

Township Island Annexation Public Information Meeting

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Monday, August 20 from 6-8 p.m.

2nd floor Council Chambers, City Hall (301 E. Huron Street)

Meeting Attendees: Public: 46, (see sign-in sheet, Appendix A)

Elected Officials: Anne Bannister (Ward 1)

City staff: Troy Baughman, Michelle Brainard, Kayla Coleman, Jeff Kahan

Purpose: The City of Ann Arbor hosted an information meeting to discuss the annexation process and impacts to property owners.

Staff presented information about city-initiated township island annexation including background and history, rationale, city initiated annexation process and impacts to property owners. A copy of the meeting presentation is available at a2gov.org/annexation. Most of the meeting time was dedicated to audience questions and comments which are noted below. This is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This is a summary of comments based on notes taken at the meeting. Where staff responses are provided, they are shown in italics. Where additional detail has been added after the meeting it is denoted as a “post meeting note.”

- Concern about meeting time and amount of notice provided to residents before the meeting. *Post meeting note: Staff acknowledge this concern and appreciate the feedback. In future rounds of City-initiated Township Island Annexation staff will plan to provide more advance notice to property owners.*
- Interest in data to show where police and fire have duplicated response during an emergency.
- Request for clarification regarding utility connection for homes more than 200 feet from the utility line. *Post meeting note: Per [Ann Arbor City Code](#) (Title II, Chapter 28, Section 2.42.2, (7)A.), utility availability is defined as utilities existing within 200 feet of the property line. If you believe you have unique circumstances hindering utility connection that would justify staff review, please contact Troy Baughman (tbaughman@a2gov.org). Final determinations about utility availability will be made by the Public Services Area Administrator, Craig Hupy.*
- Concern about utility connection – why connect? Functioning well and septic. Far exceeds 200 feet from utility service, estimates 1100 feet and passing over a creek and past many landmark trees. Private contractor has estimated over \$50,000 to connect.
- Landlocked parcel, hope to build future dream home. Estimates 900-1000 feet away from City services and with elevation change, a creek and trees. Request for complete costs to property owner for annexation/utility connection.
- Concern that as a vacant parcel shouldn't have to contribute to storm water utility rates.

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- Concern that residents have not been sufficiently involved in the process. Resident concerns should be taken into consideration.
- Concern the duplicated safety services isn't actually an issue.
- Emphasis that 18% of septic tanks are failing and yet there are still 82% that are still good.
- Interest in additional information about extension charges
- Interest in more community involvement to identify the impacts of annexation to those affected.
- Can a house be sold during the annexation process? *Post meeting note: Real estate sales do not impact the annexation process.*
- What is the quality of City water and where are the reports showing City water is safe to drink? *Post meeting note: Information about water quality is available online at a2gov.org/a2h2o. Please contact Sarah Page at the Water Treatment Plant with additional questions about water quality (spage@a2gov.org or 734-794-6000 ext. 43903).*
- Concern that the City is not appropriately considering the impacts to families affected by annexation. Believes that City Council should ask the property owners what they want and should listen to them.
- Concern that even with water line right in front of her house, the estimated connection cost will be between \$50,000 - \$100,000.
- Concern that people will not be able to afford costs associated with annexation and utility connection, particularly senior citizens on a limited budget. *Post meeting note: Information about the State of Michigan program for senior citizens or totally and permanently disabled person's to request special assessment deferment is available online: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/taxes/2748_DSA_Affidavit_Instructions_2017_555865_7.pdf.*
- Why would anybody think it is a good idea to pay all that money for something residents already have for free with no problems?
- Concern that homes built in the 1950's would require internal plumbing repairs before connecting to City utilities.
- How many yes votes does the City need to get this passed? *Council majority is needed for annexation petition approval. (6 votes)*
- Request for listing of parcels included in the parcel selection for annexation. *The requested information is available online www.a2gov.org/annexation.*
- Belief that because of existing mutual aid agreements between City and Township police and fire, the elimination of duplicate services is being misrepresented. Request for statistics about police and fire duplication.
- Request for a list of all 500+ names and addresses of existing township island property owners.
- Expressed understanding that if septic fails and utilities are available, connection is required.
- Expressed feeling that the city is being greedy and going after more tax revenue.

