

February 1, 2017

**Annexation Issue**

Barbara Renken, Resident of Oregon City, Barlow Crest Neighborhood, Park Place.

Vice Chair of PPNA, Secretary of CIC

Thank you for your time, service and dedication to Oregon City and our Citizens.

Many of us are aware that SB 1573 was passed in March 2016, allowing for land to be annexed under specific guidelines into cities without a vote of the people, which had been the law until March 15<sup>th</sup>.

It is my understanding that if a city in the State of Oregon has a Municipal Code regarding annexations, it then over rules this bill when the Staff and Commission choose to take action.

Our Oregon City Municipal Code, Ordinance 14 is pretty specific about the citizens right to vote on annexations. It takes into consideration quality of life, transportation, education, infrastructure. Other cities have encouraged the City Staff and City Commission to defend their OCMC, including the city of Corvallis, among others.

I am here to encourage you to defend our Municipal Code and the residents that elected/hired you to work for them.

Without your support the cost of the infrastructure and the effect of these nonstop annexations will be devastating without the cooperation of the State, County, City, and yes, even the Federal Land and Transportation Departments. This is the purpose of Ordinance 14 in our Municipal Code; to protect you and the citizens of Oregon City. Oregon City is a better city because of annexation approval.

Barlow Crest is in a section previously a part of a large farm with an airstrip. This farm has been subdivided and been annexed in to Oregon City on several occasions, with a vote. We love our home, our neighborhood and we're not against development and/or progress done responsibly for the benefit of all.

The Neighbors of Park Place and other areas in Oregon City urge you to deny this annexation until critical issues and challenges are addressed.

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## SB 1573 (Annexation Bill) and Oregon City

Unknown to many Oregon residents, and supported by the Oregon Homebuilders Association, Gov. Kate Brown signed a bill, (SB 1573) on March 15, which attempts to circumvent cities' local vote requirements for annexations. That is SB 1573 would allow any property outside of an Oregon city to be annexed into the nearest city without a vote of that city's citizens, as long as it is on the border of the city limits.

The problem, however, is that at least 34 Oregon cities have a city charter which requires a vote to annex land into the city. Oregon City is one of those, as is Corvallis. SB1573 attempts to invalidate those local voting requirements, taking local control away from the voters.

Corvallis has chosen to sue the state of Oregon for violating their city's charter. Other Oregon cities are also looking at the possibility of suing, as we can in Oregon City. Oregon City's charter states that the citizens of our city have the right to vote on annexations of properties into our city. This should be explored and considered.

As a result of Gov. Brown's decision, some builders have jumped up to accept contracts from property owners who have been eager to sell and develop their property in the city. Just a few of these are located in Oregon City's Beavercreek and Park Place neighborhoods, previously introduced as "concept plans." Some of these properties have been on the ballot for annexation and have been overwhelmingly defeated several times, and for good reason.

So here we are with some of these same properties already voted down for annexation, (in the Beavercreek and Park Place neighborhoods) being annexed now without citizen approval. The citizens living in these areas are displeased with the possible outcomes. Some developers in the past have been eager to propose both low- and high-density development projects without concern for transportation, education, utilities, habitat or other effects of quasi-rural areas.

Recently I attended a Planning Commission meeting, (Jan. 9) where many people submitted public comments opposing the proposed annexations. In addition to the voting rights issues, the citizens presented facts and con-

new and are reasons why previous annexation ballots have been voted down in the past 10 years.

Therefore, in light of the local voting rights and SB1573 concerns raised by the public at the meeting, the Planning Commission formally suggested to the City Commission that in deciding on the annexation application, the City Commission should seriously consider the implications to our local right to vote on annexations. Should the City Commission refer the annexation to the voters? Soon the City Commission will decide: yes or no.

The City Commission should defend our charter by referring the annexation to the people for a vote. My concern is the city leans more on the developer's side than on the citizens' side. I understand the more development, the more taxes, the more money. However, we need to stand up for our city and our rights in deciding how we want to see this city continue to develop.

Do we want our city to become Happy Valley? Or Beaverton? Or do we want a more suburban lifestyle for our families and children to grow up in? You decide. Do you prefer children playing in their yards, or playing in the streets? Developers have a way of applying for development with little regard for local parks, habitat or quality of life.

Please pay attention to what is happening and attend or watch Planning Commission and City Commission meetings and take responsibility for your city.

I think the Planning Commission and the City Commission are currently overwhelmed with the fallout of SB 1573. The Park Place Concept Plan if annexed and developed per the original plan, would add over 1,500 homes, and this is not the only annexation or development currently in consideration in Park Place. Once that annexation is developed, the adjacent land that is currently unannexed would be eligible to be sold and developed. The Park Place neighborhood could see upwards of 2,000 homes, all accessed via Holcomb Boulevard in the next few years. Citizens need to step up and defend their right to vote on annexations.

Barbara Renken  
Oregon City

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