

## **ROAD DEBRIS AND THE TAYLOR & MATHIS FACILITY**

Road debris is a hazard that can cause loss of vehicle control with damages ranging from a flat tire, vehicular rollover, or collision, with accompanying injuries or deaths. In the year 2011, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Traffic Safety Facts found that more than 800 persons were killed across America by "non-fixed objects" (a term that includes roadway debris). Road debris can also cause other more specific problems and damage to vehicles.

Has anyone recently noticed the condition of C.H. James Parkway, between Humphries Mill Road and Dr. Luke Glenn Garrett, Jr. Memorial Hwy? The median lane is littered with debris, not to mention the trash on each side of the road. The same goes for the entrance of Luke Garrett Hwy where the concrete median is badly damaged, the traffic signs are broken off and missing, and pieces of concrete, gravel, and debris are littering a portion of the road leading into Norfolk Southern train depot. Veterans Memorial Parkway, although in better shape, also needs some attention too. We must not ignore the fact that both of these road arteries, Luke Garrett Hwy and Veterans Memorial Parkway, are not just roads leading into Austell but they are the "storefront windows" of our city.

So, one must wonder, if our city officials were unable to maintain and keep these roads clean in the past under normal conditions, how will they keep it up when truck traffic doubles or even triples after the new Taylor & Mathis industrial facility goes up. Will they will be able to handle it, or will they remain asleep on the wheel?

For those who may not know of this project yet, Austell recently sold 54-acres to Taylor & Mathis at the corner of Luke Garrett Hwy and Austell Powders Springs Road for their new 550,000 SF facility that will be providing transportation services to Norfolk Southern Railway terminal.

While closing this deal, during a council meeting last November, in the absence of mayor Joe Jerkins, Pro-Tem Mayor Ollie Clemons said "the land was just sitting there" anyway and "it was not a requirement" for the city to notify Clarkdale or Cureton Woods residents" of this pending decision!!! (One wonders what

happened to transparency Mr. Clemons maintains city officials should be accountable for?) Needless to say, behind closed doors, he and the city council entered into a purchase-sale agreement with Taylor & Mathis, a deal Mr. Clemons said is “something that cannot be stopped”, although we don’t know who the end-user of this facility will be, we have “no-idea” on the construction timeline, and “no restrictions on what they can build” was implemented. With so much unknowns after a “thoroughly negotiated” deal, one must wonder who will ultimately pay for the road modifications on Garrett Hwy. Will those be paid by Taylor & Mathis, or the taxpayer? Remember, this facility will require for the median on Garrett to be modified for access, another traffic light may be required, and for this project to turn out right for Austell, Luke Garrett Hwy (being the back door to the city) must be beautified to counter the industrial image this facility will project without enhancing the roadway.

Moreover, what about the intersection of Luke Garrett Hwy and C.H. James Parkway where frequently semi-trucks overturn due to negative road slope and often block traffic for hours. Soon, with twice as much semi-truck traffic at the very intersection, have anyone in our city hall thought of the cost required to modify/improve the grade at that intersection so this will not be happening twice as frequently? And, who will be paying for that? If it turns out that Austell taxpayers must pay for all these requirements, then once again it appears that we put our trust in the hands of someone who lacks the skills to properly negotiating a deal on behalf of the taxpayer.

On July 2nd, 2019, in regards to the TAYLOR & MATHIS facility, Rob Hosack, Cobb County Manager, wrote the following in a report addressed to Andrew Smith, Principal Community Development Planner with Cobb County:

“Prior to the proposed development, there has been a history of traffic issues created by trucks using the narrow streets of Clarkdale in search of a shortcut to Norfolk Southern Yard, despite signs stating no truck traffic is allowed. It is anticipated that the presence of a 547,500 SF warehouse/ distribution center would only increase such incidents. The lack of an adequate buffer would allow for noise, wind-born dust, and exhaust from the operation of the proposed use to reach the village and other nearby neighborhoods (and let’s not ignore the impact on the kids at Garrett Middle School nearby).”

Was this perhaps the real reason why Mr. Clemons did not want “to notify Clarkdale or Cureton Woods residents” of their pending decision? If not, why then he negotiated this deal behind closed doors? And, what happened to the transparency Mr. Clemons keeps talking about every time he runs for office?

My name is Chris Djonis. With great honor, I am announcing my candidacy for mayor of Austell. As your new mayor, I pledge to you that every significant decision I will ever make while in office will always remain transparent!

**I NEED YOUR VOTE ON NOVEMBER 5TH.**

**Chris Djonis**

**Djonis4Mayor.com**