

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, and Charlie Schneider.

Excused: Councilmember Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, and Planning Manager Brad Medrud.

**ORDINANCE NO.
O2022-001, ELEVEN
COUNTY ISLAND
ANNEXATIONS:**

&

**ORDINANCE NO.
O2022-002,
TROSPER LAKE
ISLAND
ANNEXATION:**

Director Matlock briefed the Council on the background of county islands located within the City limits and expectations during the next Council meetings. Until recently, state laws did not facilitate the annexation of county islands. With the recent change in state law, the City is able to annex county islands. One of the Council's strategic priorities is to annex all county islands. The proposed annexations will be considered by the Council over two meetings. All property owners living within the islands have been notified of the City's intent to annex. Staff has received some feedback but not an overwhelming amount with some opposition by several property owners who would likely attend the Council meetings to convey their opposition to annexation.

County islands are surrounded by the City requiring residents to access City streets. Most emergency response is by the City because of mutual aid agreements and proximity to emergency services provided by the City. County island residents likely use City parks and Tumwater Library. Residents of county islands use City services but unlike other property owners in the City, they do not pay for those services, which is why their property tax rate is less. City residents are subsidizing the services used by county island residents. The Council should factor those considerations in conjunction with the overall community benefit.

Director Matlock acknowledged Manager Medrud and consultant Gary Cooper for their work on the annexations.

Manager Medrud presented information on the efforts undertaken to date and the next steps of the process. The first proposal is for 11 county island annexations comprised of the smallest parcels. The second proposed annexation is the Trospen Lake county island, the largest county island extending from Littlerock Road to Trospen Road. The entire annexation of county islands total 160 parcels on 161 acres. The Trospen Lake county island includes 111 parcels on 132 acres.

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Staff recommends the Council schedule consideration of Ordinance No. O2022-001 on May 17, 2022 and June 7, 2022 for consideration of Ordinance No. O2022-002.

Manager Medrud outlined the annexation process and services provided by the City (police, fire, stormwater, road maintenance, building and land use permits, and code enforcement). Additionally, each county island currently receives an individual voter pamphlet prepared by the County Auditor's Office for each election. The zoning of county islands annexed to the City would remain intact for a period five years.

City staff has worked extensively with Thurston County to receive approval by both the Board of County Commissioners and the City Council to move through the annexation process. The effort was initiated in 2021 through work with between City and Thurston County staff to define the process for both jurisdictions. Outreach was initiated to affected agencies providing services to the islands. None of the agencies objected to the annexations.

County and City staff conducted a virtual open house on December 1, 2021 to meet with residents and discuss the proposed annexations. More than 30 individuals attended the meeting with both the County and City receiving multiple phone calls and emails from county island residents. Approximately one-third of the contacts were supportive of the annexations.

As required by state law, a series of joint public notices were issued informing the residents and property owners within the annexation areas of the annexation process and other requirements. As required by state law, the City and Thurston County approved an interlocal agreement by January 25, 2022 outlining the process to complete the annexations.

Notices of intent to annex were filed with the Boundary Review Board of Thurston County for the 12 annexation areas. The Boundary Review Board completes another public notice process to all residents and property owners affording them an opportunity to request the Boundary Review Board take action to hold a public hearing and render a decision on the any of the 12 proposed annexations. The Boundary Review Board returned nine of the annexations to the City for final action after completion of the 21-day waiting period. On April 4, 2022, the final three larger annexations requiring a 45-day noticing period were completed by the Boundary Review Board and forwarded to the City for final action. At no time did the Boundary Review Board receive a request for a public hearing or further action.

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The Council's final action is adoption of the proposed ordinances. The annexations will become effective the date of the ordinances. Scheduling the annexations over two Council meetings affords sufficient time to discuss and review the proposed annexations. Public notices will be released following approval of the meeting date for each ordinance.

Councilmember Jefferson inquired as to whether staff has recorded feedback from residents who spoke in support or opposed the annexation. Manager Medrud affirmed records of all public contact and public input is maintained and updated as comments are received. To date, 16 individuals have contacted the City with questions or comments during the process. Approximately 60% to 70% of those comments were not supportive of the annexation.

Councilmember Schneider asked whether the objections centered on the property tax increase over the next several years. Manager Medrud said in some cases, the objection was based on an increase in property tax while others wanted to remain in the county. Residents residing within the Black Lake Fire District will experience an increase in property taxes for the next three years because of a previous fire district levy.

Councilmember Agabi asked about the possibility of any potential changes in the proposed annexations prior to the Council's consideration. Manager Medrud said any changes would be at the Council's discretion following public comments. The City has completed two formal processes as part of the annexation. The first process was the interlocal agreement with the county, which included a public hearing to receive public testimony on the proposed annexation process. The second process was the Boundary Review Board process for each annexation providing property owners and residents an opportunity to comment or request a hearing before the Boundary Review Board. The final process is the Council's consideration the ordinances and to receive public comments.

Councilmember Dahlhoff commented on how her father opposed annexation to the City in 2008 because of his preference to live in a rural area and associating the county with a rural area. Change is often difficult and often uncomfortable for many people. As her father realized the benefits and services that he was already receiving by the City and understood the reasons for the annexation. Many people often want only to be heard and acknowledged.

Councilmember Althaus said the General Government Committee received a briefing on the proposed annexations and recommended the Council review the proposals during a worksession. The committee

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supports both ordinances. It is likely, the Council will receive some emotional comments; however, it is the right move for the City as the action has been identified as a priority for the City for some time.

City Administrator Doan noted that Thurston County Auditor Mary Hall plans to attend the Council's two meetings to answer any questions on how the islands impact the voting process in Thurston County and how annexation of the islands would increase the efficiency of the Auditor's Office.

Mayor Sullivan affirmed the Council's concurrence to schedule the two ordinances on May 17, 2022 and June 7, 2022.

MAYOR/CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

There were no reports.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

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