

BOUNDARY COMMISSION
ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI

MINUTES OF MAP PLAN PUBLIC HEARING
St. Louis County, Ferguson, Hazelwood, and Moline Acres
November 29, 2000

COMMISSION ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners	Present (P)/Absent (A)
MATT ARMSTRONG	P
TED ARMSTRONG	A
JANE ARNOLD	P
BOB FORD	A
AGNES GARINO	P
TOM HAYEK	P
DEE JOYNER	A
GREG KLOEPEL	A
ILENE ORDOWER	P
JOHNNIE SPEARS	P
DON WOJTKOWSKI	P

OTHERS PRESENT:

Daniel Krasnoff - Executive Director

David Hamilton - Legal Counsel

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wojtkowski called to order the meeting of the Boundary Commission at 7:00 p.m. on November 19, 2000. The meeting took place at the Florissant Valley Community College, Ferguson, Missouri. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a public hearing on the map plan submissions of St. Louis County, the City of Ferguson, City of Hazelwood, and City of Moline Acres.

A. OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Wojtkowski began the hearing by instructing members of the public who desired to address the Commission to fill out speaker cards and return them to Mr. Krasnoff. Mr. Wojtkowski said speaker cards would be accepted through the final presentation—St. Louis County. Individuals were given three minutes while those representing organizations were given five minutes for comments.

The Commission was established by House bill 1967, which was passed into law on June 27, 2000. Part of that law required municipalities interested in annexation in unincorporated St. Louis County submit map plans by July 1, 2000. Map plans designate areas in which municipalities plan may want to pursue annexation in the future. The law provides that the Commission hold hearings on the map plans after which the Commission may comment on the map plans or encourage negotiation of map plan boundaries between submitting entities. On April 15, 2001 municipalities may proceed with annexations within the map plan boundaries they previously submitted. If Plans of Intent are submitted at that time, the Commission will conduct a separate review of those plans and hold new public hearings about the proposal(s). The sole purpose of the Commission in reviewing such proposals is to determine whether the proposals should go on the ballot for the voters to consider. The purpose the hearing, therefore, was not to hear actual annexation proposals, but instead to hear descriptions of the map plans submitted to the Commission.

2. Presentation of St. Louis County

Glenn Powers the Planning Director for St. Louis County made the presentation. He began by referencing the map plan area of North County. He said the area contained 57.4 square miles with a population of approximately 92,000. He said the County included the area in its map plan because, similarly to municipalities it was to express interest in annexing an area. In St. Louis County's case, they were already the local service provider and wished to express their interest if the residents desire to continue to serve the areas if the map plan. Under current state law unincorporated areas with a population of more than 2,500 were able to file map plan petitions to have an area with more than 2,500 residents unincorporated. Likewise, St. Louis County could submit a proposal to have an area remain unincorporated.

In terms of phasing, the County found the issue difficult since they were dealing with areas in south and west County as well as North County. Their decision would be based on resident preferences, whether the citizens would like to be unincorporated or in a city. The County's impression was that there was particular interest in north and south areas to remain unincorporated. He would not be surprised come April for the County to submit some unincorporated area proposals.

The County would base its timetable on what it heard from residents. They were planning on holding town hall meetings to solicit input from residents. Mr. Powers said it was important for the County to implement their map plan because they wanted to fulfill the desires of residents if they indicated a desire to remain unincorporated and retain what the County considers excellent local services.

Mr. Powers said the advantage the County offered to residents was professional, efficient, cost effective services. They were one of only eighteen counties in the country with a AAA bond

rating and had not increased taxes in well over ten years. He highlighted the services provided by the County police, with over 700 commissioned officers with 111 operating out of the North County precinct. They also provided services under contract to Black Jack. There was a precinct headquarters on Route 67 with six neighborhood substations--quite a County police presence. The Public Works Department was professionally staffed with degreed engineers and architects and inspectors and offered a full range of neighborhood inspection and permitting services with a very high ISO, insurance rating, based on code and enforcement programs. The County also added the comprehensive pro-active code enforcement program where five inspectors were assigned to North County. He also said he brought a Total Appraised Value map showing where higher North County property values were located. He also said over \$323,000 was spent in unincorporated North County alone on the Sewer Lateral Program--a large program staffed by several full-time people.

