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Woodford County: A growing community.
What do we want to be and become?

BY BEN CHANDLER
PUBLISHER

Like some *Sun* readers, I was born, raised, and have lived nearly all of my life in Versailles and Woodford County. Like nearly all of you, I live here now.

Given that you are reading this, I assume, like me, you care deeply about the type of community we become in the next five to twenty-five years and beyond as we welcome those new to our community.

All anyone has to do is drive around the county, or be a regular reader of the *Sun*, to realize we are growing. Residential housing is becoming scarce and is often beyond the reach of average folks, many of whom work here but cannot find an affordable place to live. The bourbon industry, despite a recent dip, continues to grow. Much of Edgewood Farm, owned by the city, is under development with more to come. Harness racing has secured a foothold with the new training facility on Paynes Mill. Downtown Versailles is catching up with Midway as a tourism and shopping destination. The cattle-calf agribusiness



Ben Chandler

has been boosted by a new partnership with UK. And, new businesses are opening up every month.

We are growing . . . whether all of us, or some of us, or a few of us are concerned, it is a fact.

The folks I talk to, the things I read, and the statements I hear from public officials and community advocates all point to a shared desire to, as we grow, retain the distinctive nature of Woodford County. But what does that mean?

Woodford is a rural county with two small cities surrounded on nearly all sides by the explosive expansion of Fayette, Scott, and Jessamine counties since the

mid-1980s.

The question I have asked the staff at the *Sun* to focus on for this countywide edition is this: given that we are a growing community, what kind of community do we want to be and become? While we cannot touch on every issue associated with growth, I hope you will find that we have covered nearly all of the most pressing issues – a few of which required far longer than normal word counts.

Let me give some hard facts for context.

In 1980, just three years after I graduated from Woodford County High School, the population of Woodford County was 17,778. Today, based on the 2020 census, Woodford County has a population of 27,017.

Compare that to Scott and Jessamine counties. In 1980, Jessamine was 26,065 and Scott was 21,813, both larger but similarly rural in nature. In 2020, Scott had ballooned to 57,535 and Jessamine to 53,019.

What happened?

In Scott County, Toyota built its first, and still large-

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Changes that increase housing density
gets heavy pushback during hearing
Amendments to in-family advance

BY BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Proposed changes to the zoning ordinance that increase the densities in residential districts in Versailles received heavy pushback from residents of the community who spoke at a public hearing on Nov. 13.

No action was taken on amending the text for residential districts in the ordinance after several people from an overflow crowd voiced their opposition to the amendments to the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission.

Some of the speakers told the commission they moved here or have spent their lives here because they want to live in a small town surrounded by farms, and they are concerned higher densities will change the character of the community and their neighborhoods.

“Let’s keep our Woodford County what I remember it being,” said Lillie Cox, 88. She called it heartbreaking to watch land on Troy Pike, where she picked wildflowers, being cleared of vegetation by bulldozers. “Let’s get together. Let’s care about Woodford County and all Woodford Countians,” she said.

Joe Johnson, who described himself as a highly-engaged resident of the Cedar Ridge subdivision, said he was not aware of the changes being proposed until someone came to his door and told him about the 117 pages of amendments to the ordinance.

Johnson (and others) urged the commission to table action, wait for the completion of its housing study, and have a public meeting so Planning Director Steve Hunter can help citizens “truly understand the sweeping

changes” that commissioners are being asked to recommend to the Versailles and Midway city councils and Woodford Fiscal Court.

A housing task force made several recommendations – some resulting in the proposed text amendments from the City of Versailles for the residential districts of the ordinance – with the goal of having more affordable housing opportunities, Hunter said.

Those recommendations included adding language that allows manufactured homes-qualified (as now required by state law), and accessory dwelling units and higher densities in residential zoning districts. A new R-1D district would allow a minimum lot size of 3,500 square feet with a maximum density of 12 units per gross acre.

Versailles resident Vernon Azevedo questioned the need for the changes and called for an impact study to determine if the text amendments will negatively impact the community prior to implementation of the changes.

Commissioner Chad Wells pointed out that multiple meetings have been conducted to discuss the proposed changes that are now receiving pushback from the public. And Hunter told those at the meeting that information and agendas about meetings and hearings are posted on the Planning Commission’s website.

The sections on residential zones will now go back to the commission’s advisory committee for further discussion.

The commission did vote to advance language limiting in-family land conveyances to

See HOUSING p. 5

Addie Moore: Heart of a champion

BY BILL CAINE
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

As the cross country season came to a close, so did the magnificent career of Addison Moore, a three-time KHSAA Class 3A champion and six-time regional winner. Her impact on the sport in Kentucky will be felt for years, not just because of her incredible times like the state record she set at this year’s state meet, but also because of her big smile and love for her fellow competitors and teammates.

By all accounts, Moore does things the right way. She trains hard and does well in school. She represents Woodford County with genuine grace and love for others.

