

[← Back to "Annexation Dirty Word" Search Results](#)

How to move forward: Maryville discusses the dos and don'ts of annexing

By Ashley Depew ashley.depew@thedailytimes.com March 23, 2022 Publication:
Daily Times, The (Maryville, TN) Page: 01 Word Count: 575

Annexation has become a “dirty word,” Maryville City Manager Greg McClain said.

Population and acreage growth in Maryville is a hot topic in the city, from those directly involved with city decisions to those indirectly involved - taxpayers and residents.

McClain said the origin of the problem is politically-infused misinformation about growth and development in Blount County.

“The closest we can come to as a community and as a government, as a planning commission, as city council, is to think through strategies about how to best grow,” McClain said. “You’re going to grow, and you better think it through completely.”

In an effort to get a wholistic picture of how city of Maryville staff, planning commission members and elected commissioners felt about growth and development through annexation, the city held a round-table discussion on Monday.

Land development administrator Jillian Love briefed attendees on how annexation should and has historically been used.

Love said public health, safety and welfare is a main priority of annexation, such as a county property owner near the city periphery having a failing septic system and requesting to become a part of the city for sewer services.

County property can be annexed into Maryville by two means, Love said, owner request or passing of a city-proposed referendum.

The topic of single-home annexations encouraged different viewpoints from those attending the round-table.

Some felt that single-home annexations should be taken on a case-by-case basis while others thought they should, essentially, not be allowed.

A recent Board of Commissioners vote regarding a family wanting to annex into

Maryville to attend the school system prompted the discussion. Chatter during the work session alluded to a compelling argument made by a father to send his child to the same school the child's friends and neighbors attended.

Multiple parties agreed that annexation to attend Maryville City Schools was the primary reason people requested the line change.

The leading argument for not allowing single-family home annexations was fear of a domino effect - if one property with school-aged children is annexed into Maryville, 100 may follow.

"It's hard to look people in their faces and say, 'I know you live on a Maryville city street, but you can't be in Maryville,'" planning commission chair and an Alcoa City Schools administrator Keri Prigmore said. "But I've got to look at the fact that being in education, that five-year plan, it runs out real quick."

Others said the public deserves the opportunity to present their argument to the planning commission, then the board, because special circumstances may exist.

McClain brought up a different approach to controlling growth and development.

As the land is mapped now, properties within the urban growth boundary in Maryville and properties solely in Blount County are zoned for the same development density.

In order to prevent urban sprawl, which is sporadic urban growth into rural areas, development needs to stay toward the center, McClain said.

"If I can build just as dense out here near the mountains as I can near the city," McClain said, "that's a problem. A lot of people don't like the urban growth boundary because it allows people to develop in the county ... it's going to develop, you can't stop it. So, if it's going to develop, push it close where we can serve it."

Infrastructure, such as roads and lines for sewage and water, is more easily upkept inside and near the cities than the periphery of the county.

McClain suggested the county could adjust land density usage so that Maryville's urban growth boundary can welcome more development than property in the outlying county.

Daily Times, The (Maryville, TN)

Date: March 23, 2022

Page: 01

Copyright © 2022 The Daily Times. All Rights Reserved.