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Subject: Becky Johnson creating hysteria, - “Too Many Cars” now at Queen Subdivision? Too Late!

“Too many cars? Waynesville to hold developers accountable for extra traffic”, article by **Becky Johnson**, dumb-as-a-brick reporter for the Mountaineer, 2/5/2022.

Becky Johnson captions some dramatic tag lines under the photos in her article:

- BRACING FOR IMPACT
- DANGER AHEAD
- BLIND CURVES
- SOON TO BE HOMES

Here is yet another example by this Left-Wing newspaper, The Mountaineer, and **Becky Johnson**, carrying the water for the Town of Waynesville Development Services Director, **Elizabeth Teague**, and the entire Town of Waynesville Planning Board, by attempting to shift the blame for homeowner concerns for this disaster over to NCDOT, rather than accepting the blame themselves.

Becky Johnson is reacting to complaints by locals along Sunnyside Road about the impending traffic situation, then interviews **Elizabeth Teague** and members of the Planning Board (**Ginger Hain, Barbara Thomas** and **Michael Blackburn**) who shift blame and responsibility for this fiasco to Wanda Austin of NCDOT. It’s now all NCDOT’s fault. Not theirs! Don’t worry, **Elizabeth Teague’s** plan to fix this is to create yet another Policy.

WTF?

This article is riddled with so much [expletive deleted] that the only way to address this debacle is to go through the article (as I have done numerous times previously with articles written by **Becky Johnson** and **Vicki Hyatt**) and comment paragraph by paragraph.

Throughout this article, recall the current situation with the Browning Branch Development, a.k.a. Lake Buchanan Development, which the Planning Board approved contingent on getting approval from the NCDOT. Well, **Chris Lee**, NCDOT approved the initial Driveway Permit, but NCDOT, Wanda Austin indicated that a final driveway permit was not and never has been approved for the connection of the Lake Buchanan Development to Allens Creek Road (a state road). The entrance is still a pot hole gravel mess, thanks to **James Weaver “Kirk” Kirkpatrick the III**. Approval is still pending (yeah, Deaver’s pesky Right of Way). Let’s see **Becky Johnson** interview **Elizabeth Teague** and the Planning Board about the current status of that train wreck. Well, I for one, don’t think that will happen until hell freezes over.

Don’t forget to look at the massive amount of material compiled on **Chris Lee**, NCDOT, **Elizabeth Teague** and the Browning Branch Development on www.haywoodtp.net. Go to Interesting Stuff Achieves.

The point is, there is a disconnect between **Elizabeth Teague** / The Town of Waynesville Planning Board and NCDOT.

“Too many cars? Waynesville to hold developers accountable for extra traffic”? How about holding the following people accountable?

The solution is not another Policy, but to fire them all -

- **Elizabeth Teague**, <eteague@waynesvillenc.gov>
- The entire current Town of Waynesville Planning Board (excepting Marty Prevost).
 - ▶ **Susan Smith** <SusanTeasSmith@me.com>
 - ▶ **Ginger Hain** <gghain@hotmail.com>
 - ▶ **Stuart Bass** <swbass8220@icloud.com>
 - ▶ **Barbara Thomas** <barbchristi@bellsouth.net>
 - ▶ **Robert M Blackburn** <michael.fumc@gmail.com>
 - ▶ **Gregory Wheeler**
 - ▶ **Don McGowan** <djmcgowan100@gmail.com>
 - ▶ **Tommy Thomas** <tommy_thomas2@hotmail.com>
 - ▶ **Ron Sneed** (their lawyer) <ron@sneedlaw.com>

Here is a color image of the Queens Development overlaid on the Haywood County GIS map of the area.

Also see: <https://www.haywoodtp.net/pubII/220131QueenSubdivisionColor.jpg>



Legend: Anyone whose name is in **bold** can't be a good thing.

