

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27, 2025  
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

Members present: Rob Pearigen, Scott Wilson, Rhea Bowden, Michael Payne, Phil White, Evelyn Patton, Ben Tarhan, Laura Willis, Marilyn Phelps, Katie Gohn, Kevin Cummings, Walker Adams, Sallie Green, Ben Beavers, Robert Benton, Aidan Goulding, and Roger Speers

Members via Zoom:

Absent: Ed Hawkins

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer (attending via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with a welcome to the newly elected Community Council members, Katie Gohn, Kevin Cummings, and Walker Adams. Newly elected member, Ed Hawkins was ill and unable to make tonight's meeting.

**(1) Approval of the October Minutes**

The minutes for the October 2024 Community Council were approved as circulated.

**(2) DREMC Streetlights- Payne and Willis**

Laura Willis opened the discussion of concerns from the community of the new LED lights that have been installed by Duck River in key areas citing concerns of light pollution that could be harmful to birds, insects, and wildlife. The location, angles, and brightness are among the concerns for many. Laura revisited the subcommittee that had been formed in 2023 to find ways to alleviate these issues and study other campuses and municipalities utilizing adaptive lighting. Laura stated that efforts to obtain assistance from the University administration were one of the roadblocks in this subcommittee's efforts. Ben Beavers confirmed he had spoken with constituents in his area who were concerned about the bright lights that had replaced the burnout bulbs. Using a smaller-wattage light bulb could potentially provide some cost savings while also increasing pedestrian safety while limiting the dangers to nocturnal creatures.

Scott Wilson confirmed that Robert Benton, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management, has worked closely with DREMC. Mr. Benton stated that there have been many conversations and requests from the community and parents citing the need for more lighting for students and pedestrian safety.

Before confirming the University would sit down with Mark Webb (community liaison) and Duck River to discuss options, discussions included:

- Individual concerns of redirecting street lights away from bedrooms or backyards could be addressed directly with Duck River representatives.
- Comprehensive lighting plans should be outlined in the University's strategic plan.
- Are these issues more of a communication issue?
- DREMC states they have a large stock of the new LED lights. Once these have been used, is there a different option that could be utilized and what are the options available?
- Parents and students have specific concerns about poorly lit parking areas and dimly lit paths to dorms.
- How can we provide adequate lighting without "too much" lighting? Are there ways to lessen the impact until something more impactful can be done?
- Can shades be automatically installed when the new LED lights are installed to lessen the initial impact of the brighter lights in residential areas?

### **(3) Traffic Committee Update- Payne**

Michael Payne confirmed that through the community grant funding and a matching gift from the University through a safety grant, there is \$12,000 available for the Traffic Committee to purchase speed humps to alleviate speeding in residential neighborhoods. This amount would provide funding for five sets of speed humps. Three streets identified by the committee to install these speed humps are Alabama Avenue, Kentucky Avenue, and Missouri Avenue. John Brewster, Superintendent of Grounds, has ordered the speed humps, and once received, installation can begin.

Two sets of speed humps will be available for University input to identify two additional streets that need these slowing measures. It was suggested that the Lease Office and University Rental Housing could send a survey to gather input from community members on streets that see routine speeding. Sewanee Police Department could also be helpful in locating areas that would benefit from this vehicular traffic slowing method.

### **(4) Election of New Agenda Committee Member- Wilson**

Scott Wilson asked for a self-nomination from the Council to serve on the agenda committee for a three-year term. Walker Adams agreed to serve in this capacity.

### **(5) Announcements and/or Questions**

Evelyn Patton stated she had received complaints about the lack of upkeep within the University Cemetery. She confirmed that the leaves had not been removed and that debris was scattered. Nicky Campbell confirmed she would check into this issue with the groundskeepers.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carey Fulmer*