



## FROM THE CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE . . .

### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HUNTER MILL ROAD CORRIDOR

#### HMDL NEWS

On Thursday, March 23, the Board of Supervisors approved the Special Exception Application SE 2009- DR-008, allowing the Oakcrest School to relocate to the eastern half of the Golf Park.

#### THANK YOU'S

HMDL thanks Dranesville Supervisor John Foust, Ben Wiles of Foust's staff and Dranesville Planning Commissioner Jay Donahue for taking the time to study the issues in great detail and understand the concerns from both sides. They engaged in the rigorous review required at this site. Their actions helped to mitigate the bulk of the concerns we expressed.

HMDL would like to thank county staff, particularly Tracy Strunk for all of her time, attention to detail and cooperation on this difficult case.

#### KEY POINTS FROM THE APPROVED DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

- The sole entrance to the school will be from Hunter Mill Road at approximately the point where the Golf Park entrance is today. Left and right turns into the site will be allowed and there will be a right-turn only exit (the left turn south would be too dangerous – especially for teenage drivers). NOTE: The entrance had been proposed for Crowell Road very near "Dead Man's Curve."
- The northern berms on Crowell road will remain.
- The operating hours were slightly reduced. Monday to Thursday, now has a 10 p.m. stop time.
- Outdoor lighting and PA systems have been sufficiently reduced. The soccer and softball field will not have lights.
- A Roundabout at the Hunter Mill/Crowell intersection will be built by the school and must be in place before it opens. The roundabout is consistent with the comprehensive plan guidance. With the sole entrance off of HMR, this roundabout was crucial to the school in allowing the parents to be able to u-turn and get back to the Toll Road, from where the vast majority of them come into our community. Without it, they would be spending even more time stuck in traffic.
- The school has to make efforts to increase carpooling, and is also required to reduce its peak hour vehicle trip generation by 15% from baselines which are tied to enrollment levels.

#### WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

##### Traffic

The construction of a roundabout will be of great benefit at the Crowell/Hunter Mill Rd intersection. Traffic modeling shows that it will outperform the signalized options and be less expensive to construct and maintain. We are hopeful that this feature will be constructed within the next two years.

One critical point we were not able to get mitigated to the degree we desired is the school's traffic impact on the Hunter Mill/Dulles Toll Road interchange. Oakcrest is a commuter school with the vast majority of the students coming in off the Toll Road. While the school allegedly 'only' adds 10% to the traffic counts there, that is equal to approximately four to five years of normal traffic growth.

We asked for higher vehicle trip reduction targets, possibly including some bussing like the neighboring school. We are disappointed that our proposals were not selected, but pleased that some form of reduction was required.

##### Land Use

We will see the western portion of the Golf Park come before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors again, as the owner history makes clear, and as the outstanding APRs dictate. We expressed fears of the domino effect and received assurances that this approval in no way increases the pressure on these adjacent lots to be changed, as the Comprehensive Plans warns against such situations.

Supervisor Foust tried to allay those fears in his statement at the Board of Supervisors hearing and also in a Washington Examiner article today.

*"In my opinion, this application should rise or fall on its own merit," said Supervisor John Foust, D-Dranesville, whose district includes the future school site. "In my mind, nothing about approval of this application should give encouragement to anyone that the comprehensive plan or zoning for property in the vicinity of this application will change."*

The comprehensive plan for this area clearly warns that the cumulative effects of special uses must be considered when applications come forward. With four schools whose entrances are within a quarter mile of each other, and enrollment caps of over 1300 students and staff, we now have the equivalent of small high school here. We must evaluate any future special exception usage proposals in that light. We look forward to the continuation of the a 45 year history of citizen task force, planning staff, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors support in retaining the low density residential character of the corridor.

#### ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

In the final analysis, it is clear that active involvement in the process produced a much better outcome than would have been achieved if we did nothing. We took on a well respected, well funded opponent and got some significant concessions that benefit the community. Oakcrest School has said they are very interested in limiting the intensity of uses on the western residual portion of the site. We welcome their support in the coming years as proposals will inevitably be brought forward. It is time to do two things:

1. Share the outcome of this decision with your neighbors and friends. Ask them to sign up for this E-News (forward this one to them) which will keep them apprised of developments in the community and of how they can assist with our mission and participate in the public processes which determine the quality of life in our community.

2. Please welcome the families of the Oakcrest School as neighbors and new friends and take the time to share with them our long history of commitment to the Hunter Mill Road Community. Also share with them the rich history of this corridor.

We are counting on the support of HOAs and all HMDL supporters in promoting the historic and low density residential character of the Hunter Mill Road corridor.

### **FINALLY**

The HMDL would like to recognize the following community participants for their tireless efforts and substantive contributions:

- \* Home Owners Association members for thoughtful and careful analysis, for writing letters, sending E-mails, and testifying and attending hearings in support of those who did testify.
- \* HMDL leaders and supporters to include Jody Bennett, Jim Barrett, Steve Hull, and Brian Schuster for a successful effort on behalf of the Hunter Mill Road Community.
- \* Dave Graham without whose help the serious methodological errors of the Applicants' traffic consultant might not have been discovered. Those errors included the use of an inaccurate and unsafe model which produced misleading information about the Hunter Mill/Crowell intersection design alternatives.
- \* Bruce Bennett and the Hunter Mill Road Traffic Calming Committee for their participation in securing the expert review of the originally submitted traffic study.

### **Preserve the Scenic and Historic Character of Your Community!**

Share this e-mail with your friends - build the Hunter Mill E-community! HMDL needs a contact for every neighborhood in the corridor. Sign up – receive e-newsletters and be counted as a supporter of HMDL. Visit [www.hmdl.org](http://www.hmdl.org) and click on Membership. See our privacy policy.

Volunteer - Choose the History, Transportation, Land Use, Environment, or Communications Committee. Visit [www.hmdl.org](http://www.hmdl.org) and click on Volunteer.

The Hunter Mill Defense League (HMDL) is a community, non-profit organization in Fairfax County, Virginia, dedicated to preserving the scenic and historic character of the Hunter Mill Road Corridor. Contact [info@hmdl.org](mailto:info@hmdl.org) with any questions or comments about this e-newsletter.