Moore is also the two-time reigning Kentucky Gatorade Player of the Year for cross country and looks like an ear lock for a third year after a record-breaking performance in this year’s state meet. She was also the only runner in Kentucky to stay under 18 minutes in a 5K for the entire season.

Throughout this season, Moore made it clear she wasn’t focusing solely on winning the state. She wanted to be a regular high school senior and enjoy her final races with her teammates without the pressure.

During a senior day interview, she said she was doing her best to take in every moment before it was gone.

“I want to enjoy this time with my teammates and celebrate all of the great times we’ve had together,” said Moore. “It’s easy to get caught up in all of the excitement with region and state coming up, but I am exactly where I am supposed to be with my great teammates who support me, and I try to be that person for them as well. I’ve loved every moment of being part of this program and I’ve grown so much as a person – spiritually and as an athlete.”

If you’ve ever driven downtown during the off-season, you’ve probably seen Addie running full stride as she continued her training for the next big race in her life. As a competitive runner, she doesn’t just run in high school races; she is a player on the national scene as well, running in AAU Junior Olympics, where she dominated for years in some of the country’s biggest races, like the New Balance Nationals. WCHS Assistant Coach Ashley Swingle said Moore sets a great example by how she treats others and also by her drive and determination.

“Addie is a good example of quiet confidence,” said Swingle. “Her faith carries her



ADDISON MOORE capped off her high school cross country career by winning her third straight state championship earlier this month. (Photo by Bill Caine)

everywhere she goes. She knows who she is, and as a female in high school sports, that is important. She demonstrates confidence that is neither arrogant nor cocky. She knows it’s okay to be proud of the abilities that she has.”

WCHS Coach Adam Swingle has coached Addie for all three state titles and is active on the course during races. He is often seen sprinting to catch a runner to offer words of encouragement. In Addie’s case, he probably has to run faster to catch her.

Swingle has stated on numerous occasions that Moore’s contribution to the program and the school will have a lasting impact. Her willingness to fight through the pain of a tough race, her faith, and her ability to bring people together are all part of what makes her special.

“I believe Addie began cross country in third grade, and she’s always loved the sport and the people around it,” said Swingle.

“Addie shows people that when you work hard, what you think is impossible is actually possible. She encourages people and helps them raise their level by caring for them and believing in them. One of the most significant impacts that Addie has had on sports in Woodford County is that you can love the Lord and also be a great athlete. It doesn’t have to be one or the other. You can be both, and that is the impact she’s had. She is an active participant in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and regularly leads our devotionals. She’s shown that you can live out your beliefs and still be awesome in your sport.”

Moore’s mentorship has been tremendous, as she has coached the Huntertown Elementary cross country team for the past three years. Co-Coaches Amanda Howard and Emily Gampper raved about the impact Moore has had on the younger runners, both in performance and in ensuring the kids have fun.

Before she’s a nationally ranked runner, Moore is “Coach Addie” to the Huntertown Elementary cross country team and that’s precisely how Coach Emily Gampper likes it.

“We have an amazing group of high schoolers who volunteer their time every week to help mentor the kids in Huntertown cross country,” Gampper said. “Addie has been able to make it work for the last three seasons, and she truly loves the kids.”

Gampper said that Moore’s ability to serve and lead is what makes her an amazing role model for the younger runners at Huntertown.

“It’s uncommon for elite high school athletes to set aside time to mentor younger runners because of the time management it takes between schoolwork, training, and the recruiting process,” Gampper said. “But Addie makes it work and always shows up for the kids.”

Her humility, Gampper added, is what makes her so special. She’s won every big race there is in Kentucky, and she carries herself with humility and always has more to give the kids.

“Honestly, sometimes I wonder if the parents and kids realize the level of talent coaching them, since she’s so humble and relatable,” she said. “You’d never know she’s ranked nationally because to them, she’s just ‘Coach Addie.’”

Beyond the workouts, Gampper said Addie is also a spiritual leader for the team.

“She prays with and for the kids, and she’s always such a light and a joy to be around,” Gampper said. “When you watch her, it’s

clear that her priorities are putting her faith first above winning and above pushing herself to be the best.”

Coach Howard, who has also worked closely with Addie, said her leadership began well before Huntertown’s program even started.

“Addie has been coaching young athletes for a few years, starting with Ready Set Run at Falling Springs,” Howard said. “She was part of Huntertown Elementary’s original high school ‘Fab Five’ coaches and helped push, coach and inspire so many young runners.”

Howard said Addie’s influence reaches far beyond competition.

“She’s made such an impact on so many young athletes on and off the course, from praying with them to cheering them on,” Howard said. “She’s truly an amazing role model.”

Her high school running days are not over yet. Moore is a big part of the WCHS track and field team and will look to go out with a bang next spring.



A SECOND REGIONAL TITLE came during Moore’s 8th-grade season in 2021. Moore finished her career with six regional titles. (Photo by Bill Caine)

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GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Tuesday, Nov. 25, Fiscal Court at 5:30 p.m.