

16 July 2011

Gregg Mandsager
City Administrator,
Muscatine, Iowa

Re: Annexation questions to Greg Mandsager following Muscatine annexation information meeting 14 July 2011

Thank you for offering to take and respond to questions. Thank you for Andrew's information presentation and for your several explanations.

Why does Muscatine propose annexing north of Highway 61 every few years (other than revenue which, as you said, is not a valid reason)? **The City Council has an ongoing goal to review and consider annexation opportunities.** The city spends city resources and have so far accomplished nothing. Why do they keep coming back? **This is a basic planning function that directly relates to the potential for Muscatine to grow and develop in the future.**

Did previous annexation proposals stop because of unacceptable payback times? Are they trying the same thing again and expecting different results? **Prior evaluations have not produced enough political support to move forward. While I expect there are many reasons for that, one of the reasons could (and should) include payback. Any consideration given to annexation must be closely evaluated; with serious thought given to all costs associated with the delivery of services to those area(s).**

Would a formal poll by the city or by the subdivisions provide some reality training for the city administration before they proceed? **The idea has been discussed. However, we believe that anything short of a vote of the people in the community combined with those in the area(s) to be annexed would likely not produce an accurate result.**

We (my wife and I) oppose involuntary annexation. We are satisfied with our current conditions. **Noted.**

Why is the city looking back and attempting to change existing subdivisions (other than revenue)? **There is no proposal to change any of the existing subdivisions.** If the city wants to expand they should look forward and require infrastructure before subdivisions are developed. Installing infrastructure before development should be much more economical than retrofitting developed areas, as is proposed. **Your point is well taken. That is precisely what would happen to any future development that would occur following**

annexation. However, as you are aware, the property is not currently located in the City of Muscatine so our concern with respect to these types of issues cannot be addressed.

Has the city considered what involuntary annexation as presented by Andrew looks like to the annexed residents? **The report given by Andrew was intended to begin a dialogue where everyone has a voice. In short, this is the beginning of a long process...not the end.** Taxes would increase by maybe ½. **Those costs have been calculated and are included in the report.** The city would provide garbage and recycle services ILO the current private providers, city police ILO County and Muscatine Fire and rescue ILO Wilton. **Yes.** As you said, no services for sewers (except possibly sewer mains to the subdivisions), nothing for road maintenance or construction and nothing for snow removal. **Please remember that these roads are private and owned by the residents in the subdivision. They are not currently maintained by Muscatine County, garbage and recycling is not provided by Muscatine County, and there is no public sewer system supplied or maintained by Muscatine County. Fire insurance costs are considerably higher than they are for Muscatine residents. If the residents in the subdivision wish to dedicate the street right-of-way to the City as a public street and the City accepts them, the maintenance, snow removal, etc., would transfer to the City.** And, as you said, adding roads and sewers makes your payback time exponentially larger or never. **Never is a bit of a stretch here. Obviously it is important to carefully consider capital costs associated with all public improvements. To do otherwise is unacceptable.**

Has the city considered what involuntary annexation would do to the annexed people? **We believe that is a part of the overall discussion and is important to those making the decision whether (or not) to proceed with involuntary annexation.** Taxes would increase far more than the services provided. **That will be determined once the proposed area(s) for annexation are better defined.** I expect that higher taxes and infrastructure costs would reduce home values considerably and make selling difficult or impossible. **This is speculative. Historically house values in Muscatine have remained stable. There is no reason to believe that would change as a result of annexation.** These things and being forced to make changes would reduce quality of life and increase stress substantially. **I am unsure of the intent here. I will try to respond if you can provide more clarity.**

Has the city considered that potentially reduced property values would reduce projected revenue? **We do not have access to information that supports a reduction in values or revenues.**

Would you repeat what you said about restrictions on what police can do because our roads are private property? **I defer to Mr. Mandsager.**

Thanks again for taking questions. **I hope you find this helpful.**

I appreciate the time you have taken to express your concerns and the thoughtful content of your questions.

Regards

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