

CITY OF GRAND MARAIS
ANNEXATION PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
April 8, 2009

Mayor Hakes called the hearing to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Sue Hakes, Tim Kennedy, William Lenz, Jan Sivertson and Kay Costello

Members absent: None

Staff present: Mike Roth, Don Davison and Kim Dunsmoor

The City of Grand Marais is considering annexing the remaining portion of the Blackwell Addition. The property is completely surrounded by the city. An Annexation Public Hearing was held previously: however, at least one property has changed hands since that time.

Fritz Sobanja is against the annexation because his property taxes would increase. He would like to see a sample of the expected property tax increase for the properties being considered for annexation. He also asked about the proposed special assessment for the water and sewer extension that is happening this summer and if he would be required to hook up to the services.

Estimates of the special assessment are available at city hall. The County Auditor's office can give an estimate of the increase in property taxes. A property owner has 12 months to hook up to sewer services adjacent to their property. Property owners do not have to hook up to water services: however, their private well will be metered to determine their sewer usage. The city engineer will work with property owners to decide where they would like sewer stub locations along their property. Property owners will need to hire a private contractor to connect their property to the mains. A property owner not adjacent to city utility services would need to petition the city for further improvements.

Lori Hommerding is against the annexation because of increased taxes without additional benefits.

Katy Smith is against the annexation because improvements to their property will not get to them in a timely fashion.

Mark Hommerding gave an example of Little Falls where they did a substantial sewer and water project and gave residents a 10-year time frame to hook up.

Gary Schlien is against annexation because further improvements will make property owners need to divide and sell the property in order to pay for the improvements. Gary asked what property owners get for annexation and asked for a schedule indicating the timeline and impacts to property owners.

Kay Costello asked if it would be possible to annex only those properties receiving services.

Yes, but city services are not clear-cut and there are always situations with winners and losers.

Fritz Sobanja asked if there was any way around hooking up to the sewer main.

No.

Gary Schlien asked if the zoning would change if they are annexed into the city.

There is no reason to treat the property differently for zoning.

The first reading of the annexation ordinance will be scheduled for April 29, 2009. Staff will put together a schedule indicating anticipated timeline and when costs may affect property owners. An estimate of increased taxes for the affected property owners will be available by the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 5:48 p.m.

Property owners in attendance:

Rory and Katy Smith

Steve Smith

Lori and Mark Hommerding

Fritz Sobanja

Gary Schlien