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More houses will add to traffic woes on Troy Pike, neighbors say

By BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

What was described by the developer as a scaled-down plan to rezone 9.67 acres at 1470 Troy Pike from A-1 agriculture to R-1C single-family residential (R-1C) in order to construct 25 houses did not quiet neighbors' opposition to approving more development.

During a public hearing on Dec. 11, the neighbors urged the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission to deny the zone change request because adding 25 homes will still worsen existing traffic woes on Troy Pike.

Coupled with the residential developments that have already been approved for hundreds of apartments and single-family units, "Do we really need more development right now until we catch up and take a pause on what all we're doing," asked Mark Williams.

"I think we need to keep Woodford County the kind of place we want it to be," he added. "Not the kind of place some of these surrounding counties are."

Vision Engineering (Jihad Hallany) previously withdrew a plan to rezone the entire property — all 22.5 acres — from A-1 to single- and multi-family residential. The original plan had proposed 227 apartment units, which were removed in the revised plan in response to concerns raised by neighbors.

The new application to rezone the property, which is located inside the urban service area, was submitted on Nov. 20 and only proposes single-family units.

Hallany said an existing house and MacDougals Garden Center will remain on the portion of the property (1460 Troy Pike) not being developed into single-family lots. Also, he pointed out Versailles has a housing shortage.

"I need to do something with that property," said Hallany. "This is a property that has been in the urban service boundary for 47 years, 48 years. ... It's the last piece of property that has not been developed" in this part of the county.

With the additional housing developments previously approved on Troy Pike and elsewhere in Versailles, Mark Pearson asked, "...

How many is enough?"

Given the large amount of traffic that backs up in front of the proposed subdivision during student pickup at Southside Elementary in the afternoons, "This is an accident waiting to happen," said Dean Stoops, who identified himself as a resident of Helmsley Estates and a retired Army aviation safety officer and accident investigator.

Even though the proposed subdivision has been scaled down, Planning Director Steve Hunter told the commission that Vision Engineering's plan still includes a left-turn lane into the development and three lanes exiting the site.

Hunter noted that a traffic study was not required with this zone change request because this plan creates fewer than 50 lots.

However, neighbors urged the commission to pause taking action on this zone change and other proposed residential developments until its own traffic study has been completed.

Chad Grant, who moved to Mortonsville because he loves this community "exactly the way it is," told the commission, "I've lived in four small towns in my life, and they've all been ruined by this exact thing. Slow, slow, slow, slow urban sprawl, and then it's gone."

After the hearing was closed, the commission voted to table action on the zone change request for a month to review the testimony given.