Mr. Powers said the County Highway Department maintained and plowed over 19 miles of arterial roads and 286 miles of County Roads, operating out of the District 1 substation at Seven Hills Drive with a staff of 24. St. Louis County's five-year capital improvement program included sixteen projects in North County with a total value of \$30 million. The Parks department managed a large regional park system. In North County those parks included 12 parks with 1150 acres. The County Planning Department administered the zoning and subdivision ordinances. The department also did long range planning including plans in North County with substantial citizen input, including Old Jamestown Study, Castle Point Neighborhood Plan, located off Chambers Road and the Spanish Lake Community Area Study was recently completed. They also assisted residents in filing the plan of intent for the Parker-Halls Ferry Zone that was before the previous Boundary Commission.

He finished by saying residents had expressed support for remaining unincorporated. They had met with community groups such as Old Jamestown and Spanish Lake. The County felt there was substantial interest in remaining unincorporated. They continued to listen to ascertain people's preferences.

Questions from the Boundary Commission

Commissioner Hayek asked what Mr. Powers was trying to say with the assessed valuation map. Mr. Powers said many of the more highly valued properties were in the unincorporated parts of North County. Mr. Hayek asked if that was not where much of the new construction was taking place. Mr. Powers said it was newer construction with large lots, for example Barrington Downs. He said the orange were the lowest valued suburbs, mostly in the older, inner suburbs, \$0-\$49,000; yellow was next, \$50,000-\$75,000; Light Green, Green and then Blue, as you enter the hundreds-of-thousands. He said this was a generalization but many of the more highly valued properties were in the unincorporated areas. Mr. Hayek asked if Mr. Powers was saying that the lower value properties were lower in value because they were in municipalities. Mr. Powers said he disagreed that there was a greater need for neighborhood stabilization or to protect property values because an area is unincorporated. Mr. Wojtkowski said he thought Mr. Powers was saying annexation may not be a remedy to neighborhood stabilization problems.

Commissioner Matt Armstrong asked if the County provided police and street services to the Crest Aire and South Industrial sections. Mr. Powers said yes. Commissioner Matt Armstrong asked if it caused a hardship for the County to service these areas. Mr. Powers said no. Mr. Powers said serving Crest Aire was not terribly convenient, but it was not a hardship. He said it was another matter whether it made more sense for Crest Aire to be in another jurisdiction.

Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if there was a risk that services within small pockets may be diluted by the difficulty to serve them. Mr. Powers said regarding Crest Aire he never heard that from any of the residents. He said it took longer for plows to get into the area in a storm. Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if there were neighborhood watch programs in Crest Aire. Mr. Powers said there were neighborhood watch programs in Crest Aire.

3. Presentation of Ferguson

Mr. Allen Gill, the City Manager, Jeffrey Boyd, and Bob Swank represented Ferguson. Mr. Gill began by welcoming the Commission to Ferguson, the college was only one of many assets in the city. Mayor Wegert regretted he could not come. Mr. Gill introduced the Assistant City Manager, Julie Szymula; Economic Development Coordinator, Bob Swank; and Director of Neighborhood Improvement, Jeffrey Boyd.

Mr. Gill said Ferguson has 22,000 people with a diverse economic base, housing stock and population. He said Ferguson had a stable municipal government that was incorporated 102 years. The city had a strong history. They operated under a city manager form of government with a highly respected police department, a Class, ISO rated fire department, 11 parks containing over 107 acres and the most heavily fished urban lake in St. Louis County. They had aggressive code and nuisance enforcement with heavy neighborhood involvement--with district city assistance for block parties and other activities, obligations of an urban community.

They were there to present their map plan in accordance with the new Boundary Commission law. They created the map plan to keep their options open and had no immediate timetable. They did consider annexation important because they felt cities were the best providers of urban services. He said that as residents of unincorporated areas saw more success in Ferguson, they would want to become part of the community.

The map contained three phases. Phase one was to the north and east of the city. This included the 1997 annexation area. They read those reports and they may have wished to again pursue that matter at some point in the future. Phases three was located south and east of the city. Both phases one and two push their map plan area to the borders of adjoining or nearby facilities. Phase two was the Kinloch area. That was admittedly unusual, but Mr. Gill said the area might fall in the cracks of the new law and Ferguson did not wish to be excluded. They had discussed the matter with the mayor of Kinloch and their only intention was to propose annexation if the area were disincorporated or Kinloch could no longer perform municipal functions. He said the area was under a great deal of stress and if disincorporation occurred, they wanted to be prepared.

