

Council won't act on Meadowcreek Parkway until June  
written by Newspark Team | May 13, 2008



The first week of June is shaping up to be an important one for the fate of the Meadowcreek Parkway. Council approval is required on projects at either end of the City's portion of the proposed road.

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Councilor Satyendra Huja

First, Council will hold the second reading of an ordinance to grant the Virginia Department of Transportation permanent and temporary easements on and through 9 acres of land near Charlottesville High School.

The School Board granted its permission on May 1

, and Council held its first reading and public hearing on May 5. The second reading is postponed until June 2 because Councilor

Satyendra Huja

will not be present at Council's meeting on May 19.

Second, Council will hold a work session on the design of the Meadowcreek Parkway Interchange on June 4. Huja requested a work session after

Council declined to follow the recommendation of the Steering Committee

that an oval roundabout be used at the junction of the Parkway and the Route 250 bypass. Councilors felt the alternatives presented to them at a meeting on April 21 were too large.

The firm overseeing the design of the interchange, RK&K, cannot move forward until Council selects a preferred alternative. Owen Peery, Project Manager for RK&K, told Charlottesville Tomorrow that his team is preparing to address Council's concerns.

"We are currently preparing for the June meeting by revisiting these issues and how they have influenced our designs to date," Peery said.

## Council vote on school land easements scheduled for June 2

On May 1, the City School Board voted 4-1 on a resolution to grant the easements, but City Attorney Craig Brown said approval came with four conditions and six expectations. The conditions are that no portion of the Meadowcreek Parkway can open until the whole roadway is complete, a safe crossing will be created for pedestrians and cyclists at the Parkway's intersection with Melbourne Road, that the road be hidden from Charlottesville High School playing fields by landscaping, and that the speed limit on the Parkway will be 25 miles per hour as it approaches Melbourne Road.

Brown said City staff proposed an additional condition to be added to say that the permanent easements will continue to be deeded to the City of Charlottesville. That would give the City jurisdiction over the control and maintenance of the intersection, and would have final say on how the intersection will be designed and operated. All five conditions are incorporated into Council's resolution.

Mayor

Dave Norris

asked Brown for more details on the School Board's expectations, and asked for an opinion on whether or not they should become conditions. Brown listed the expectations:

Mayor Norris, Councilor Huja, and Councilor Julian Taliaferro all said they wanted these expectations to be included in the City Council resolution. If Council approves, the City will grant permanent easements on approximately 1.8 acres in the County for the road, half an acre for phone and power lines, as well as another 2.5 acres for drainage, stormwater management and slopes. VDOT will get a temporary construction easement on another 3.7 acres of land that will expire upon completion of the parkway and the linear park.

Norris told the audience and his fellow Councilors that he will be voting against the resolution.

## Council approves concept for new runoff plan



Conceptual drawing of stormwater management plan

On May 5, Council approved a revised stormwater management plan for the Meadowcreek Parkway. The original design showed only one pond to retain runoff from the roadway's hard surface, but this did not meet with the current expectations of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

"It impacted a live stream [Schenck's Branch] and it was also not capturing the majority of the stormwater runoff," said Jeanette Janiczek, a City transportation engineer who presented the new plan to Council. Since March 2007, a committee made up of citizens as well as City and County staff has been working on a revision.

“We proposed turning this one-pond facility into several stormwater management amenities that would treat the quality and the quantity of the stormwater runoff,” Janiczek said. “It would be more aesthetically pleasing, blend in with the topography of the park landscape, and would also be more an educational feature for the park.”

Councilor Huja asked if it was possible to increase the size of at least one of the ponds, because he said Charlottesville should have some sort of a lake or pond. Janiczek said the committee concluded a large pond wouldn’t satisfy the regulatory agencies.

During the Council’s public comment period, Meadowcreek Parkway opponent Peter Kleeman had raised concerns that plans for the Meadowcreek Parkway Interchange appeared to overlap with the location of the stormwater management ponds. Janiczek said the two projects are separate but are being coordinated by City staff.

“We’re still in concept with the interchange, and if we could move to the design, and we could nail down and answer more specifically your questions,” Janiczek said.

TIMELINE FOR PODCAST

Sean Tubbs