

Albemarle County Planning Commission
October 31, 2017

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, October 31, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Room #241, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were Tim Keller, Chair; Daphne Spain; Pam Riley; Mac Lafferty, Karen Firehock; Vice-Chair; Bruce Dotson; and Bill Palmer, UVA representative. Absent was Jennie More. Ms. Firehock arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Other officials present were J.T. Newberry, Senior Planner; Elaine Echols, Chief of Planning; Tim Padalino, Senior Planner; Andrew Gast-Bray, Assistant Director of Community Development/Director of Planning; Sharon Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission; and John Blair, Deputy County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Mr. Keller, Chair, called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

Public Hearing Item.

a. SP-2017-00023 Birdwood-Boars Head Temporary Connector Road

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Samuel Miller

TAX MAP/PARCEL(S): 07500-00-00-06300

LOCATION: 410 Birdwood Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22903

PROPOSAL: Amend SP2017-09 to create a temporary connector road between the Birdwood Golf Course and Boars Head Inn (TMPs 059D2-01-00-01500 and 07500-00-00-06300) from Golf Course Drive on the Birdwood property to Berwick Drive on the Boar's Head property.

PETITION: Swim, golf, tennis, or similar athletic facilities under Section 13.2.2.4 of the zoning ordinance. No new dwellings proposed on this 544-acre parcel.

ZONING: R1 Residential, which allows residential use by right (1 unit per acre).

OVERLAY DISTRICT(S): ENTRANCE CORRIDOR, AIRPORT IMPACT AREA, and STEEP SLOPES – MANAGED and – PRESERVED.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Institutional use which allows for schools, libraries, parks, major utilities, hospitals, universities, colleges, ancillary facilities, and undeveloped publicly owned property; and Parks and Green Systems which allows for parks, playgrounds, play fields, greenways, trails, paths, recreational facilities and equipment, plazas, outdoor sitting areas, natural areas, and preservation of stream buffers, floodplains, and steep slopes adjacent to rivers and streams in Neighborhood 6 of the Southern and Western Urban Neighborhoods.

(Tim Padalino)

Mr. Padalino presented the staff report on SP-2017-00023 Birdwood-Boars Head Temporary Connector Road. This is an application for an amendment to SP-2017-009 that was recently approved by the Board of Supervisors. This request is an application by Ms. Ashley Davies of Williams Mullins on behalf of the University of Virginia Foundation. The proposal is to amend a previous special use permit SP-2017-00009 to create a temporary connector road between Golf Course Drive on the Birdwood property and Berwick Drive on the Boar's Head Inn and Sports Club property. Vehicular use of the proposed temporary connector road is requested between July 22, 2018 and August 11, 2018 in conjunction with a major sports tournament to be held at the McArthur Squash Center at the Boars Head Sports Club. Although the request is for the temporary use of the road, the road would be constructed as a permanent improvement. This proposal also includes permanent pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks and some exterior lighting to aid for better pedestrian movement and golf cart movement.

Mr. Padalino reviewed the slides of the property pointing out it is a 544 acre property fronting on Ivy Road and US 250. It is tax map parcel 75-63 in the Samuel Miller Magisterial District. It is in the development area in the western Urban Neighborhood and as a reminder, it is also in the area defined as Area B. The property is zoned R-1, Residential and is subject to some existing special use permit conditions of approval, which were established in 1996 and carried forward most recently with special use permit SP-2017-09 for the UVA Golf Indoor Practice Facility. In looking at the existing conditions and some adjacent uses, you can see the Birdwood property is currently used for the Birdwood Golf Course and Clubhouse. Of course, the Birdwood Pavilion Historic Site is on the property as well. In looking at the center of the map, you can see the project site it could connect Golf Course Drive with Berwick Road and thereby allowing access to Boars Head Sports Club and Boars Head Inn, which are currently only accessible through Ednam Drive one point in and one point out.

