

## Lynn Richardson

**From:** Keith Megginson [keith.megginson@ncmail.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 12, 2007 12:15 PM  
**To:** 'Lynn Richardson'  
**Subject:** FW: Barber Lands emergency access

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**From:** Chris Walker [mailto:Chris.Walker@datadirect.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 11, 2007 11:53 PM  
**To:** Vanderbeck Tom & Laura; Thompson Carl; Cross Mike; Barnes Pat; Lucier George  
**Cc:** Kost Sally; Keith Megginson; bjjvc@emji.net; pbford@mindspring.com; drclyde@embarqmail.com; Klarmann.clc@mindspring.com; dsturner1@alltel.net; jhinkley@nc.rr.com; judysharpman@earthlink.net; mwglick@nc.rr.com; Ernst4commish@aol.com; Chris Walker  
**Subject:** Barber Lands emergency access

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to you not as the Chair of the Planning Board, but only as a member of the Board, concerning our vote last night on sketch design approval of "Subdivision of Barber Lands." This is not an official report, either majority or minority, because I was a member of neither—I abstained on the vote. I do have a particular concern that I wish to convey to you.

This is a well-designed development and I believe that everyone in the room, including at least 200 residents of Fearington Village, was in basic agreement about that. The developer had met with the residents and worked out compromises with them on all major issues. The contentious issue before us was the recommendation of the Planning staff for a "dedication of public right-of-way for possible future road connection and utility access for extension of county water lines." A petition with over 800 signatures opposed this access route for potential development of the McLean property, south of Barber lands, as it would funnel traffic through Fearington Village to Highway 15-501. Mr. Barber also opposed this full access.

I struggled with this proposal as I believe that strong arguments existed on both sides. By ordinance and precedent, I believe that the staff was correct in recommending this connector route, as this is County policy and has been recommended and approved in many projects that have come before the Planning Board. There seems to be some question as to how "landlocked" the McLean property truly is, and the McLean attorney indicated that her client would want to procure additional private access even if the access through Barber lands were granted. What the developer had willingly conceded and indicated on the sketch map was a 45-foot emergency access corridor. One Fearington resident proposed a gate across this access that could be activated only by emergency vehicles. In my opinion, this was an good proposal that went largely unheeded.

On balance, I felt that it was a 50/50 call on the correctness of future connectivity policy versus the undoubted negative effect that it would have on Fearington Village. A motion was made to approve the sketch design with no access to McLean, not even emergency access; to require 100-foot buffers; and to require an environmental impact assessment. Although I wanted to approve the sketch design, I had difficulty with the motion as proposed. An amendment was offered that would require gated emergency access only. I suggested that it be further amended to include utility easements, as staff had recommended. Unfortunately, from my perspective, this amendment was withdrawn. Had it not been, I would have supported the amended motion, although I did not see the necessity for an environmental impact assessment. I, therefore, abstained, because I could not support the motion as presented, and also did not want to vote against what I considered to be a well-planned development.

My request of you is that, during your deliberations on this matter, you restore the 45-foot emergency access that is already on the sketch map, gated for emergency vehicles only, and that you include utility access. I can see absolutely no detriment to Fearington Village from this, but I can anticipate unfortunate, perhaps tragic, circumstances without it. It would be truly tragic if the response time to a dangerous emergency situation were delayed by even three minutes because of this lack of access. The argument was raised that this access could

somehow be open to regular vehicular traffic in the future. I fail to understand how that could occur if the conditions on the access are that it is gated and for emergency use only. I also believe that it makes no economic sense not to grant utility access. How could this possibly harm Fearington Village? What logic is there in running extra lengths of utilities, perhaps amounting to miles, when this easement might potentially prevent the need?

I urge you not to remove this important access that the developer has willing provided, and to heed the recommendation of staff for the granting of utility access.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chris Walker