Monroe A. Miller, Jr.
Haywood County Taxpayer

LetsGoBrandon

[**Editors Note:** The **Becky Johnson** article appeared on www.themountaineer.com on 2/5/2022. Original content in black, my inserted comments in ***Italic bold red.***]

Too many cars? Waynesville to hold developers accountable for extra traffic, By Becky Johnson bjohnson@themountaineer.com 2/5/2022.

Residents of Sunnyside Road in Waynesville — a narrow road riddled with blind curves and blind hills and no shoulders to speak of — are bracing for the impact of an additional 200 vehicles coming and going due to a 115-unit subdivision coming their way.

Here is the set up. Interviewing impacted residents fearful of impending doom.

“My concern is somebody is going to get hurt,” said Jimmy Crocker. “Sunnyside Road is not a safe road for that amount of traffic. There are going to be multiple accidents.”

Neighbors fear they will be risking their lives just to pull out of their driveways.

“It is extremely dangerous. Somebody is going to get killed up there,” said Zoltan Kollat. “DOT said when it becomes a problem, they will intervene and do something about it. Well, it’s already a problem.”

This is where Becky Johnson starts carrying the water for Teague and the Planning Board.

Waynesville’s planning board couldn’t agree more. They felt the developer should be required to upgrade the road and put in turn lanes to make it safer.

Bull-[expletive deleted].

“What was really just a little farming road is suddenly going to carry traffic it was never designed to carry,” Waynesville Planning Director Elizabeth Teague said. “That is a concern and will remain a concern.”

Why did the Planning Board approve this development if this was a concern? Because the Planning Board was interested approving this development under any circumstances, and nothing was going to stop them.

But the decision was ultimately up to the DOT, and the DOT took a pass — claiming the road was good enough to handle the extra traffic, without even requiring a traffic study by the developer.

This goes to the headline of this article: “Waynesville to hold developers accountable for extra traffic”. WTF? The Planning Board is accountable for the extra traffic. Teague knew this project did not meet the criteria of a mandatory traffic study.

“We tried to get them to do that,” said Teague. “But DOT said it did not rise to the level of warranting a traffic study. We disagreed.”

Nonetheless, the planning board’s hands were tied. Without the DOT on board, the town had no recourse to force the developer to address the concerns.

The Planning Board should have canned the project right then and there. No one was forcing a gun to their head to approve this project. This Planning Board has apparently no understanding of what NCDOT can - will - will not do once a development is approved. [re: Lake Buchanan Development].

The planning board now hopes to change that with a new policy that would give it more leverage with developers when the issue comes up in the future.

Great! Another policy that has no teeth, other than to deflect blame from Planning Board members.

The policy would require developers putting in more than 50 units to do a traffic impact analysis. That analysis would in turn show whether the road can handle the additional traffic as is, or whether it's deficient.

"It allows us to look at how the development will interact with our roadways," Teague said.

Anecdotally, many who have driven Sunnyside agree 200 more vehicles coming and going will be a recipe for disaster.

Where did this magic number of 200 more vehicles come from? The developer, of course.

But anecdotally is not enough. The traffic impact analysis would provide a quantifiable assessment rooted in traffic engineering formulas, as well as the math and science of sight angles, turning radiuses and the like.

"You go through the steps of a traffic impact analysis to determine how and where a traffic light might need to be placed, if turn lanes are needed, if shoulders are insufficient," Teague said.

Blind eye

The 115-unit Queen Farm subdivision didn't come close to meeting DOT's threshold for a traffic analysis.

Teague knew this.

"The criteria to trigger a traffic impact analysis for a residential housing development is 315 single family detached homes," said Wanda Austin, division engineer for the western DOT district that includes Haywood. "This equates to increasing traffic on the surrounding road networks by 3000 vehicles per day."

That may make sense for urban areas like Charlotte, where six-lane roads are the norm.

But in a rural county, where those 3,000 cars are being injected onto a narrow, two-lane country road without shoulders, turn lanes or stop lights, it's a different ballgame.

