

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION
ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING-BC0102
August 28, 2001**

COMMISSION ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners	Present (P)/Absent (A)
MATT ARMSTRONG	P
TED ARMSTRONG	P
JANE ARNOLD	P
BOB FORD	P
AGNES GARINO	P
TOM HAYEK	P
DEE JOYNER	P
GREG KLOEPEL	P
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 8:15 p.m. on August 28, 2001. The meeting took place at Lawson School, 1830 Charbonier Road, St. Louis County, Missouri. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a public hearing on the proposal submitted by the City of Hazelwood to annex the Crest Aire subdivision (BC0102).

PUBLIC HEARING-BC0102-HAZELWOOD, CREST AIRE ANNEXATION

A. Introductory Remarks by Chairman

Mr. Wojtkowski introduced Mayor T.R. Carr of Hazelwood.

B. Presentation of Proposing Agent - City of Hazelwood

Mayor Carr referenced attendance at the meeting by members of the City Council and department heads of Hazelwood. He is a part-time Mayor and Chair of the Public Administration and Policy Analysis Department at SIUE. Hazelwood has a Council-Manager form of government with a professional City Manager, and is a Charter City. Mayor Carr said his personal experience with annexation, as a resident of the Riverwood Trails subdivision, is an asset. He said Hazelwood has eight wards.

Mayor Carr said Crest Aire residents previously voted against annexation with Florissant and favored annexation by Hazelwood. Also, the previous Boundary Commission voted against annexation by either city. Since then, Hazelwood has annexed three subdivisions, all of which adjoin Crest Aire. Mayor Carr said he met with Mayor Lowery and they agreed to disagree about the annexation of Crest Aire.

Mayor Carr said Crest Aire is a natural extension of Hazelwood's boundaries. City vehicles drive through Crest Aire to access Hazelwood subdivisions. He said Crest Aire is the last residential area available to Hazelwood to annex, while Florissant has many other opportunities.

Mayor Carr said Crest Aire residents would gain through tax savings. St. Louis County would relinquish only as much as \$130,000 in taxes--two-twenty-fifths of 1% of the County's \$155 million budget. Also, the County would no longer pay to service the area. The Florissant Valley Fire Protection District would remain the same.

Mayor Carr said projected revenues are approximately \$168,000-\$173,000 with projected spending at \$149,000. In the first year Hazelwood would have an \$18,000 net revenue increase. That figure would increase to \$67,000-\$69,000 in following years. Mayor Carr said Hazelwood is not annexing Crest Aire to increase revenue. The annexation of would slightly increase Hazelwood's \$18 million annual budget.

Mayor Carr said Hazelwood has a diversified tax base. A one-half cent sales tax increase will be voted on in November. The Elm Grove redevelopment is in a point of sales tax area so revenues would stay in Hazelwood. He said the City has virtually no long term debt. Property taxes have not been increased in thirty-six years.

Mayor Carr listed gains for Crest Aire residents: Hazelwood's assessed real estate valuation is \$.31 per \$100. Hazelwood pays the Florissant Valley Fire Protection District tax, which, as of

September 1, 2001, is \$.967 per \$100. Hazelwood does not have a personal property or utility tax. Savings to Crest Aire residents would be approximately \$21,656 compared to the current tax bill. Advantages to Crest Aire residents total \$12,316, if annexed.

Mayor Carr said Hazelwood's City Council is responsive. The City's employees are experienced. He said Hazelwood is the only city with annual leaf vacuuming and twice a year limb pick-up and chipping. Hazelwood has a sewer lateral insurance program, mosquito fogging, quality street maintenance, prompt snow removal, citywide low-rate trash pick-up and quality communications program with residents.

Mayor Carr said Hazelwood has a technologically advanced police department, one of the lowest crime rates in the region and the only department in Missouri with a full-time Adult Abuse Coordinator. Other amenities include: parks, historic buildings, playgrounds, senior bus system, pool, tennis courts, disk golf, bike routes, two community centers and recreational programs. He said Hazelwood is a small, approachable community of 27,000.