Mr. Gill said there was no timetable for bringing a proposal to the Commission. He said it was important for the city to implement the plan. He said orderly incorporation was in the best interests of Ferguson and the residents of the surrounding areas. They were better able to provide municipal services, maintain the quality of housing and neighborhoods and ensure vital economic activity. Residents had not recently expressed interest in the map plan but in previous efforts there was interest.

Mr. Gill combined the questions about why Ferguson was the best to serve the area, the arguments it would make to residents and the advantages it offered residents. He said they had a proven track record in housing preservation/development and economic development.

Mr. Boyd stepped forward to discuss neighborhood redevelopment. He said they were proud of the housing stock in Ferguson and were proud of their efforts to support their constituents. The code enforcement was pro-active, fair, and practical. They offered low interest loans and forgivable grants to meet the demands to improve housing for disadvantaged residents. They would make loans between 0-6% to improve housing conditions in Ferguson. Because some funding was from the government, they devised the Custom Home Improvement Loan Program, to benefit the whole community. They also had a residential program to market the community through local Realtors. The City of Ferguson will guarantee the value of the home through the Home Equity Assurance Program. If a homeowner remained a minimum of five years, the city would guarantee your home would be sold for the value the owner paid for the house. They wanted each resident to feel valued and would do anything they could to make that happen.

Mr. Swank said they had the capacity to provide development and redevelopment in the areas under discussion. They could do because they had a proven track record, formerly known as Central City/Central Hardware. The project was a TIF development named The Crossings at Halls ferry. The project included a Home Depot, Shop; and Save and other stores. The project was lauded as the proper use of TIF and has received substantial publicity. In downtown there was a revitalization for which the city developed an in-house plan. The downtown was described as making strides with the help of improvements that included Victorian street lighting, fencing, upgraded parking lots and the renovation of buildings. There was a new coffee house and new interest. On the other side of the campus the North County Festival shopping center was created. The land was in bankruptcy and totally redeveloped and was described as 100% occupied. This was done without TIFs or other government redevelopment. The city would put the same effort into any areas that were annexed.

Mr. Gill finished the presentation by saying the city was leading the way in many ways. He said they offered strong neighborhood development services, economic development services and public safety services. Mr. Swank passed out a compact disk with a presentation on economic development in Ferguson.

Questions from Commissioners

Commissioner Matt Armstrong asked if there was an unincorporated pocket. Mr. Gill said the map plan was to adjoin the Florissant City Limit.

Commissioner Hayek asked Mr. Gill to describe code enforcement in Ferguson. Mr. Gill said there were mandatory exterior inspections. There was interior inspection on a complaint basis only. Exterior inspection was required any time a house has a change of ownership or occupancy. They did have occupancy standards based on the gross square feet of the unit and the number of people allowed to occupy the unit. The city cross-checked the occupancy with school attendance. Mr. Hayek asked how many people were assigned to code enforcement. Mr. Gill said it was under public works, which was headed by an official engineer. They had a code official who supervised four full time inspectors and up to two part time inspectors in the summer who look for overgrown weeds and “junk cars.” Mr. Hayek asked how many officers there were. Mr. Gill said total strength was fifty-two, but he could not give a break-down of their duties.

Commissioner Spears asked if the map plan encircled the City of Dellwood completely. Mr. Gill said it did.

Commissioner Kloepfel asked about citizen input to the proposed annexations. Mr. Gill said they had no plan, but annexation requires meeting with subdivision trustees and citizen groups to obtain their support. Mr. Kloepfel asked how the home equity insurance program worked, were the funds federal. Mr. Gill said the funds came from a previous housing development fund. He said the funds were derived from a TIF to create a revolving loan fund.

Commissioner Kloepfel asked if the representatives from Ferguson reside in Ferguson. Mr. Gill said two did and one did not.

Commissioner Ordower said the phase one was in other municipalities proposals. She asked what was there. Mr. Gill said there was commercial, single family, multi-family, and some undeveloped property.

