

Beth Robrahn

From: Carol Brown
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 7:31 PM
To: Heather Dawson; Beth Robrahn; Rick Davis; Martha Burke (burkefamily203@cox.net); donidaho@cox.net; 'Fritz X. Haemmerle' (fxh@haemlaw.com)
Subject: FW: annexation requests / Quigley - Bill Hughes comments
Attachments: nixannex.rtf

Comments from Bill Huges (both in the body of this e-mail and attached.) For the Quigley Annexation record. CB

Carol Brown - Hailey City Council (208) 788-4221
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From: billy [wilfracug@cox.net]
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 4:02 PM
To: Carol Brown
Cc: lmhughes@frontier.com
Subject: annexation requests

Carol,

The only reason I attended the meeting 7/25 was curiosity about Friday's paper, which I hadn't read and accessed online. One of the news updates for Monday identified Quigley as an agenda item for that night's meeting, so I pedaled down to City Hall, hoping no one had yet dreamed up any nonsense similar to Cutter's. Please forward this to the mayor and other Council members, along with Beth, Heather et al. I would appreciate if you would read this aloud at the next meeting. It is VERY important that some perspective reflecting reality be introduced to processes where people appear to simply be going through the motions as if circumstances had not changed dramatically. Denial is my favorite coping mechanism as well! As always, I appreciate and trust your level head! billy

A few thoughts:

Given current economic realities it appears irrational for the Council to continue to devote time and energy, and that of the staff and public, to further examination of annexation agreements. Any rational individual might assume the astounding and constantly expanding - through foreclosures - excess of inventory would preclude consideration of creating more. I believe the response of City infrastructure capacity to existing commitments is entirely unknown as a considerable percentage of housing remains uninhabited, while hundreds of platted lots within City Limits sit empty and covered with weeds.

Continuing dialogue on annexation is only about the positioning of these investments for some distant future extraction of value. Again, it is not the City's function to manage present or future risk for these investments. The best interests of citizens should take precedent over the interests of real estate investors in Connecticut or Chicago. Hailey doesn't have the resources to effectively manage existing problems associated with development it has already approved, to intentionally create more and bigger problems would be really really stupid!

The configuration and impacts of this latest proposal for Quigley are irrelevant, other than to acknowledge the applicant's obstinate refusal to remove all proposed residential development from sensitive wildlife areas - specifically Deadman's Gulch - as recommended by Idaho's Department of Fish & Game. Without access to Hailey's sewage system and effluent line, properties requesting annexation have little value at existing densities and **no** opportunity for adding any density. Hailey's current and future elected officials must always remember they negotiate from a position of great strength. Regardless of past posturing by County Officials, raising the specter of 2,300 single family dwellings out Quigley, the ACI insures Hailey will actively participate in any decisions on nearby development proposals in the County.

The withdrawal of historic recreational access by both recent applicants requesting annexation is a sadly lame attempt at extortion, and a reflection of investor insensitivity and indifference to quality of life issues in our community.

There are no benefits sufficient for Hailey to assume the risks associated with any annexations at this uncertain space in time. Non-profit agendas are also irrelevant, any related objectives remaining separate from the City's business in representing the best interests of all citizens. If the Land Trust can raise the money to buy these properties, I would encourage them to do so. If I had any money, I would contribute to such an effort. According to individuals familiar with the local market, vacant land is worth 25% to 30% of its peak value five or six years ago.

We have cracked open enough eggs. Some of them are rotting while we continue to babble incoherently about sustainability, the actual practice of which eludes us. There is no crystal ball. It would be irresponsible for the sitting Council to tie the hands of future Councils who will have the advantage of making important land use planning decisions in the context of existing realities, not those presumed by some Council a decade or two prior. Ask John Campbell about signing agreements based on assumptions about the future. Such is the nature of speculation, an activity the City should be eager to avoid. While thoughtful consideration of and planning for the future can be healthy, for the City to wager heavily on distant outcomes is foolhardy, inviting disaster.

Often a simple "no", while disappointing, can be the kindest and most appropriate response to an unreasonable request. A period of debt-fueled, malignant growth has concluded. Perhaps the City and its citizens would be best served by taking this opportunity to find some measure of equilibrium following such a substantive boom/bust event. Today's unrealistic annexation expectations presented to the Council by real estate investment interests too late into the game are sad and unfortunate, but this suffering is the result of choices they made. The City owes them nothing but compassion for their circumstance. Without consistent thoughtful public participation in the process, the current local real estate train wreck might have been far worse. The City of Hailey and Blaine County dodged a bullet. I have no regrets about any pushing I have done to influence that outcome.

I offer the Mayor and Council my admiration and respect for their commitment to service. I'm extremely grateful to live where the high desert meets the mountains, and people care deeply about the place they live.

William F. Hughes
Hailey