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- One resident has a need for 24 hour in home health care and that road/vehicle access is critical. Road closures for utility work will not be acceptable.
- Does the City soften water with a water softener? *Typically residents on City water do not soften their water. Post meeting note: Contact Sarah Page, Water Treatment Plant Water Quality Manager (spage@a2gov.org or 734-794-6000 ext. 43903) with additional questions about water quality.*
- Interest in more information about potential need for a lift station. *Post meeting note: City sewers are generally designed to service homes by gravity, however situations may exist where pumping may be needed due to topography. Information on depth (and location) of City sewers can be obtained by contacting City Engineering Unit at 734-794-6410 or email request at utilitymaprequest@a2gov.org.*
- Property owners expressed that private contractor quotes for utility connection have been \$50,000 - \$100,000 and that they do not have the means to pay for this.
- Who on council is up for re-election? *The City has 5 wards, 2 councilmembers per ward, one councilmember from each ward is up for re-election.*
- Family owned property for 54 years, and have not been thinking about the potential cost to annex. Wanted to live in a safe place where they could raise a family. Believes that annexation is 100% political.
- If City Council votes no, would the project end? *Council must approve the petitions before staff submits petitions to the State Boundary Commission.*
- How long is the State Boundary Commission process? *The City does not control timing of the State's Boundary Commission process. Round 1 of City-initiated Township Island annexation took 2 years to complete from the time of submittal. We don't expect round 2 to take as long.*
- Do we have to cap our well? *After connecting to City water, wells can be used for irrigation purposes only. If not being used for irrigation wells must be capped.*
- Concern that there isn't an opportunity for the property owner to fight this process – other people are making decisions for her and for her home.
- In 1997 there were several meetings about this same issue and nothing ever happened; hopeful it will happen again, just like last time.
- Concern that City Council will vote on the same night as they listen to residents speak against it and that it doesn't seem fair.
- Request for the record to show property owner feels this is wrong and is very angry.
- Family owned business for 80+ years. The expense being asked of property owners is unfair. Feels forced and with no say in the process. Not asking anything from the City, and doesn't want anything from the City. When the City took a portion of the family's property to pave the road, the City gave \$1.00 and now he will be affected by thousands of dollars. Feels that the annexation process is unethical.
- Concern about utility connection – house is 200+ feet from the City main and down a hill.

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- Interest in a more gradual annexation process – when a house goes for sale, when there is a death, when a well or septic fails.
- Curious about annexation impact to tax bill home value. *Annexation is not an uncapping event affecting taxable value. Contact Ryan Doletzky in the Assessor's Office with additional questions about tax impacts (rdoletzky@a2gov.org or 734-794-6000 ext. 45380).*
- Concern that residents were not given sufficient notice of annexation process and upcoming meetings.
- Expressed that residents are against this– encouraged audience to fight against the annexation process. Does not want to be part of the City. Concern that annexation is unfair taxation driven by the City wanting to increase tax revenue. Concern that sufficient notice of annexation meetings/process was not provided and that the City is rushing the process.
- Concern that annexation does not bring any benefits to the property owner.
- Concern that living on an unpaved road and without any existing utilities, won't be able to afford extension charges when utilities become available. Property owner feels they will be required to sell their home because of this.
- Concern about property owner investments if a septic fails and a new one is installed, and then City utilities later becomes available.
- Request that the City use a staging process for annexation and wants to know how round 2 locations were selected. *Post meeting note: Multiple City Service Areas have participated on a team reviewing issues related to township island annexation. The team considered various factors as guidance to prioritize township island parcels for annexation. These factors do not definitively set the priority order for township parcel annexation. A list of those criteria is available on the City's website (a2gov.org/annexation) and provided below:*
 - *Availability of City water and sanitary sewer utility services*
 - *Percent of parcels already connected to City water or sanitary sewer utilities within a group of township island parcels*
 - *Ability of City vehicles to access property (including emergency vehicles)*
 - *Road jurisdiction (City, County, private)*
 - *Availability of fire hydrants and the need for specialized fire fighting equipment*
 - *Percent of parcels requesting City water and sanitary sewer utilities within a group of township island parcels*
 - *Condition and age of private wells and septic systems and number of County Environmental Health complaints*
 - *Number of contiguous parcels affected*
 - *Presence of regulated natural features on potential development sites*
 - *Staff time and effort anticipated to prepare survey drawings and legal descriptions*
 - *Percent of vacant parcels within a group of township island parcels*
- What are the tax implications associated with coming into the city? *The municipal portion of property taxes changes after annexation. The current millage rate for the City is 15.8885 as of*