Commissioner Ordower asked if Ferguson had communicated with any other municipalities about overlapping boundaries. Mr. Gill said he had not, nor had he seen their map plans.

Commissioner Ordower asked what the population was of the map plan area. Mr. Gill said they tried but were unable to develop a reliable number.

Commissioner Garino asked how the map plan related to I-270. Mr. Gill said phase one was large because if Ferguson would cross I-270, the area needed to be large enough for the city to create an identity. They would need to put satellite services north of I-270 for it to make sense.

Commissioner Garino said Ferguson was adjacent north and south of Dellwood for phase three. She asked if there was 15% adjacency or would they need to phase in this phase. Mr. Gill said he could not give a percent and that it was at least the minimum. He also said phase three was contingent on phase one.

Commissioner Garino noted that an area in phase three overlapped with Moline Acres, east of New Halls Ferry. She asked what was in that area? Mr. Gill said it was primarily residential.

Commissioner Garino asked how taxes in Ferguson supported municipal services. Mr. Gill said they had sales tax, utility tax, property tax, business licenses and other fees--a diversified budget. Mr. Gill said they has their own fire department.

Commissioner Garino asked if he knew Ferguson would have to pay for fire services for those in the annexed areas. Mr. Gill said he knew that.

Commissioner Wojtkowski asked why phase three was contingent on phase one. Mr. Gill said it had the area of contiguity they would need. Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if phase three could not be done first but with more, smaller annexations. Mr. Gill said that was potentially true.

Commissioner Wojtkowski said their first move was to jump north of I-270 rather than to expand into the unincorporated area that was already contiguous with Ferguson. Mr. Wojtkowski asked what drove that thinking. Mr. Gill said his reading of the law the incentive for grabbing commercial land was not great. That although Ferguson was a point of sale newly annexed areas were in the pool--a fact that limited the potential gain of annexation. Mr. Wojtkowski said he thought Ferguson was doing a lot of neat things. He said, however, that by considering annexing from North Florissant Road to Route 367 did that dilute the ability to serve the core area.

Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if Kinloch were disincorporated would they want to annex. Had Ferguson had any discussion with Kinloch or Dellwood, that the Commission had been hearing that municipalities needed to expand to increase their population, yet population proposals begin to surround and land lock other smaller municipalities. Should not municipalities be discussing potential consolidation and streamlining government. Do those conversations take place, could the Commission play a role in that happening? Mr. Gill said he personally hoped so. There had been discussions along those lines that were unofficial--particularly with elected officials, though there had been no specific proposals. Ferguson's population base was sufficient to provide services, but boundaries could be "cleaned up" and there could be more cooperation. However, mergers were a different matter. He said consolidation was an issue that could be addressed in the whole County. Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if there had been consolidation discussions with Kinloch. Mr. Gill said Kinloch was insisting they could redevelop by using the abandoned airport land to be sold to Kinloch and they could oversee that development. There was a committee discussing the matter between Berkeley, Kinloch, and Ferguson. Commissioner Wojtkowski asked if the RCGA was trying to become involved. There were several competing groups looking at airport development.

4. Presentation of Hazelwood

Edwin Carlstrom, Hazelwood's City Manager made the presentation. Mr. Carlstrom began by introducing staff members: Tom Manning, Public Works Director; Donnie Bryant, Finance Supervisor, Joel Smiley, his assistant and Steve Anderson, Economic Development Coordinator. Mr. Carlstrom said he was delegated to make the presentation because the Hazelwood City Council had another function that evening. Hazelwood proposed two different

annexations in two areas. He said Hazelwood was the “economic motor” of North County. He said 25,000 people worked in the city. They expected half a billion dollars in construction in the next year--for a city with 26,829, ranking sixth in population in St. Louis County. Hazelwood was founded in 1949 around a Ford motor plant. It adopted a constitutional charter in 1979 with a nine-member council. The mayor was said to be part of the council, which was elected at-large. They had a city manager form of government, with Mr. Carlstrom working there for twenty-two years.

He said the city had completed eleven annexations. The city’s assessed valuation was \$432,900,000, ranked eighth in St. Louis County.

5. Presentation Moline Acres

6. Public Comment

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The meeting was adjourned.