

## Could annexations bring an end to the county commission?

As the City finds marginal ways to accommodate owners of property in the county who want to annex to the city, will the day come when the annexations extend so far out into the rural areas that there is no need for a county commission?

There have been dozens of annexations that met no legal challenge and more are ahead. Not just to take in county pockets but to extend the boundaries of the City.

Concerns for the health, safety and welfare of residents are seldom considered. What is more important is the potential to expand the city's land and with that, the property and sales tax revenues.

One annexation making its way through city processes is the third visit to a parcel of land east of Southwest Drive. That parcel is between the BNSF tracks and the homes on the east side of Southwest Drive. That annexation would also include the Animal Shelter, which is on the west side of Southwest Drive.

Few knew that a move was also afoot to annex land west of Southwest Drive, extending northward to near 5th St. A city pocket exists in the county out there and may allow for the "contiguity" or "adjacency" necessary to satisfy legal requirements. The same safety issue remains - that beginning the heavily used UP tracks across from Tyrrell-Doyle which prevent

emergency vehicles from sometimes accessing homes along Southwest Drive.

The latest annexation application is for nearly 150 acres and the application was made by Swan Ranch, Neil McMurry of Casper. While the parcel is contiguous to current city land by a small area on its north edge, it has no contiguity or adjacency anywhere else around its perimeter.

Annexation of this parcel will enable leapfrogging over I-25 and annexing land, step-by-step and gradually, all the way to the Albany County border. It would allow for the annexation of land south of College Dr., by Love's Truck Stop and across I-25, by the Flying J Truck Stop, the Comfort Inn and McDonald's. Going further south, annexation could go to the Colorado line and come back to the east and box in Orchard Valley.

A willing city council, often ignoring the law, will approve any annexation put before it. Legal or illegal. And, residents find it too expensive to fight the money behind these new annexation attempts.

A municipality has an absolute right to annex property, so long as it complies with state statutes. That may be as it should be. But, at some time, will the city annex enough land that so little is remaining in unincorporated Laramie County that a county commission is unnecessary?

## Walkability contract

A Denver company with a lengthy name, GlattingJacksonKercherAnglin, entered into a contract with the City of Cheyenne to provide a unique service.

Basically, what the Agreement required of the vendor was that they "perform a walkability of neighborhoods in Cheyenne." They would spend one day in Cheyenne, estimating that the "walking audit should take approximately two to three hours." Two to three hours!

At lunch, paid for by the City you can bet, the "team will meet to discuss the audit and Dan will provide some highlights as a preview to the evening presentation."

If the 2-3 hours walking audit wasn't sufficient, the vendor would "audit more areas defined by the client in the afternoon."

Now, how could the City get a reliable audit of walkability when the vendor didn't do the walking at random but went to areas selected by the City? That would be like wanting to be judged for the beauty of our young women and selecting the gals they can look at. Come on.

Kind of like the library impressing a magazine that named them a "best" library of some sort by having a coffee shop by the east entrance. Now that's it not there, should they give the award back?

The "evening presentation" was to be made at 7:00 pm for "public officials and

community stakeholders."

Once again, the City was responsible for "making arrangements for the lunch and evening presentation, inviting attendees and providing a meeting place and refreshments ..." Oh, yes, "the Client shall provide a screen for the presentation."

About all the vendor had to do was walk for 2-3 hours and collect their fee.

What was their fee for this work, you ask?

Seven thousand dollars. Yes, \$7,000.00!

They assigned two people - a walker and a "Planner 2."

If the City wanted any other services from these Denver cloggers, they'd have to pay extra. On their rate sheet, a GJKA "Principal 6" billed at \$295.00 an hour, "Principal 5" at \$270.00, "Principal 4" at \$245.00. Presumably, Principal 6 can walk fastest. A "Planner 2" like the one assigned to this project bills at \$100 an hour if extra work had been needed from him/her.

After spending 2-3 hours on Cheyenne's sidewalks, a report was to be generated - again while in Cheyenne, after lunch but before the evening presentation and refreshments. Para 6.5 makes it clear who "owns" the "documents." The walkers "shall be deemed the author of these documents, work product and information and shall retain all rights thereto."

## The two mayoral candidate's responses to the following question:

*What is your position on Jack Spiker hiring Scott Smith of the WT-E for a new PR position with the City? If you are elected and you determine during the transition period between the election and the swearing-in date that this is an unnecessary and/or unwarranted position, will you agree to RIF the position?*

I do not know if Scott Smith is an employee of the City of Cheyenne or not as you stated in an e-mail dated September 26th, at 6:57 P.M. I respectfully decline to reply to your questions, and furthermore choose not to participate in your continuing feud with the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle by meeting your deadline to respond to your reported hiring of Mr. Smith by Mayor Spiker as Projects Information Officer for the City of Cheyenne.

Every person employed by the City deserves a more thoughtful consideration and review than your arbitrary deadline allows. And, until elected as Mayor, it would be presumptuous of me to undertake such a review on this reported hiring or any other position that reports to the Mayor. When you are ready to serve as a timely forum for the discussion of issues important to Cheyenne's future, I will be more than happy to participate.

Rick Kaysen  
Candidate for Mayor  
City of Cheyenne

I recently learned that the City Planning Office hired Scott Smith to be the Public Information Officer for the Department.

As Mayor, I will have the responsibility during the transition to meet with all Department and Agency Directors and determine how my goals and the goals of the City Council will be met. Appointments will be made based upon an individual's qualifications and his experience and ability to structure his department and implement these clearly articulated goals. I expect all Directors to use the same standards when filling positions within their departments.

I was surprised by the Mayor's decision to fill the PIO position at this time. He not only sent up a red flag on the Planning Office's performance, highlighting the need for a more intense scrutiny of the department, but he also confirmed a systemic weakness in the City's review process for many of its projects and operations and its inability, generally, to communicate and interact effectively with the public. I am a bit skeptical that PR spin, or the creation of a very specific, carefully designed position in City Government, is necessarily the best use of money or the best approach for providing information or improving and expanding opportunities for public input on public works projects.

Consequently, in addition to the transition review, I will implement an on-going, comprehensive program evaluation process to ensure that all City services are delivered and presented in the most efficient and cost effective manner. The results of these reviews can define needed changes and additional oversights within agencies and departments, leading to possible reductions in overhead and improvements in public interaction and confidence in City Government.

I am committed to providing job security for every city employee and I will not automatically eliminate Mr. Smith's position. I also firmly believe your government should be open and that information should be easily accessed. If my skepticism is overcome and I am convinced that having PIO in the Planning Office is the best way to provide the information you need to have confidence in the process and my decisions, I will maintain the position.

Jayne Mockler  
Candidate for Mayor  
City of Cheyenne

## Candidates, remember the early voters

It is estimated that as many as 30% of the votes cast in this year's general election could be cast before November 4th.

In the recent Laramie County primary election, 23%-24% of the total votes cast were cast before election day, August 19th. Early voting, called "absentee voting" by the county clerk, can swing an election. It has happened here before and early voters should not be taken for granted. If you hold all your advertising for the last two weeks, your message will miss up to one in six or one in seven voters.