am very familiar with the Sugar Hollow Camp and the Living School brought this up as an example. Firstly, the road to Sugar Hollow is paved and appropriate for two way traffic. There are one lane bridges but these are clearly marked as is the speed limit. This is overall a much

more maintained and appropriate road for a busy camp. I can also tell you that every person I've spoken to living on the road to Sugar Hollow camp are not thrilled with the traffic in any way and find even the paved two lane road inappropriate for that much traffic.

If the Living Earth School gets approved, is this the last special use permit we must suffer through with this property? What is next? I appreciate what they are trying to do, but unfortunately this does not seem like an appropriate location for it due to the roads that must be traveled in the area. It would be nice if they could find a piece of property with a safe passage in and out and that would not put our rural community under more strain.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara Brumfield

Scott Clark

From: John OBrien <jmobrien88@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 9:34 PM
To: Scott Clark
Cc: Liz O'Brien
Subject: Community Input for SP2021-13 Living Earth School

Categories: SP Public Comments

CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.

Mr. Clark,

Good evening. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the community meeting on Living Earth School's (LES) camp proposal for Israel Mountain Farm. I was able to watch the recording and am grateful for the county's transparency.

My family and I reside at the corner of Pounding Creek Rd and Stillhouse Ridge Ln. LES appears to be a great organization with an honest and worthy mission. That being said, my primary concern with the planned camp is safety and noise resulting from a drastic increase in traffic. As others mentioned in the meeting, Pounding Creek cannot handle the proposed number of staff and participants (up to 200 per day) going to and fro. Below is a snapshot of my concerns:

- Pounding Creek Road is very narrow in some spots. Enough so that 2 cars going in opposite directions cannot pass one another. There are also multiple blind hills and turns. Further, participants are most likely not familiar with the area. I can speak firsthand that drivers not familiar with the road generally drive much too fast.
- People use this road for recreation (running and biking) frequently. There are also multiple families with small children that live on or near the road.
- The increased traffic will create a much higher volume of road noise. Many of the homes along Pounding Creek are quite close. This is a quality of life issue
- The crush is easily washed out and generally poorly maintained by VDOT. Additionally, the pavement (first few hundred yards after the Miller School intersection) has a number of large pot holes and divots. Increased use will only make conditions worse.

I propose LES utilize a shuttle service to move participants to and from the camp. They can pick campers up at a predetermined location (such as Crozet) and easily traverse to the site in 10-15 minutes. This will drastically reduce traffic, make travel easier for the participants / families, and prevent the issues noted above.

Bottomline, I do not want to prevent LES from executing their mission. However, the proposed volume of traffic is unsafe and degrades quality of life for existing residents.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Best,

John and Liz O'Brien
jmobrien88@gmail.com
(434) 906-7884

Scott Clark

From: Sara Brumfield <sbrumfie@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 3:05 PM
To: Scott Clark
Subject: Pictures of Pounding Creek Road for Living School

Categories: SP Public Comments

CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.

Scott,

I don't want to send you too many emails but I drove down Pounding Creek Road before the rain to get pictures of the road they are trying to put 200 people on per day with the Living Earth School. This was actually surprisingly good conditions for that road but it was before the recent rain. As you can see there are many blind curves and hills and the road is not wide enough for 2 way traffic. There is poor visibility turning onto Miller School also. I am worried about putting *any* extra traffic on that road, it does not seem safe.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sara Brumfield















Scott Clark

From: Steven Rosenfield <attyrosen@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 4:16 PM
To: Scott Clark
Cc: attyrosen@aol.com
Subject: RE: Asking questions regarding presentation by LES

Categories: SP Public Comments

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Thanks Scott. I wish I could be on an email alert system regarding LES's application. They seem well intentioned, but their pictures speak mountains about their difficulty integrating the camp. It seems like our government needs to be sure that pledges are kept or wait until their pledges are met before granting the variance.

Thanks Scott.

Steve

Steven D. Rosenfield
Attorney at Law, Emeritus
The Virginia Prisoner Project
P.O. Box 222
Batesville, VA 22924
Tel 434-882-2288

sent from the all new AOL app for Android

On Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:17 AM, Scott Clark
<Sclark@albemarle.org> wrote:

Steve—

Thanks for attending yesterday's meeting. I hope it was helpful. Please let me know if you need any more information.

--Scott

From: Steven Rosenfield <attyrosen@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 6:30 PM
To: Scott Clark <Sclark@albemarle.org>
Subject: Asking questions regarding presentation by LES

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In the event that there is not an opportunity to ask questions, I would like LES to explain any scholarship plan or other plan to bring minorities to the program. Their two pictures show possibly one person of color. Otherwise staff appear all white and children one minority.

I hope down the road that you will keep addressing our societies issues surrounding integration.

Thanks, Steve

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Batesville, VA 22924
Tel 434-882-2288

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Scott Clark

From: John OBrien <jmobrien88@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 9:23 AM
To: Scott Clark
Cc: Liz O'Brien
Subject: Re: Community Input for SP2021-13 Living Earth School

Categories: SP Public Comments

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Scott,

Thank you for the prompt reply Sir. We appreciate you taking our concerns into consideration. LES and Israel Mountain look like a great fit if traffic can be mitigated.