Mr. Padalino pointed out in a photograph taken from the edge of the Boars Head Sports Club property with Boars Head on the left and Birdwood on the right looking north you can see the existing conditions with Berwick Road and Golf Course Drive. The concept plan included in the staff report was Attachment C and Mr. Padalino said he would not go into detail and would allow the applicants to explain this in their own words. He said essentially staff have identified a few major elements including the connector road alignment between Golf Course Drive and Berwick Road. A gate or some similar physical barrier for the purposes of access management and the pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks and some exterior lighting.

Mr. Padalino said this special use permit amendment application is on an expedited review schedule; it was submitted in September and a community meeting was held last Monday on October 23. He said the community meeting was well attended and there were lots of good questions and discussion among members of the community and there was no opposition or objection from attendees. He noted there were some questions about landscaping, traffic impacts both at 250 and within the Inn and the surrounding communities and those have been detailed in the staff report. Tonight we have the hearing with the Commission and is scheduled tentatively for a December 13 hearing with

the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Padalino said a very detailed analysis is contained in the staff report but as a summary staff identified several favorable factors including the fact that the Comprehensive Plan explicitly calls for this vehicular connection between these two properties. In addition, the non-vehicular infrastructure like the sidewalks and other connections those are also explicitly called for in the Comprehensive Plan and they further support an advanced Neighborhood Model principles. Additionally, the temporary use of this proposed permanent road is not expected to create significant transportation impacts and would in fact actually allow the applicants to manage transportation in connection with that special event at the end of July and the beginning of August of next year. Staff did not identify any unfavorable factors.

Mr. Padalino said as such, the recommendation from staff is to recommend approval with conditions as noted in the staff report. Essentially, it is to carry forward the six existing conditions and to create a new condition #7, which are contained in detail in the staff report. He said he had provided a paraphrase summary on the screen essentially that the development be in accord with the concept plan including those major elements he identified a moment ago. There is a condition of temporary use as requested by the applicants. There is a condition for a review and approval from Fire Rescue as well as the county engineer about the gate or other barrier and signage to control and manage access. In coordinating with VDOT the recommendation is to have a maintenance of traffic plan be prepared, submitted and approved by VDOT in connection with this special use permit amendment request. If there were any questions, he would be happy to answer them.

Mr. Keller invited questions for staff.

Ms. Spain asked what is considered the community for that area; is it Ednam or who are the people who came to the community meeting.

Mr. Padalino replied that notice was sent by the applicants to the heads of the homeowners association for Bellair, Ednam, Ednam Forest and Ednam Village with Ednam Village being the subdivision most closely located to this improvement.

Ms. Spain asked if Farmington was notified, and Mr. Padalino replied no not Farmington; however, Kenridge and White Gables were notified across 250.

Mr. Dotson asked what the Route 250 Stars Study is.

Mr. Gast-Bray replied that the Stars Study is a more comprehensive analysis of the traffic patterns and potential improvements to the 250 Corridor going from the 240/250 interchange all the way at least to 29 and a little bit beyond. He said it certainly comprised this particular area and that is something that we have been trying to coordinate and part of the reason staff suggested they hold off on the recommendations for a permanent connection until that was analyzed more closely.

Mr. Dotson asked if there was any timetable on that.

Mr. Gast-Bray replied yes, it is moving forward and it is slower than anticipated. He said there have been some recommendations for analysis that have come forward but it still has a ways to go before being officially adopted and he believed it would be coming in front of the Commission at some point.

Mr. Lafferty asked would this study include the multi-use path to Crozet.

Mr. Gast-Bray replied that it is one of the considerations but he did not think as a result of this study that Three Notched Trail or any equivalence would be completely determined since this is more of a modeling of the transportation performance. However, there would be crossings and other things that would be theoretically as a part of this so the trail itself is being taken in account in that study, but it would not, for instance, determine an alignment of the Three Notched Trail or wait until we had a final alignment of the Three Notched Trail before coming to conclusions.

