

**WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
March 17, 2015 Public Hearing - Commission Board Room
1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428**

DISTRICT 1 Alan Bush Chairman	DISTRICT 2 Charles Kent	DISTRICT 3 Charles Brock	DISTRICT 4 Todd Abbott	DISTRICT 5 Lynn Gothard Vice-Chair
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Present at the meeting were Chairman Bush, Commissioners Kent, Abbott, and Gothard. Also attending the meeting were County Attorney Goodman, County Coordinator Corbin, and Deputy Clerk Brantley. Commissioner Brock was present via polycom. Clerk Bell was not present.

Chairman Bush advised the public hearing is in reference to the possibility of closing Falling Waters Road.

County Engineer Knauer addressed the Board and public. An estimate of a year and a half the Board pursued a design for Falling Waters Road to address the safety issues. The largest problem identified was located north of Fairway Drive. There is a vertical curve located there that required an estimated 5 ½ feet of cut in order to make that vertical curve match a 35 mph speed limit.

A set of plans were composed and the project was advertised. There was negotiation for right-of-way along with community meetings to obtain right-of-way to address the safety issue. Obtaining the right-of-way was unsuccessful by the landowners.

As a result, the Board has given instruction to address signage to address the safety concerns without using additional right-of-way.

County Engineer Knauer showed the audience a slide that reflected the existing grade on the vertical curve as well as the purposed grade on the

vertical curve.

Currently residents that pull out on Fairway are pulling out downhill of a blind curve, which is a dangerous situation.

Mr. Ellis asked County Engineer Knauer if there is right-of-way at the hill.

County Engineer Knauer advised, as he is aware of there is right-of-way signed by one resident.

County Engineer Knauer advised the Board/public in order to shave the hill down a great deal of the sides would be needed.

Mr. Ellis addressed the Board in reference to the hill. It would be an inconvenience to many of residents that live on Fairway Drive if the road is closed. He suggested solving one issue by shaving the hill if there is right-of-way available. He is in opposition of closing the road.

Commissioner Abbott spoke on Falling Waters Road. The safety study reflected the visual stopping point is 7-9 miles per hour over the hill. The County looked into slowing the traffic as well as limiting the amount of traffic. In order to cut the hill down the County needs right-of-way, which the County failed to obtain the proper right-of-way.

County Engineer Knauer advised there was not an actual safety study done but a design based on green book standards. The design based on green book standards is what that requires.

The County turned in for a safety grant through the Department of Transportation.

County Engineer Knauer advised the green book standard, which is what the County is required to abide by would require this for 35 mph.

A resident asked how much right-of-way would be needed on both sides of the road in order to cut the hill down.

County Engineer Knauer advised 100 feet of right-of-way is needed. The distance north and south would be estimated at 700 feet.

County Attorney Goodman read the Board approved non-agenda section statement: The Washington County Board of County Commissioners welcomes your input at the public comment or public hearing portion of this meeting. While your comments are appreciated, please be aware this is not a political forum, nor is it a time for personal accusations and derogatory and personal remarks. Profane or vulgar language is not permitted. In order to maintain respect for all points of view, the Board request not clapping, booing, or any other form of support or non-support be used. This is not a question and answer session. Further, it is the general policy of Washington County that no official action will be taken on items brought to the Board. However, the Board may at its direction direct staff to assist in looking into the matter. Please direct your comments to the Chairman and provide any documentation to the County Manager for disbursement. If you would like to address the Board, we would ask that you come to the

podium, state your name, address, and topic you will be discussing. Please limit your comments to no more than three minutes. At the end of your time I will ask you to finish your thought and then to please take your seat. Your participation is welcomed and appreciated.

Chairman Bush advised the public that he was not in support of closing the road.

Commissioner Brock advised that he does not support closing the road.

- Gerald Ritcher, 1371 Falling Waters Road, suggested a speed limit and bumps, instead of closing the road. If the road were closed, it would affect emergency personnel as well as the residents.
- Stanley Pool, 1309 Old Church Road advised the Board he does not want the road closed. If the Board does choose to close the road it should be closed at State Park Road, which would affect everyone.
- John Brown, 1553 Clark Lane, asked the Board how wide is the current right-of-way?

County Engineer Knauer advised there is not current platted right-of-way on the road but prescriptive rights, which are to the back side of the ditch. This distance would be around 25-30 feet in the area that is a problem.

John Brown advised the Board the road is going to be unsafe, whether it is closed or open. The issue is fixing the road in order to provide safety.

If there is a problem with speeding, it is a law enforcement problem. He is against the road being closed.