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summer 2018. Please contact your Township to determine the Township millage rate. Taxes due to other entities (e.g., Washtenaw County, Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Ann Arbor Library) do not change with annexation.

- The city needs me, I don't need the city.
- What are the lessons learned from round # 1 of city-initiated township island annexation? Concern about the process moving too quickly. Concern that the process is unfair.
- What happens with re-zoning after annexation? Area of concern for him is would this be zoned R1 based on lot size requirements. *After annexation properties will receive a City zoning district.*
- Request for a realistic dollar amount that property owners can expect for utility connection.
- Concern that the process is too political, moving too fast and hasn't been provided enough information.
- Request that Council hold a meeting with potential round 2 property-owners to hear individual stories and perspectives. *Post meeting note: The request for a special-called work session to discuss annexation issues was presented to Council's Administration Committee. The Committee declined to schedule an additional meeting. The petitions for Township Island Annexation will be considered at the October 1 City Council public hearing. Members of the public will be able to speak on October 1; 3min/speaker.*
- Believes the City is being shortsighted on what affordable housing is.
- Property owner expressed legal action will be taken if needed.
- Expressed lack of trust toward the City and believes the annexation approach is offensive.
- Request for lower utility connection cost, or waived fee. Believes the city should work out something similar to what was done for the footing drain disconnection program, e.g., negotiate a cheaper fee for private contractor costs with approved contractors. *Per Ann Arbor City Code Capital Cost Recovery Charges are due for all water and sanitary sewer connections.*
- Will annexation increase home value? *A realtor may be better suited to answer questions related to home value.*
- How were round 2 locations selected?
- Request for list of all parcels that will potentially face annexation. *Post meeting note: A listing of remaining township island parcels within the City's ultimate service boundary area is now available on the project website (a2gov.org/annexation).*
- What will properties be zoned after annexation? Can properties be split? *Properties will be provided an appropriate zoning district after annexation. Eligibility for property split depends on lot size. Contact Planning and Development Services for additional information (Jeff Kahan, Planner, jkahan@a2gov.org or 734-794-6000 ext. 42614).*

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Appendix A: Sign in Sheet

Maureen Michael + Roger Derod	Edward Vielmetti	
Valdis + Astra Liepa	Greg Peterson	
KATHLEEN POWELL	Christine Cebianca	Dwane Peterson
GERGER LOHMANN	Cathy Selin	William Ager / Mary Ager Trust
DAVE PORATH	Gail Ristow	Carrie Chobanian
Michael Porath	William R Dawson	Ruth Pfingst
Anne Bannister - Council	Jeanne Neuhoff	Damen Provost
DANIEL ER WHITSON	Margaret Cressman	Fred Williams
Bradley Maze	JOEL L. CRESSMAN <small>(umpire)</small>	DR. SPINDLER
Jeffrey Bates	Tom Wieder	JEFF HAYNER
Rachel Fortney	Carrie Brown	(DEBRA MOORE)
Ingrid Picazo / John Erb - Downward	Robert Brown	VERONICA SAWITATE
Bob White	LUISA LARICHE	Jocelyn Gordon

Bob Ziff

Bruce Conybeere

PROF JUDY KARRANS

Brian Rosewarne

Louie Andersen

Jeff McNally