Mr. Lafferty said he remembered in the past that the residents along 250 have opposed any improvements.

Ms. Riley said just as a follow up question, the study that needed to be done to determine whether permanent use of this could be used and she is assuming Commissioner Dotson is trying to get a sense of what the timeframe might be. She asked to hear a little bit more about what other work would need to be done before a permanent acceptance of this proposal here might occur. She assumed that in the conditions a maintenance of traffic plan by VDOT is really just specific to this temporary use, and asked if that is correct.

Mr. Padalino replied yes, that is correct taking the last question first since he believed it was about transportation event management. He said the first question regarding what other efforts might be necessary for a permanent opening of that road he thinks it is more of a comprehensive traffic impact analysis for onsite and offsite impacts and what types of improvements could alleviate those impacts. He believed the applicants are working on some of those efforts right now, but that would not really be a necessary consideration with this request.

Mr. Keller opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to address the Commission.

Valerie Long with the Law Firm of Williams Mullens representing the applicant the University of Virginia Foundation, said also present was Fred Missel, the Foundation's Director of Development. She said they appreciate the opportunity to discuss this application with the Commission. She thanked Tim and Andrew for the significant amount of time they and their colleagues have spent with them discussing this application and others over the past few months. She said they have really worked well with us to come up with this expedited review and they are very grateful. As mentioned, this is a proposal

to accommodate the anticipated visitors and traffic associated with the World Squash Championships that will take place here at the Boars Head Sports Club next summer. She said it is a very prestigious event and exciting and it is a real testament to the facility at the Boars Head and our community that the championships will be held here. Therefore, everyone is excited and we just want to make certain that we are ready to accommodate the event and all the players, teams, visitors and fans who will be there to participate in it.

Ms. Long said they originally planned submit an application for a permanent connector road instead of a temporary one; we did not intend to have to break it up this way. However, we realized that with the timing and the need to have that road constructed in time then unfortunately, the process for going through the entire application for a permanent road given the VDOT Study and some of the other analysis that would be required for the permanent road frankly we just did not have time for that. She said with Mr. Gast-Bray's suggestion and encouragement we proposed to move forward with a temporary road instead. Therefore, as Tim mentioned it would be restricted for use for just a two-week period during just before and after enduring the squash championships. It would, however, be built to permanent road standards and everything will look exactly the same with the only difference will be that it will have a gate that can be closed when it is not permitted to be used. She said as stated the pedestrian infrastructure will be put in place and everything will be the same.

Ms. Long said she had some slides to show the Commission as needed. Ms. Long said as Tim mentioned this is on the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan and it is very specific with regard to this property that this connector road will be required. Ms. Long pointed the exhibits on the slide that shows everything that is there now as well as some things that are proposed. She pointed out the entrance at 250, the recently approved Indoor Golf Practice Facility, the existing Birdwood Mansion, Golf Course Drive that comes down to the existing Golf Clubhouse, and a proposed future use for a tennis facility for outdoor tennis matches that will come before you. She pointed out that is not part of this application but we show it just for context. She pointed out the existing Boars Head Indoor Tennis Facility as well as the rest of the Boars Head Sports Club, its outdoor tennis courts and the Inn. Ms. Long pointed out the location of the connector road that was a very small span.

Ms. Long said the span of the temporary connector road is literally from point A to point B and will connect Berwick Road to Golf Course Drive to provide a very efficient and effective vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connection for those folks who are trying to get to and from that area. She noted that right now there is no way to get between those two facilities despite the fact that they are so close to each other and they are owned and operated essentially both by the Foundation and there are lot of people who belong to the club and want to go play golf and tennis. She said it is a challenge to get back and forth and it requires people to get back on to 250 at the Ednam Drive light, turn right and go down and turn right into Golf Course Drive and loop all the way around. Ms. Long said so this is a very logical connection. Ms. Long said she was actually involved in the rezoning in 2004 that permitted the addition of the indoor tennis facilities to the Boar's

