

Residents give city council feedback on stormwater, transit
written by Newspark Team | September 15, 2013



More than 50 residents came to Jackson-Via Elementary School last week for the latest town hall meeting with the Charlottesville City Council.

Fry's Spring and Johnson Village residents took the opportunity to share their concerns, as well as acknowledge some of the successes they have seen in their neighborhood.

Cindy Gibson and Marga Bushara came to Thursday's meeting hoping to resolve their ongoing problems with stormwater drainage onto their properties. They said water from multiple neighbors is funneled directly onto their properties on Huntley Avenue.

"We are trying to fix this by ourselves and we do not know where to put the water," Bushara said. "We are in a no-win situation."

Jim Tolbert, the city's director of neighborhood development services, said the issue is hard for the city to address because there are no code violations on any of the properties, which were built before enforcement of current stormwater drainage standards.

Tolbert acknowledged that this was an issue the city should work on.

"Ordinarily, you don't have six- or seven-year construction projects on a development like this," Tolbert said, referring to the Huntley Development. "We are aware of your situation and our engineers are

looking at it and trying to come up with a way to address it.”

Councilor Kathy Galvin suggested that the city could facilitate a discussion about the issue.

“We need to be the ones bringing the right people into the room to get these problems fixed,” Galvin said.

Upcoming changes to Charlottesville Area Transit’s Route 4 also were discussed. Three residents expressed their disappointment that Route 4 will drop service to Johnson Village come January.

“The route has been over-promised about what it can do, and we constantly under-deliver on it,” said Westley Kern, CAT’s marketing coordinator. “When we look at the numbers of people getting on and off the bus, Johnson Village had a very low percentage for ridership.”

The residents were still displeased.

“If you can’t give us Route 4, as I believe we should have it right now, can you at least consider giving us a shuttle for work time [going in] and work time coming home?” one rider asked.

Another CAT official said the shuttle option could be priced and discussed further with the City Council.

Kern encouraged anyone affected to tell CAT what they would like from them, and offered each resident his contact information.

“If the demand grows, and there are enough people writing to us, we will always reevaluate our neighborhoods,” Kern said.

Peter Hedlund, a member of the Fry’s Spring Neighborhood Association, thanked councilors for some of their successful projects.

He said he was pleased that the city had kept and maintained the trees planted along Jefferson Park Avenue, and said that lowering the speed limit along a section of JPA from 35 mph to 30 was “a step in the right direction.”

“Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of our community — where we live and enjoy our life,” said Mayor Satyendra Huja. “The integrity and quality of neighborhoods is a top priority for our city. It needs to be continuously revisited and worked on regularly.”

The event was part of the Our Town Charlottesville initiative to bring town hall-style meetings to each neighborhood in the city. The next such meeting will be in the Woolen Mills neighborhood Oct. 3.