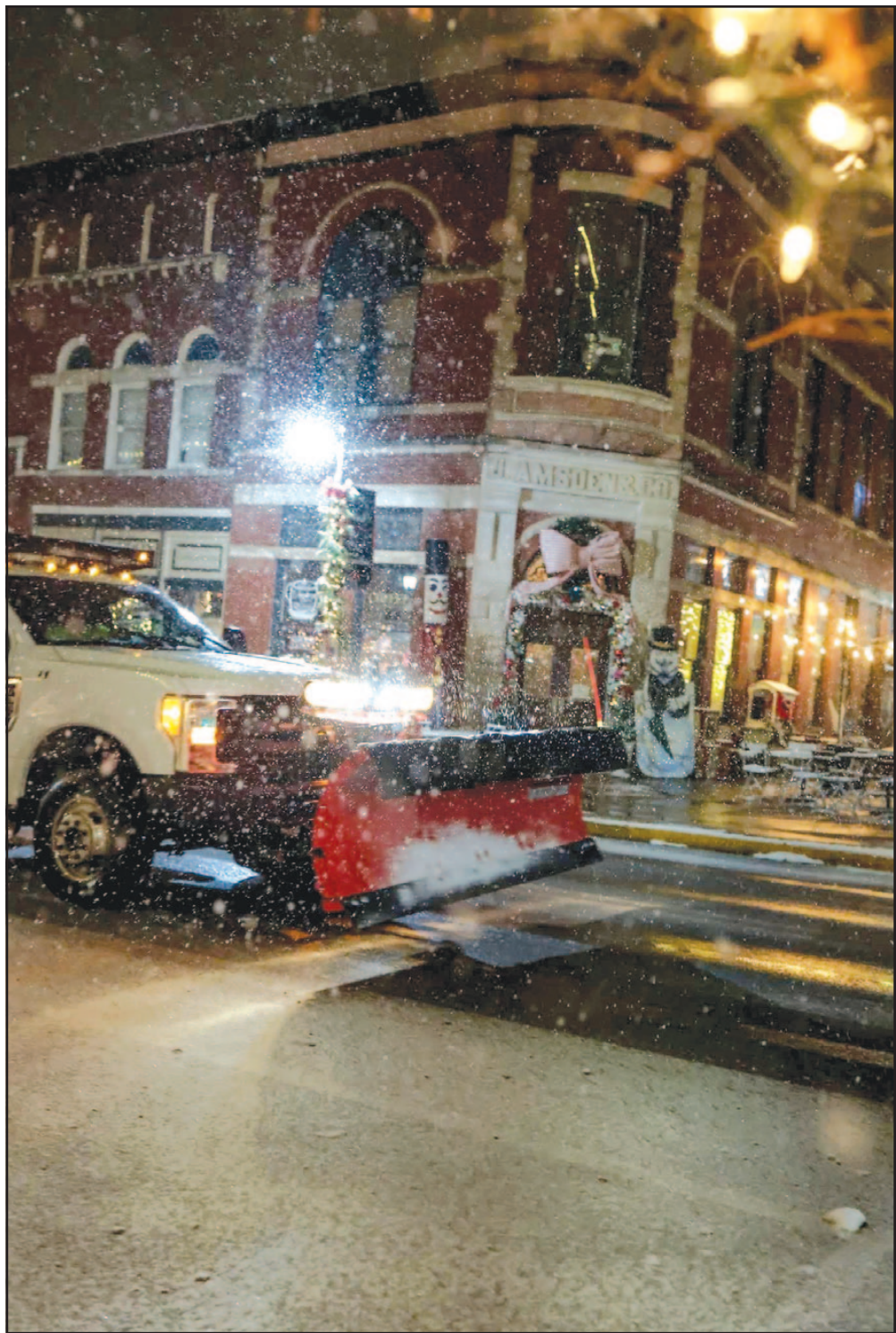
The vote came after Commissioner Randal Bohannon said, "We need to sit down ourselves and just map out how many houses have we approved in this county." His suggestion to the other commissioners was met with applause from those at the public hearing.

Commissioner Chris Sharp recused himself from the hearing because of what he described as a possible conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict. Commissioner Whitney Stepp was absent.

Midway U field house

A development plan to construct a second field house near the athletic fields on the Midway University campus was approved. A conditional use permit (CUP) was approved to allow the field house on property zoned as A-1

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WOODFORD COUNTY ROAD CREWS were out plowing roads Dec. 12 as snow moved into the area. (Photo by Bill Caine)

Northside Elementary fifth graders do illustrations for Christmas poem

By BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Midway author Bob Rouse has written stories and published books about growing up in Midway. His next writing project, a poem being published in next week's *Woodford Sun*, was inspired by his granddaughter Nora.

Santa Day on Railroad Street will feature illustrations by fifth graders at Northside Elementary School.

"I can write," Rouse told the students, "but I can't draw.

So I'm going to ask you guys to help with some of the art."

He said their spot illustrations will help his Christmas story come to life.

Earlier, Rouse read from *Backyard Poetry*, a book he wrote and published to share what he experienced while working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. He wrote poems about what he saw in his backyard, his observations about what was happening in the world around him, and what he described as his stupidest poem:

I Cut My Own Hair.

"The best part of this book are the illustrations," Rouse told the students. Because he can't draw, he asked his daughter-in-law (Nora's mom and their teacher), Shelby Rouse, to do the illustrations for *Backyard Poetry*.

Because students are not exposed to a lot of poetry in the fifth grade, Shelby Rouse said she appreciated giving them an opportunity to collaborate on a project with someone in their community who is a published author.

"So anytime you can bridge that school to community gap," she said, "it's a great opportunity for them."

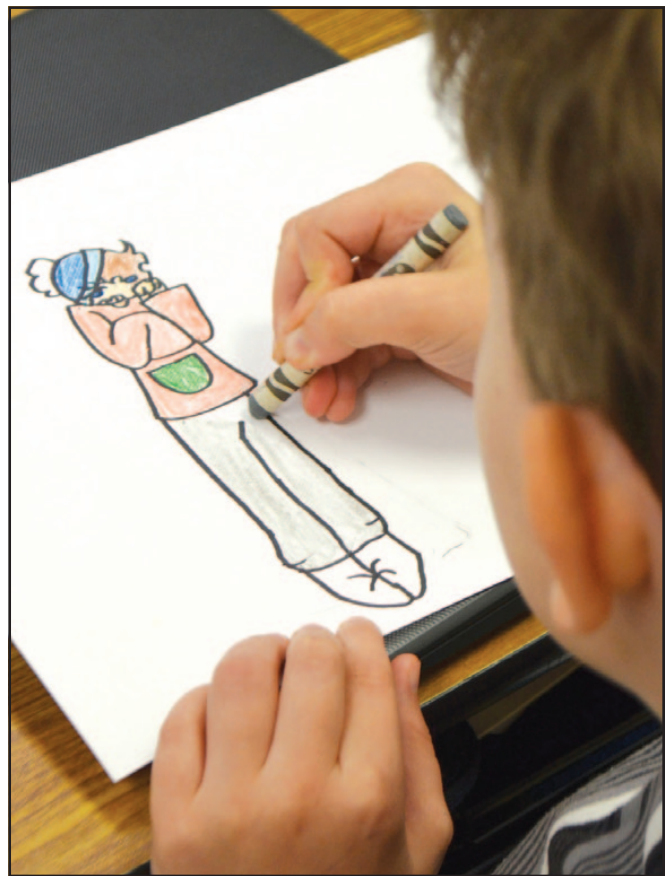
She called doing illustrations for a poem being published in the *Sun* as "a really exciting opportunity" for fifth graders. It also supports a reading and writing standard, asking them to explain how visuals and multimedia elements contribute to a text.

Before her father-in-law asked them to collaborate with him, he talked to the students about writing and asked who liked to write. "I really like to write," Bob Rouse told them. "And I write for a living, but I also write for fun."

He also talked about growing up in the house next to Holly Hill Inn and spending most of his life in Midway because he wanted the fifth graders to know "what I've done with my writing, you can do with your writing."

Rouse started writing fictional short stories published by the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and now earns his living writing "good news" articles and news releases about cities as editor of the National Tour Association, he said.

Later, after writing several short stories about Christmas in Midway for his friends, Rouse published his first



USING PENCILS, CRAYONS AND SHARPIES, fifth graders recently worked on spot illustrations for *Santa Day on Railroad Street*, a Christmas poem by Midway author Bob Rouse that'll be published in next week's *Woodford Sun*. (Photo by Bob Vlach)



FIFTH GRADERS, from left, Savannah Johnson, Grant Raterman and Mason Russell worked on illustrations for a poem being published in next week's *Woodford Sun*. Their spot illustrations will frame the storyline of her father-in-law's poem, *Santa Day on Railroad Street*, teacher Shelby Rouse said. (Photo by Bob Vlach)

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GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Friday, Dec. 19, Fiscal Court at 10:30 a.m.