

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 2025
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Community Council meeting was held in person in October with an option to also participate online via Zoom.

Members present: Rob Pearigen, Scott Wilson, Ben Beavers, Michael Payne, Marilyn Phelps, John Gilmer, Rhea Bowden, Evelyn Patton, Walker Adams, Delores Jelks, Aidan Goulding, and Katie Gohn

Members via Zoom: Ed Hawkins and Ben Tarhan

Absent: Sallie Green, Laura Willis, Kevin Cummings, Phil White, and Robert Benton

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer (attending via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

(1) Approval of the September Minutes

The minutes for the September 2025 Community Council were approved as circulated.

(2) Kennerly Road Truck Traffic Update- Benton

Scott Wilson opened this conversation by reading an update from Robert Benton outlining the complaint received about heavy truck traffic and speeding along Kennerly Road.

Chris Barton, a Kennerly Road resident, raised concerns about increasing heavy truck traffic, including food delivery and Facilities Management trucks, speeding and damaging the road. He noted that Kennerly Road has become a shortcut for trucks coming from Highway 41-A, which has led to congestion and road deterioration.

Chris reported some success in working with Caroline Thompson (Sewanee Dining) and her efforts to direct delivery trucks to alternative routes, but without formal intervention from the Franklin County Road Commission (FCRC) and TDOT, rerouting through GPS is difficult. Additionally, the glass recycling truck picks up on Kennerly.

Council Feedback:

- Kennerly Road is a county road, and the University cannot prevent traffic, but speed humps could help reduce speeding.
- Johnny Hughes, the county road commissioner, can address concerns about the repaving schedule for Kennerly.

(3) Economic Development Update from David Shipps- Adams

David Shipps, Vice President for Economic Development and Community Relations, announced that funding for the University apartment project has been finalized by the Board of Regents. This will allow construction to begin in May 2026 or possibly earlier. The project will consist of two three-story buildings. David will provide ongoing updates on the timeline and progress of the housing development.

(4) Speeding and Dogs Update from Chief Thomas- Adams

Chief Jeremy Thomas confirmed that the Sewanee Police Department has been patrolling Kennerly Road to address concerns about speeding. He also reported that timely reporting of dog-related incidents is crucial for effective enforcement. Delays in reporting limit the ability of the Sewanee Police Department (SPD) to take action. SPD can remain on the premises until Animal Control arrives, but they require prompt notification to address incidents properly.

Marilyn Phelps raised concerns about the issuance of an "at-large dog" citation when a dog has bitten someone. She disagreed with the citation being given in such cases without a separate citation for the bite itself. Chief Thomas explained that law enforcement can only make a report on what they observe unless the incident is witnessed by an officer. He emphasized that it is the victim's responsibility to press charges if they wish to hold the dog owner accountable. While SPD can provide a report to the victim, it is not admissible in court without further action from the victim.

Vice Chancellor Rob Pearigen inquired about the next steps to update the dog policy. Isabelle Love confirmed that a vote is required to approve changes made by the policy committee. Scott Wilson added that the proposal discussed in the previous meeting to fine community members for dog policy violations is not a feasible option, as there is no governing body to enforce such fines.

The council agreed to include the updated dog control policy on the agenda for the next meeting, where a vote will be held on the proposed changes.

(5) Announcements and/or Questions

As a follow-up from September's agenda item, Isabelle Love, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Administration, addressed the confusion regarding the repaving of Clara's Point Road. Love clarified that the directive from Road Commissioner Johnny Hughes specified that repaving would occur "in the next calendar year." However, a misunderstanding led to the directive being interpreted as referring to the "next fiscal year," which was a few days after the request resulting in a delay in communications with residents.

The council agreed to improve communication for future road projects to ensure residents are properly informed about schedules and timelines.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carey Fulmer