Head Sports Club. She said back then staff first brought up, at least first to me, the benefits of a future connector road. She said it was not something the Foundation was in a position to build at the time, but it has been something that we have been thinking about ever since. She said the fact that it is a recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan we think makes quite a bit of sense; it will obviously help significantly with the squash tournament coming up. She said we also think it has many advantageous benefits for the long-term use, which we will get into more at the time that the permanent application comes to you. She said that among other things it provides a second point of ingress and egress for the many neighbors who live near the Boar's Head Sports Club, especially the residents of Ednam Village since they do not have a connection to Route 250. She pointed out the residents of Ednam Village have only one point of ingress and egress to their neighborhood at Berwick Drive and then they go down and come out at Ednam Drive onto 250. She said this will provide a second point of access, which is not only convenient but also is very important for life/safety purposes if there were ever an accident that blocked Ednam Drive's access to Route 250. So likewise all of the residents in this area of Ednam Forest will also have the benefit of that. Again, this is only during this two-week period next summer that they would have that benefit but we are hopeful that in addition to providing a way to maintain traffic and access to overflow parking areas during the tournament it will also provide at least a short window into how well this works for traffic flow purposes.

Ms. Long said the last thing she would mention that by providing access to Golf Course Drive it does provide access to the golf course parking lot that already exists near the Birdwood Club House. She said that area is used regularly by the Foundation for employee parking during events. She pointed out people are not usually golfing in the evenings so those parking lots are vacant and it is a perfect location for staff and others to park during those events. She said the absence of a vehicular or even a pedestrian connection to that area makes it more challenging and not as safe and pedestrian friendly for their employees who want to walk back and forth to their cars. Therefore, that will be one of the many benefits of this connector road during the squash tournament and they will be using that area significantly for staff and overflow parking during that event.

Ms. Long pointed out the detailed plan that was in their packet and offered to go into more detail but just wanted to orient you a little bit. She pointed out the existing tennis courts at the Boar's Head Sports Club, Berwick Road, the entrance to Ednam Village, existing Golf Course Drive and the connector is between these two points. She pointed out the road that already exists that goes down to the main entrance to the Squash Facility and that it is a very small, yet critical, segment that connects these two roads. She said there will be a little bit of reconfiguration of this area to accommodate that because there are golf course infrastructure in this area, but the Foundation has been working very closely with all of the residents as Mr. Padalino mentioned both meeting with them regularly and has been discussing this future road with them for many months. Ms. Long pointed out that it has always been discussed in the context of a permanent road so she thinks everyone is also comfortable with it in the context of a temporary road.

Ms. Long said she would be happy to answer any questions about this. She said there

are sidewalk and landscaping proposed and there is a location for a gate to be installed so that access can be controlled when it is not permitted. She said the nice thing is that because the pedestrian infrastructure will already be in place even before and after the road is not permitted to be used for vehicles that it will remain open for pedestrian use and she imagined it be for bicycle use as well. She pointed out a rendering showing the access to the facility approaching the connector road. Ms. Long said she would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. Keller invited public comment. Hearing none, Mr. Keller invited the applicant to come back for rebuttal and questions from the Commissioners.

Mr. Dotson said that he did not think he had seen an explanation of how the small interconnector road will actually help during the squash championships and asked Ms. Long to explain that.

Ms. Long explained there were several ways in that the road will help with traffic management by providing a second point of ingress/egress to and from the sports club facility. She pointed out the location of the Squash Facility and there is a proposed addition that will be added onto it that has been approved for the site plan. So right now anyone coming to the Sports Club for that or any other use comes in off Route 250 at the Ednam Drive where it is signalized; comes down and turns left onto Berwick Road; comes all the way back down here and down the driveway and parks in this area. She noted if that area is full there is another lot and an overflow lot back here and other parking lots on the Birdwood property that are often used for events. She said right now with that being the only point of ingress and egress and Berwick Road being a small sort of country style road not designed to handle significant amounts of traffic. She said likewise the signal at Ednam Drive we feel would become overwhelmed with this amount of traffic volumes without a second point of ingress and egress. She said by having the connector road here vehicles would be able to exit the facility and access Route 250 from a second point and especially if you are heading back towards town that is probably the most convenient way to go. She said likewise coming into the facility vehicles can come in or out this way which will relieve some of the congestion that would otherwise be anticipated on Berwick as well as on Ednam Drive. She said it was that traffic flow but also the access to the parking, again, by having the connection people can then come over here to park in the overflow lot that is the existing Golf Course parking lot whether it is spectators to the event, team buses or Boar's Head Sports Club staff who might be asked to park over there to free up spaces closer to the facility during the event.

Mr. Dotson said that helps me to understand the function, but certainly in terms of our Neighborhood Model approach of interconnectedness he understands it in that sense. He asked would there be during this week safety personnel at 250 for this unsignalized intersection.

Ms. Long replied perhaps, we are not sure because we have not gotten to that point yet. She said certainly they will be working on a traffic management plan and depending on the precise expectations of the number of guests and so forth if, they deem that necessary

and appropriate she would imagine they would do so. They regularly accommodate large events at the Boars Head more so than she even imagined. Sometimes you might have an event going on at the Pavilion and at the same time, you have a smaller event going on in the other areas of the Inn. She said they hire the traffic management events company when they need it, but they have staff who regularly are involved with directing folks to overflow parking lots; they sometimes utilize shuttle buses if necessary so she would not be surprised if that is something that they decide to implement in order to maintain safety.

Mr. Dotson said his third and last question is he thinks he heard it said both by staff and you that the road is being constructed to a permanent standard but it will be managed so that it is only utilized until it is approved to be permanent by some kind of gating or something like that. He asked if in the future once all the traffic studies on Route 250 and so forth are done it turns out to be a problem to have this be a primary source of entry and exit from the Boars Head and the Sports Club would you still feel that this road is justified just for internal connectivity or does its justification really depend on re-designating the primary entrance.

Ms. Long replied at this point while there are plans at some point to re-designate Golf Course Drive as the primary entrance to the Inn that it is not an immediate plan but something they are looking at in the future as part of their overall planning. She said it is not in the immediate plans. She said so certainly that is not out of the question that if it does not work well that they would take a fresh look and reanalysis that issue. They do, however, as you might imagine have a real concern about the need to ultimately obtain permanent rights to use the road; it is a road that will cost them in excess of several hundred thousand dollars to construct perhaps more with the other entire infrastructure that is involved. She said while we know that the permanent connector road is subject to County Board approval as far as a future special use permit, we do want to be frankly just very transparent about the importance. She said we hope that by the time construction starts we will have made it through enough of the application process for the permanent road that we will have an idea about how likely it is and flush out any concerns or problems. . She said we have a traffic study we are working on so we will have an opportunity to assess the data from that and have the staff and VDOT review that traffic study. She said so our hope and expectation is that we will identify any traffic problems that might result from that. Ms. Long said she thinks that is the only objection anyone would have given that the road is on the Comprehensive Plan, but we do want to mention that it is something we are thinking through the challenges of the two-step process.

Mr. Missel asked to comment to add one thing. He said we have been in conversations with White Gables and Kenridge for many months about a signal at Route 250 and Golf Course Drive and would love to make Golf Course Drive the primary entrance. He pointed out that they have had several meetings with VDOT and they are not ready to commit to allow us to build a signal there since they have a Corridor Preservation Plan. He said this is a bit concerning because it is going to be challenging to make left out from that road. He said the nice thing about it is we still have Ednam where people can do signalized lefts and that is why, as Valerie said, we are not 100 percent sure whether this is going