Mayor Carr said annexation by Hazelwood would lower the taxes of Crest Aire residents. They pay a 5% utility tax to the County, if annexed by Florissant, they would pay 3%. An average home worth \$89,000 with personal property assessment of \$4,000 with an annual utility bill of \$2,000 would save approximately \$250 per year versus County taxes and approximately \$210 versus Florissant. If annexed by Hazelwood total relevant taxes would equal \$52. Residents desire quality services with low taxes.

Questions from the Boundary Commission

Ms. Ordower asked if the City had talked to Crest Aire residents about annexation. Mayor Carr Hazelwood conducted a walk-through of Crest Aire with informational hand-outs. The people he spoke to were in favor of annexation and signed petitions. They also conducted a "Meet the Council" meeting and gave passes to use City facilities, and to receive leaf vacuuming, limb pick-up and chipping services through this fall.

Ms. Ordower asked if children of Crest Aire went to school with children from Florissant or Hazelwood. Mayor Carr said students attended school together.

Ms. Joyner asked for clarification of some revenue issues. Mayor Carr said the City's real estate property tax is \$.31 per \$100 of valuation. The pay out of City revenues \$.967 to the Fire Protection District Tax resulting in a savings of about \$.60 per \$100 of valuation.

Ms. Joyner asked if it is a "point of sale city." Mayor Carr said part of the City is partially "point of sale" and partially "pool." The Mills Mall will be part of the pool, the Elm Grove redevelopment will be point of sale. Mills Mall is a \$250 million construction project with about 200 retail outlets. The mall will be a major economic stimulus for all of North County.

Ms. Joyner asked what the major benefit of annexation is for Hazelwood. Mayor Carr said annexation would round out the City's boundaries, better access Timberwood Crossing subdivision, and to provide residents with low taxes and high quality services. The purpose of annexation is not to generate revenue.

Mr. Ford asked if Hazelwood has limited access to Crest Aire. Mayor Carr said no, they can access Crest Aire without moving through Florissant, off of Howdershell. That is a major road that the City uses to serve Timberwood Crossing. He said it is not necessary to change patrol routes significantly to provide increased services. Services are already in place.

Mr. Ford noted a small sliver of land resulted in a dead end street. He asked if annexation occurs, would dead-end streets be made to go through. Mayor Carr said no.

Mr. Ted Armstrong asked for a summary of Housing Code enforcement. Mayor Carr said Hazelwood adopted a Housing Code effective January 1, 2001, and is implementing it. He said residents wanted better code enforcement to maintain higher property values. They wanted an effective, accountable and reasonable process. This approach was written by a citizens' panel, and was adopted by the City Council.

Mr. Hayek asked if Hazelwood had analyzed street improvements and allocated funds for that purpose. Mayor Carr said there is a need for street lights and to upgrade streets. He said \$40,000 would be allocated as part of an incremental process.

Mr. Hayek asked where the community centers are located. Mayor Carr pointed out two community centers and the disk golf course on a map and estimated they are one-to-two miles from Crest Aire. Mr. Hayek asked what the fees are for the community centers. Mayor Carr said there is a one-time, \$3.00 fee for a citizen's card, and other equipment usage charges.

Mr. Wojtkowski asked for more detailed information on street improvements. The budget shows \$20,000 for the first year and \$10,000 each succeeding year for concrete. Street repairs were estimated at least \$225,000. He asked if Hazelwood is committed to making the investment to upgrade streets. Mayor Carr cited other areas they have annexed as examples of how they would make the necessary investments to improve the streets. He is committed to do what is necessary to provide quality streets. Hazelwood looked at the cost and the cash flow and can proceed incrementally. He will talk to the residents to see what kinds of improvements they want, and then spending plans can be adjustments accordingly.

Mr. Wojtkowski requested a realistic budget be submitted to the Commission regarding street issues. Mayor Carr said he would provide that information.

Ms. Garino asked for more information on the proposed budget for street improvements. Mayor Carr said he would provide that information.

