



**Vote DOUG HOLROYD  
for  
York County Supervisor, District 1**

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## **District 1 Update: July 2023**

Residents and Homeowner Associations are encouraged to share these updates within their communities.  
I welcome your comments and questions.

### **Campaign Update**

As I shared last month, I've wrapped up my door-to-door neighborhood campaigning, having visited constituents on each and every street in District 1. I've reached out to nearly 2000 homeowners and spoken with approximately 1500 citizens. I feel very prepared to represent this district as your next Supervisor.

On June 22, the York County Registrar declared me the uncontested candidate for York County, District 1, Board of Supervisor position in the November 2023 election.

I thank everyone who has supported me in this effort, and I look forward to serving you.

### **Update on Springfield Rd.**

In February 2023 I led a delegation to address the Board of Supervisors meeting on an unacceptable situation facing our residents on Springfield Road. As you may recall, the citizens of Springfield Rd (off Penniman Rd, north of Water Country USA) were being inundated with construction vehicles accessing the new site of the Tranquility residential development.

Below, is an excellent article featured on the front page of the Virginia Gazette on July 15<sup>th</sup>, by Ben Swenson which was subsequently followed by an editorial on July 17<sup>th</sup> by WTKR, Channel 3:

<https://www.wtkr.com/news/residents-on-narrow-york-county-road-frustrated-by-nearby-construction-project>

York County has now completed its engineering report to assess the feasibility of using Hawk's Nest Rd as a construction access for the Tranquility construction site. That report has not yet been

presented to the Board. On behalf of the Springfield Road residents, I have called for a Property Tax Relief. That motion has not yet been considered by the BOS.

(See the full News Gazette article below)

# A very rough road

York project puts residents in a difficult spot, with few options other than to wait for construction to end.



Josh Mullins watches from the end of his driveway as a construction truck heads down Springfield Road for the Tranquility construction site. Kim O'Brien Root/staff



Construction and private vehicles access Tranquility, an age-restricted community under construction in York County, exclusively via Springfield Road. A sign asks passersby to be respectful of the neighbors.

By Ben Swenson Correspondent

YORK — Until 2021, Springfield Road was a quiet country lane tucked in the woods of York County. Late that year, work began on a 213-home, age-restricted community called Tranquility, transforming the dead-end street into a thoroughfare for commercial and private vehicles.

Residents of Springfield Road and community members advocating on their behalf are now pleading with York County officials to alleviate what they say is a constant stream of construction traffic — a stream that will last for years of the development's buildout — on a street that's largely home to elderly and working-class people.

Many of them hope that an ongoing study of an alternative access — one that itself would require significant effort to come to fruition — will show that Springfield Road can be bypassed altogether for the remainder of the construction.

County officials say their hands are tied, and that developer Tranquility Residential, site contractor Henderson, Inc. and homebuilder Ryan Homes have a legal right to use Springfield Road. There are no other practical options.

Henderson has taken measures to soften the effects of contractors' use of the road, remains engaged in ongoing dialogue with Springfield Road residents and is looking for ways to relieve issues that arise.

Once the development is complete, which the original developer said might take five or six years in phases, Springfield Road will no longer be used for access, and residential traffic will exclusively use a different private road running through an adjacent timeshare community.

Development finds community again

The area encompassing Springfield Road was once known as Jones Point and was a rural enclave of displaced Black families who had lost their homes when the U.S. government commandeered tens of thousands of acres for what would become the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station and Camp Peary in the first half of the 20th century.

For decades, Jones Point was off the beaten path. But development crept closer to this corner of York County over the years. Water Country USA was built to the south in the mid-1980s, and King's Creek Plantation, a timeshare resort, put development on Springfield Road's doorstep around 2007.

One of the large properties to the northeast of Springfield Road is the former Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Fuel Storage Facility, a site abandoned for decades but that the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority is now transforming into an industrial park and solar farm.



There is also an 83.7-acre parcel to the east of Springfield Road that is zoned for economic opportunity and that county officials approved in 1997 for additional units in King's Creek Plantation. But the timeshare resort let its option on that property lapse, and the parcel was open again for new proposals.

In 2018, Lamont Myers, president of Mid-Atlantic Land Management LLC, appeared before York County officials with a plan to build a community for people aged 55 and older. It would develop a parcel already approved for such an endeavor, providing upward of \$500,000 in annual revenue to the county while avoiding the sort of industrial enterprises that might cause issues with the adjacent residential communities.

But a major concern was construction access. The only public road into and out of the parcel is Springfield Road, and its condition wasn't great.

A 2018 York County Planning Division staff report described Springfield Road, which it said was between 10 and 13 feet wide, as "an older, substandard road serving 12 to 13 residential properties." The road was crumbling in many places and not wide enough for large vehicles to pass one another.

Tranquility Drive, a much newer and wider road that ties into the new development from the south, is a private street maintained by the timeshare resort. In 2018, King's Creek Plantation managing partner Kevin Jones threw the resort's support behind the Tranquility development based on three conditions, among them that all construction vehicles access the site through Springfield Drive. Residential vehicles — estimated to be 770 vehicle trips per day once the development is complete — will exclusively access Tranquility through the timeshare resort once residents move in.

In February 2018, the application for the rezoning needed for the Tranquility development went before the York County Planning Commission. The evening of the meeting, two planning commissioners were absent, and one recused himself from the vote because of a potential conflict of interest. With four planning commissioners voting, the application failed to gain Planning Commission approval — which is an advisory and not a binding vote — with a 2-2 tie.

Montee Jons was chairman of the Planning Commission at the time and cast one of the no votes. He said that while on paper the development looked like a good fit for that parcel, routing all the construction traffic onto Springfield Road was a dealbreaker. Jons is now an officer with the Conserve York County Foundation, an organization that advocates for responsible development in the jurisdiction's rural areas.