to end up being the primary entrance or not. He said we know it is good for security; we know it is good for safety, we know the neighbors want it, we have had several meetings with Ednam Village and they are going to be looking at it and we literally just met with them and brought our landscape architect and agreed that at such time that we construct this, next March timeframe, we will bring a landscape architect, stand on their porch and they can point to where they want the trees to be screening of the road. Mr. Missel said long-winded answer but that is kind of why, but yes, absolutely we are looking at almost a million dollars to build this road and it includes some other improvements. He said we absolutely see this as needing something permanently and as Valerie said if all the stars align, planets and everything else that we may be able to never put those gates up. Mr. Missel said if we can make it through the actual permanent special use permit timeframe by the time it is ready to open we might be able to not have to put the gates up; however, this will allow us to start construction in advance of that.

Mr. Lafferty asked will a multi- purpose path be built at the same time, and Mr. Missel replied yes for the one that is shown on our plan.

Mr. Missel pointed out that they are going to have about 800 players from around the world at the squash tournament.

Ms. Riley asked that they elaborate a little more on what VDOT has potentially shared with you on obstacles to getting that signalized there and you mentioned a Corridor Preservation Plan. She asked is the signalized intersections between Golf Course and Ednam too close together or what the other issues are.

Mr. Long replied that she was not the expert on this and so she may ask Mr. Gast-Bray or Mr. Padalino to jump in, but my understanding from speaking with our traffic engineer who has been working with VDOT on that study as well as working for the Foundation on this is that it is a comprehensive review and analysis of that corridor to figure out ways to make it work better for everyone both vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Ms. Long said she thinks the ultimate goal is to try to minimize the number of signals on Route 250 and not add more so they are looking at do we need to rearrange them or can we make other improvements instead of signals that can help manage the traffic without creating more delays. She pointed out that is the jest of it as she understands it.

Ms. Long added that they have said if this road were to be opened on a permanent basis even without a signal they are willing to then go back and reassess whether that location meets the signal warrants and whether they would approve the installation of a signal in that location. She would also note that when the White Gables and Kenridge projects, which are just on the opposite side of Route 250 from Golf Course Drive, that when they went through the land use approval process roughly about ten years ago each of them were subject to proffers and conditions about contributions toward the cost of a signal in that location. She pointed out as Fred Missel mentioned, they very much want a signal there, and we hope that everything will come together at that time as well but there are still some analysis to be done. She asked if that addressed your question as much as possible.

Ms. Riley replied, yes and asked if there is a remote possibility that VDOT might recommend that they not have a signal at Ednam and that they have a signal here instead if they had to eliminate one.

Mr. Gast-Bray replied yes, that is one of the chief considerations that is to remove this one since they have also as part of the Star Study proposed alternative configurations for 250 as a whole; and there is considerations of when the traffic light would be enacted or put in or transferred. Mr. Gast-Bray said there are lots of state constraining conditions that have to be met that are called the so called warrants so you can't come to a conclusion before you have done all of the study; it is not a fait accompli before you do the study. He pointed out they are waiting for the study results to come up with the best program going forward; and we just do not have that yet. He said we did not want them to get into an awkward situation given that we are working towards a permanent solution and did not want to hinder the squash championships as well as everything else that is going to be coming forward.

Mr. Keller thanked Mr. Gast-Bray.

Mr. Lafferty said it looks like it would be a perfect candidate for an adaptive control system if you had three lights there.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that he did not think that VDOT would approve three sets of lights in that tight area at this point and they are not leaning towards that. He noted but yes, adaptive signals may indeed be a part of the overall picture.

Mr. Keller closed the public hearing to bring the matter before the Planning Commission for discussion and action.

Ms. Firehock pointed out that she did not ask any questions because she attended the very informative and well-received public meeting. She said since they did an excellent job of informing everyone and the community as well as asked good questions she was ready to make a motion.

Ms. Firehock moved to recommend approval of SP-2017-00023 Birdwood-Boars Head Temporary Connector Road with the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Ms. Spain seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Keller asked for a roll call.

The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6:0. (Ms. More absent)