"We are mountainous. We have windy roads. You have a rural area quickly converting to a more urbanized area," Teague said.

Teague pushed for this development, which is why Teague has to go.

Austin noted that DOT did analyze the turning radius at the subdivision entrance and whether turn lanes were needed at the intersections of Sunnyside and connector roads.

BFD. That stands for Big [expletive deleted] Deal.

The bigger issue in Teague's opinion, however, was a turn lane at the subdivision entrance to prevent vehicles from sitting in the middle of Sunnyside when waiting to turn in. Waynesville planning staff implored DOT to take a second look to no avail.

This is all so minor in the scheme of things, it is like round off effort in Build Back Better.

“We should have been in a position to at least get a turn-lane to force them to widen the road at both points of entrance,” Teague said.

Who does this woman think she is? Forcing NCDOT to change their policy?

But Teague said the DOT typically takes a “wait and see” approach — waiting until after the development has been put in.

“They don’t improve roads due to the expectation of development,” Teague said.

Planning Board Member Ginger Hain said that approach seems reactionary.

The same Ginger Hain who does not know how to run a Quasi-Judicial Hearing.

In the case of Shining Rock Classical Academy, a charter school that opened along Russ Avenue last year, the town questioned whether a stop light would be needed due to the large volume of vehicles turning in and out of the school.

“DOT said ‘We are not going to require that yet.’ Then as soon as school opened, they started counting the traffic to see if warranted a study for the light,” Teague said. A stoplight was then added.

One of the only development projects in Haywood County that has met the DOT’s threshold for an upfront traffic study was the Walmart complex on South Main in the late-2000s. Walmart was required to put in various turn lanes and stop lights as a result of the analysis.

None of the big apartment complexes that have come down the pike lately had to do an analysis, however.

“None of them met the 3,000 traffic generation threshold for the DOT,” Teague said.

As noted previously, Teague know of this requirement for traffic studies.

Incidentally, the developer of the Palisades at Plott Creek apartment project did a traffic impact analysis voluntarily, but that’s rare.

Strong arming

The new policy being proposed wouldn’t be fool proof in eking out concessions from developers, however. While it would give the town some leverage, DOT ultimately has discretion when a development is located along a state road.

NCDOT still has not given final approval for the Driveway Permit for the Browning Branch entrance. Yeah, they do have ultimate discretion, not Teague or the Planning Board.

“We are never going to be in a position legally to prevent DOT from giving someone a driveway permit,” Teague said. “We would be able to say ‘In addition, the town’s requirement is going to be X,’ and how we get there is through your traffic impact analysis.”

Some planning board members questioned whether it would actually accomplish anything.

Duh!, as Homer Simpson would say.

“I am wondering how this would have helped us with Sunnyside, and I think what you are saying is ‘maybe,’” said Planning Board Member Barbara Thomas.

Planning board member Michael Blackburn asked what the cost of a traffic study typically runs.

“If money is spent by the developer, he’s not going to eat the cost. He’s going to pass it along and make the houses more expensive,” Blackburn said.

The traffic analysis shouldn’t run more than \$5,000, however, Teague said.

How the [expletive deleted] can Teague put a price tag on a traffic analysis by a third- party?

To be clear, the traffic analysis isn’t a way to hold up a project.

“A traffic impact analysis doesn’t stop development,” Teague said. “It does give us the ability to say for ‘This site you need to study X, Y, and Z,’” Teague said.

Developers would have to pay for their own traffic impact analysis, using a third-party traffic engineering firm.

The new policy may be better late than never, but that’s no consolation for the residents of Sunnyside.

Kim Mathis, a resident of Sunnyside, isn’t holding out hope the DOT will revisit it down the road.

NCDOT has to figure out and solve the mess at Browning Branch Development before they can spend time at the Queen Development.

“The state doesn’t maintain my road. They never darken the door of my road,” she said. “I’ve got big muddy ruts in my yard already from vehicles running off the road.”