Not only was Springfield Road substandard, he said, but the optics were not good. Jons said he was not comfortable with the timeshare resort being OK with high volumes of residential traffic permanently on its private road while routing all the construction traffic through a less-visible and less-well-off neighborhood.

“These are plain people — the elderly and people who work on their feet all day,” he said. “These are poor people and people of color.”

The volume of traffic on Springfield Road again came up when the Tranquility application went before the York County Board of Supervisors in March 2018.

Myers said the road, which he measured at 14 feet wide, would encounter a limited amount of traffic on any given workday. Myers deferred to the expertise of Mid-Atlantic Land Management’s traffic consultant, Chris Lawrence, who framed the traffic issue as a question of numbers.

“Do we put construction access through Tranquility and through the timeshare property, or do we do it on Springfield? So, it’s about a dozen homes versus 460 timeshares,” Lawrence said at the public hearing.

“We discussed construction traffic with the builders, and our best estimation is that we’re going to have roughly 20 construction vehicles on a typical day,” he said.

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve the application.

Big trucks on a narrow road

Chairman Thomas Shepperd, who voiced strong concerns in the public hearing about the traffic impact on Springfield Road, said that the number quoted by the traffic consultant had little bearing on his vote.

“The issue of 20 (vehicles) ... was not in my calculation, my consideration,” he said. “No one knows that answer, and to throw out a number like that to me didn’t make any sense at all.”

Shepperd said the vote instead reflected the board’s inability to force a private road owner to allow access.

“All of a sudden, (residents of Springfield Road) have logging trucks, etc., and it’s a mess,” he said. “No one would want to have it happen on their street, but you run into a legal issue. What are your options?”

A limit on the number of vehicles on Springfield Road was not in the final ordinance approved by the board, but it did include a couple stipulations, namely that construction activities be conducted only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and that the developer post a surety to return Springfield Road to its original or a better condition than it was before Tranquility’s construction.

Construction on Tranquility did not begin until 2021. By then, the original parties involved in the approval process had moved on. Myers’ Mid-Atlantic Land Management had sold its stake in the development. King’s Creek — which dropped the word

“Plantation” from its name but still retains it in its URL — was bought by Spinnaker Resorts.

A spokeswoman for Spinnaker Resorts declined requests to comment.

Current site contractor Henderson Inc. purchased the development in the summer of 2021. Since then, according to civil preconstruction manager Peter Henderson, the firm has been working to mitigate the inconveniences for Springfield Road residents.

“We have added pull-off areas to help with passing traffic, and we have put signage up to remind contractors to be respectful of the neighbors,” he said.

“We have also set up an email and phone line for the residents to communicate any concerns that arise so we can attempt to address and remedy what we can and what we have control over.”

Henderson said that on a typical day, Springfield Road encounters roughly 40 work vehicles that are contractors’ means of transportation to work, along with 15 or so larger trucks delivering materials to the job site. Henderson said it’s impossible to know now how long construction will take.

Springfield Road resident Josh Mullins, however, said the volume of daily traffic is in the triple digits. On June 8, with a camera he has on his property, Mullins said he counted 240 vehicle trips, or roughly 120 individual vehicles of different sizes, going into and out of Tranquility via Springfield Road.

For Mullins, the volume of traffic is not the only issue. The traffic creates noise and dust in the 12-hour window when it’s permitted. Especially worrisome is the narrow width of the road, which is frequently occupied with large trucks. In the event of an emergency, according to Mullins, EMS might not be able to arrive in time.

York County Supervisor Walter Zaremba voted to approve the application for Tranquility but said he is not happy with the way things have turned out.

“The current use of Springfield Road is not a winning solution,” Zaremba said. “There is no reason for us to abuse the citizens who live on Springfield.”

No help coming soon

Zaremba said it is worth considering an alternative suggested by community activists, among them Doug Holroyd, who is running for the seat that Zaremba will vacate later this year.

According to Holroyd, it might be possible to access Tranquility via a road to the north of the property, Hawks Nest Drive. The biggest issue would be a ravine the road would have to cross to get to the construction site.

County Administrator Neil Morgan commissioned a feasibility study by AH Engineering Consultants to look into using Hawks Nest Drive. But Morgan said that he suspects there will be obstacles that would make such a road impractical.

For starters, Morgan said, there will be several agencies, among them the Virginia Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers if the proposed path contains wetlands, that will add numerous layers of regulatory red tape, meaning that completion of a road would be years down the road — likely as construction on Tranquility is wrapping up.

What's more, according to Morgan, the cost of a proposed road would run into the millions, a price tag that many taxpayers would find unpalatable.

"To me, if the county was prepared to make that type of investment, which wouldn't be easy, I think that a smarter thing to do would be to upgrade Springfield Road long term," he said.

Shepperd agrees that a better approach would be to invest that money in Springfield Road, perhaps enhancing the infrastructure, and providing sewer and water to residents, who now use septic systems.

Holroyd said that not only is Springfield Road inadequate to handle construction traffic for five years, but also that county officials should have solicited more input from Springfield Road residents prior to the vote. He said that two were directly notified of the coming changes.

This episode shows the need for better planning, Holroyd said. "They stopped at Springfield Road because it had all they needed," he said. County officials say that they recognize it's a lousy situation for the people who live along Springfield Road, but that legally other options aren't realistic and that the inconvenience is temporary.

Morgan said that the developer is taking strides to be a good partner. "They are making efforts to minimize the problem. What they're not going to do is give up their lawful right to develop the property," he said.

But for Mullins, the traffic that passes in front of his house has left him dejected and inspired to spread a message of political involvement.

"The damage is already done," Mullins said. "We just want to keep this from happening to anyone else."

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