- Dave Gordy – No comment

- Scott Donovan, 1292 Clayton Road, advised the Board the condition of the road has been bad for years. If the road were closed, it would be bad for farmers as well as emergency personnel. He requested the road be left open.

- H. C. Harden (Butch), 351 Alford Road, Cottdale, is opposed to Falling Waters Road being closed. If there are other design alternatives, they should be used.

- Felicia – Advised the Board she does not feel the road should be closed. The County should focus on other areas in the County, such as Clayton and South Boulevard.

- Joe McClone – No Comment

- Oley Ellis, 1297 Fairway Drive asked if there was right-of-way from Randy Ellis on the east side to Larry Kelly.

Commissioner Abbott advised Mr. Kelly did not provide right-of-way.

Mr. Ellis suggested Falling Waters Road remain open.

- Frank – No Comment

- Ralph Segrid – No Comment

- Mavis Smith, 1625 Falling Waters Road is opposed to the Board closing Falling Waters Road. She expressed concerns about an extended route for the fire truck, ambulance, road washouts, evacuation route, turnaround of the closure, potholes, speed, and Tri-County increased mileage.

- Bill Birge, 1349 Julie Lane, advised the Board the road was poorly designed. He expressed frustration about the road being closed and the safety issues need to be fixed.

- Joey McKenzie, 1337 Old Church Road, advised the Board there is not a problem on the South end of Falling Waters Road. If the road is going to be closed, it should be closed at Fairway Drive. The County needs to be more definitive of the plan. He suggested installing speed bumps on the hill.

- Jimmy Sasser – No Comment

- Odell Clark, 1642 Clark Lane would like the road to remain open.

- Larry Parker – No Comment

- Malcolm Minchin, 1273 Fairway Drive addressed the Board the problem is north of the hill. The drainage needs to be looked at on Mr. Ritcher's property. He is opposed to closing the road. He suggested installing ditches and the County obtain right-of-way.

- Mike Welch, 1300 Fairway Drive suggested the County install something

- to physically slow people down because signing will not slow people down.
- Dr. Gabriel Berry, 1261 Fairway Drive addressed the Board the problem about the road is it being washed out. The proposed plans would not fix a specific section with potholes (wash out road).
 - Rick Brannon, 1726 Gainer Road, advised the Board you could not close a road. He addressed the issue of the road suggested to be closed because of a safety issue. When you start doing these things, it is a Pandora's Box; the Board needs to be very careful about.
 - Gene Brandow, Fire Services Coordinator provided the Board a map, which reflected fire departments increase of response time with the new routes due to the projected road closure.
 - Eric Bush, 1321 Julie Lane, addressed the Board the issue is bad engineering. It can be fixed with proper engineering.
 - Joann Walsingham, 1350 Willow Lane brought to the Boards attention the children may have to load the bus earlier and there will be increased mileage for buses. She requested the Board leave the road open.
 - Kenneth Bruner advised the Board he owns a Farm near Clark Lane. If the road is closed, he will have to reroute his equipment though Chipley, which will be a safety issue.
 - G. Bush, 1685 Falling Waters Road, suggested the Board address slowing the traffic down.

- Kevin Fussel, 1519 Gainer Road, family owns 3/8 of right-of-way on the road. Mr. Fussel requested clarification of the road closing.

County Engineer Knauer addressed Mr. Fussel there will be challenges closing the road and provided options, such as barricades, or a concrete barrier wall.

Chairman Bush addressed the public that he does not feel the Board would close the road after hearing from the public today.

Commissioner Brock spoke on the history of building the road. He feels Falling Waters Road will meet criteria for a safety grant. He does not support closing the road but fixing it completely.

- Renae Jenkins, 1211 Hickory Ridge Road, asked when the County would vote on closing the road.

Chairman Bush advised it would have to be brought up in the form of a motion and it would have to be done in a regular board meeting. The next meeting is Thursday at 9:00 a.m.

- Larry Parker, 1699 Falling Waters Road, addressed the Board if the road is closed at the proposed location the problem would be moved from the hill to the inter-section of Old Church Road and Clayton Road. He does not see closing the road as fixing the problem. The road could be fixed without closing the road.

- Kevin Fussel addressed the Board that forcing the residents to reroute could result in possible wrecks and lawsuits.

Commissioner Gothard advised the public she was 1 of the 3 Commissioners that voted to have the public hearing. The reason for that was to be able to hear the wants of the people to ensure she was in touch with the people in the community.

She advised her vote to have the public hearing was not in support of closing the road but to adequately represent the community wants.

Commissioner Abbott offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kent and carried to adjourn.

Deputy Clerk Brantley

Date Board Approved