Best,

John

On Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:16 AM Scott Clark <Sclark@albemarle.org> wrote:

John and Liz – thank you for providing your comments and concerns on this application. It seems clear from the meeting and from input from neighbors like you that traffic and the condition of the road are going to be a major part of the review of this special use permit. I'm sorry you weren't able to make the meeting to ask questions, but I'm glad if the recording was helpful to you.

Please let me know if you have any further questions or need any information.

--Scott

From: John OBrien <jmobrien88@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 9:34 PM
To: Scott Clark <Sclark@albemarle.org>
Cc: Liz O'Brien <keobrien086@gmail.com>
Subject: Community Input for SP2021-13 Living Earth School

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Mr. Clark,

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My family and I reside at the corner of Pounding Creek Rd and Stillhouse Ridge Ln. LES appears to be a great organization with an honest and worthy mission. That being said, my primary concern with the planned camp is safety and noise resulting from a drastic increase in traffic. As others mentioned in the meeting, Pounding Creek cannot handle the proposed number of staff and participants (up to 200 per day) going to and fro. Below is a snapshot of my concerns:

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I propose LES utilize a shuttle service to move participants to and from the camp. They can pick campers up at a predetermined location (such as Crozet) and easily traverse to the site in 10-15 minutes. This will drastically reduce traffic, make travel easier for the participants / families, and prevent the issues noted above.

Bottomline, I do not want to prevent LES from executing their mission. However, the proposed volume of traffic is unsafe and degrades quality of life for existing residents.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Best,

John and Liz O'Brien

jmobrien88@gmail.com

(434) 906-7884

Scott Clark

From: Holmes C. Brown <orkney1942@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 5:09 PM
To: Scott Clark
Cc: Liz Palmer
Subject: Re: Traffic on Pounding Creek Road

Categories: SP Public Comments

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Scott,

As usual, thanks for the rapid and informative response.

Holmes

> On Aug 3, 2021, at 3:02 PM, Scott Clark <Sclark@albemarle.org> wrote:

>

> Holmes--thanks for checking in, and for attending the meeting last night; it's good to hear from you.

>

> Regarding the notification for this community meeting -- our guidelines say the notification radius for these meetings in the Rural Areas should be at least 1/4 mile, and up to 1/2 mile, depending on terrain, major intervening features, etc. (As you're aware, this is significantly larger than the adjacent-owner notification that is required for public hearings.) To create the mailing list for last night's Living Earth School meeting, I used the half-mile radius, and then added some additional parcels beyond that radius that have access from Pounding Creek Road. The mailing list included 90 unique landowners. The letters for the 8/2 meeting were sent out by the applicants on 7/20.

>

> Regarding the review schedule for this application -- the item is not under any sort of expedited review. The submittal date for this item was 6/21, and the standard deadline for providing staff comments for that submittal date is 8/6 (this Friday). We try to have the community meeting close to the time that staff comments come out, so that applicants can get feedback from the County and from neighbors at the same time.

>

> I agree that the existing road issues and the potential traffic-management plan for the proposed camp raise serious issues for the applicants to address. Although I don't yet have a response from VDOT, I'm sure that we'll be discussing this issue in more detail with the applicants and trying to find out if and how the impacts of the proposed use can be mitigated. I appreciate the input from you and the other residents of the area on this. Given that we're still in the initial stages of the review of this application, I don't have a list of possible solutions to consider yet. However, I'll be happy to discuss the topic with you as we continue this review.

>

> Please let me know if you have any questions or need any further information.

>

> --Scott

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Holmes C. Brown <orkney1942@gmail.com>

> Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 2:08 PM

> To: Scott Clark <Sclark@albemarle.org>

> Cc: Liz Palmer <lpalmer@albemarle.org>
 > Subject: Traffic on Pounding Creek Road
 >
 > CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.
 >
 > Scott,
 >
 > I listened in on the Zoom Call last night re the Special Use Permit request by Living Earth School (LES) for camp activities at the Israel Mountain Farm.
 >
 > As you may recall from previous exchanges, the Batesville Community Club (Ruritans) likes to keep members and affiliates on our email list informed of developments that may affect the environment and traffic flow in the community.
 >
 > We only found out about the Zoom Call by reading a reference in Sean Tubbs' notice of upcoming county government meetings. We had only one day to contact our mailing list as to the topic of the Zoom Call. Two of the five commenters last night are on our list. The fact that only five persons offered statements—and one was a neighbor and another a member of the Board of Supervisors—is less evidence of a lack of local interest but rather of a failure to notify affected parties.
 >
 > It may be that county regulations only require the notification of neighbors, but as you are well aware from other proposed SUP applications in the Batesville area, traffic is a singular concern that affects 100s of local residents. They should be made aware of applications like the LES request and given sufficient notice of public comment opportunities to prepare statements.
 >
 > I was surprised to learn last night that the SPU request had been filed in June. (June 21 in the Project Narrative; July 21 in Project Application Plan.)It seems that this application is receiving expedited consideration. An additional question re last night's Zoom Call, how many parties were notified of the meeting and on what date?
 >
 > Finally, re camp attendees' traffic, which is the issue having the greatest impact on the largest number of people.
 >
 > The applicants were vague as to how traffic would be handled or its effects mitigated. Promises that LES would discuss Pounding Creek Road issues (narrow, crowded, rutted, poorly maintained) with VDOT constituted no commitment. The neighbor and the Supervisor emphatically stated that repeated requests to VDOT for road improvements have been unfulfilled. And in terms of traffic control, VDOT's findings in two recent local SPU applications demonstrate that an increase of 100s of trips a week and an annual nearly 4000 additional trips over a one-lane bridge in Batesville are insufficient to require any action from VDOT. Thus, the prospect of a geometric increase in LES traffic on the likely access routes, based on past comments, will probably not elicit any objections from VDOT.
 >
 > A final observation re traffic in response to speculation by LES staff about probable routes taken by camp attendees. Staff stated that most campers originate to the north of the facility and seemed convinced that cars driving to drop off and pick up campers would take US 64 to Dick Woods Road to Pounding Creek Road.
 >
 > I checked out Mapquest this morning for driving from Charlottesville to the camp ground and found that
 >
 > -Option 1 (64 to DWR to PCR) takes 21 minutes
 >
 > -Option 2 (Route 29 to Plank Road to Miller School Road to Pounding Creek Road) takes 23 minutes.
 >
 > Given the self-evident deficiencies of Pounding Creek Road (slow, dusty, muddy in rain or winter, hard to pass, rutted), most parents are likely to choose clearly marked, well maintained, paved roads over the two gravel roads. AND Option 2 goes right to the heart of Batesville.

>

> The intended goals of LES may meet with general public approval, but small rural towns like Batesville are being besieged with ostensibly benevolent projects that ultimately benefit few local residents but irredeemably alter the charter of the community for the interests of outsiders and large land holders.

>

> Holmes Brown

Board of Supervisors,

I would like to state my opposition for the Living Earth School's request to obtain a special exemption to hold camps of up to 200 people on the grounds of traffic concerns, which would violate Albermarle County's stated goal of public safety.

I live about 3 miles from the Living Earth School's proposed site on Israel Mountain and travel along Pounding Creek Road on a regular basis, so I am very familiar with the area. Pounding Creek Road is largely a one-lane gravel road that requires passing vehicles to travel along the shoulder of the road, usually with one car stopped as it is too dangerous for both cars to move while passing. The gravel road is often in a state of disrepair, particularly during rainy seasons. At these times, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is overwhelmed with other road repair demands. This leaves Pounding Creek Road with washed-out broken parts for months. Although four-wheel-drive off-road vehicles can manage these conditions, most regular cars cannot. The few residents along Pounding Creek Road are familiar with these conditions, but the Living Earth School's proposal for 200 people would push Pounding Creek Road well beyond its limits. Not only would these conditions be unsafe for the camp-goers (who would inevitably pass each other during drop-off and pick-up times), but present additional dangers to the residents of Pounding Creek Road and increase the wear and tear to the already beleaguered road.

The Living Earth School claims that they anticipate no more than 30 cars twice a day for 200 people. Even with carpooling, this seems unrealistic. Doesn't the County have the responsibility to grant special permission for requests based on the number of people at the event, not the estimation for the number of cars? If so, what is to stop the Living Earth School from allowing each camp-goer from driving individually?

The Living Earth School has proposed busing camp-goers in from other areas, which would present fewer cars to the area. However, buses are far from suitable for travel down Pounding Creek Road. Their size would make it impossible for other cars to pass and the bus drivers would find road conditions to be too dangerous when the road is at its best, let alone during the aforementioned rainy seasons. The Living Earth School would undoubtedly discover this problem after erecting its camp, and would have to revert to individual commuting.

The Living Earth School as also proposed rerouting Google Maps so that people would only come from Dick Woods Road, thereby avoiding Batesville. Google is very intransigent in granting any re-routing requests; when they do it is mostly for serious safety concerns and not to avoid small towns. Even if the Living Earth School instructed all their camp-goers to only use the Dick Woods Road route, focusing all vehicles to one direction of Pounding Creek Road would not alleviate any of the traffic concerns noted above. Also, the Dick Woods Road side of Pounding Creek road is narrower and has more hazardous conditions than the other side.

I propose that if the Albermarle County Board of Supervisors intends to approve the Living Earth School's special exemption request that it must first get VDOT to pave Pounding Creek Road and expand it to two full lanes of traffic. Failing to do so would be irresponsible. If VDOT is unwilling or unable to pave Pounding Creek Road, the Living Earth School can find another area with suitable road conditions for their camp site rather than burden Albemarle County and its residents along Pounding Creek Road.

I appreciate your careful consideration for my concerns and trust that you will make the right decision for the best interest of the County and its residents.

Sincerely,
Matt Castline

Scott Clark

From: Holmes C. Brown <orkney1942@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 2:08 PM
To: Scott Clark
Cc: Liz Palmer
Subject: Traffic on Pounding Creek Road

Categories: SP Public Comments

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Holmes Brown