Ms. Garino found many discrepancies between the official numbers given by Florissant and Hazelwood regarding assessed valuation, acres of land and miles of streets. She requested both cities inform the Commission where their figures came from. She said the discrepancies are minor, but figures should be the same when dealing with property lines. Mayor Carr said he would look into the differences and would provide additional information, and be available for any other questions that may arise.

C. Comments from Florissant

Mr. Hessel said prior annexation proposals were evaluated based upon attitudes towards the cities and residents. Time has passed, attitudes, mayors, and approaches have changed. He said it is an overstatement to say the boundaries of Hazelwood extend naturally into Crest Aire. According to maps and property configurations there is one way in and one way out via Howdershell. He reiterated that there are natural extensions of Florissant into Crest Aire.

Regarding Ms. Joyner's questions on tax differential, Mr. Hessel said the comparison of the \$.31 and \$.967 real estate property taxes are somewhat misleading. Crest Aire residents pay a property tax to the Florissant Valley Fire Protection District, not to the City of Florissant or to the County. They would continue to pay that if annexed by Florissant. If annexed by Hazelwood, residents would not pay taxes directly to the Florissant Valley Protection District, but Hazelwood is still required to make those payments. It will be paid one way or another from the Hazelwood budget which has a existing operating deficit in excess of \$667,000.

Mr. Hessel said a better comparison would be of the real estate taxes paid to Hazelwood, \$52 and to Florissant \$0, and of the utility tax paid to Florissant at 3%, or approximately \$60, compared to \$0 paid to Hazelwood. The tax difference from an obligation standpoint is negligible. Regarding parks and street repairs, Koch Park in Florissant is within a few hundred yards of residents. The closest park in Hazelwood is about one-to-two miles away. He said the difference in street repair costs of the two proposals is significant. He also said he would confirm some of the figures, per Ms. Garino's request.

Mayor Lowery said Hazelwood has a deficit, Florissant does not. He said Florissant does not have enough vacant land for the Mills Corporation construction, but was contacted first, and he brought in the former Mayor of Hazelwood to the project, which he supports. Mayor Lowery is sincere in his proposal to provide the best services to the residents in a cost effective manner.

Questions from the Commission

There were no questions from the Commission.

D. Comments from St. Louis County

Mr. Glenn Powers said the contractor had approximately ninety-four days left to complete the

street repairs. The repairs are approximately 10% of a \$2.3 million North County project. He said the County has expanded their inspection program. An earlier speaker said there is no inspection program in the County because there is no property conservation district in this area. This is partially correct. There are two types of inspection programs--interior and exterior. The County performs exterior inspections. Some municipalities do interior inspections. This can be done in the County when the residents elect to have a property conservation district, which is a voluntary program popular in some parts of unincorporated North County, but not in others.

Questions from the Commission

There were no questions from the Commission.

E. Public Comment

Roy Hooser, 1802 Croftdale Drive

He said he is against annexation by Hazelwood. If residents wish to be a part of Hazelwood or Florissant, they should move to those areas.

Janice Ramsey, 1770 Keeven Lane

She said response time with regard to her questions varied between Hazelwood, Florissant and the County. She contacted Florissant and is still waiting to hear back from the Police Department; she contacted Hazelwood and received a quick telephone response from the Police Department saying they would get more information for her, but she is still waiting to receive that information; she contacted St. Louis County and was able to get through and receive requested information immediately over the telephone. She said Hazelwood gave her direct answers with no "beating around the bush." When her home alarm system went off, the police were notified and had been to her home and inspected within five minutes.

Jeanette Eberlin, 7314 Boellner

She said she is on the Hazelwood City Council and has 1,800 people on her ward who were happily annexed into Hazelwood in 1984. Street and street light improvements were made in Sadonia Street project, at a cost of \$360,000, of which \$200,000 came from the County. Hazelwood has a grass roots Government, a Citizens On Patrol group and a small town flavor.

F. Adjournment

At that point the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Daniel Krasnoff
Executive Director

Approved: