

**MINUTES
TOWN HALL MEETING
MARCH 29, 2017**

The Mayor and Council held a second Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 in the Beach House beginning at 7:00 PM. Elected officials present – Mayor Melanie Hammet, Council members Jean Bordeaux, Brandy Hall, Tonja Holder, Megan Pulsts and August Woods. This Town Hall was called to further discuss annexation.

Council member Holder began the meeting by stating she had not been a proponent of annexation when she took office however her work on the 2017 budget had changed her mind. Explaining that as she delved into the budget it became abundantly clear that the city operated on a very tight budget with no wiggle room. She laid out the following options: (a) keeping the same borders at the same tax rate and ultimately cease to become a city by not being able to continue to provide the necessary city services; (b) keeping the borders the same but increasing city taxes to maintain the city and its services; or (c) increasing the city borders, keeping the tax rate the same which would also maintain the city and its services.

Several maps were presented illustrating the increased municipalization of the county and the possibility of Pine Lake being surrounded by other municipalities with no possibility of future expansion. The Mayor and council members outlined the meetings, discussions and contacts with other elected officials and state legislators.

Mayor Hammet stated that the newer and proposed municipalities only had to provide three city services whereas established municipalities provided more. She provided the example of Greenhaven and stated the plan for policing for that proposed city was to have DeKalb County provide the service.

The discussion turned to what Pine Lake offers for the surrounding areas thinking about annexation. Holder replied enhanced police services. That launched a brief discussion about “level of service” – how many officers per how many residents. It quickly became clear that the ratio for Pine Lake was more favorable than other areas.

Next discussed was possible areas for annexation with former Mayor Zarus suggesting that the city look at extending to the Indian Creek MARTA station, explaining the economic advantage. He also suggested annexing Fellsridge Subdivision so the city would have control of its headwaters.

Hammet explained that it was imperative that the City act quickly as other cities are moving toward expansion and proposals for new cities are on the move. The proposed time line is for appointment of an Annexation Committee in April. The committee appointees will begin to gather data and input from citizens. In May, invitations would be extended to increase the committee through inclusion of citizens in surrounding areas. The goal would be for the Committee to make recommendations to Council in June with adoption of an annexation map in July. Hammet stated that the city might likely have only one opportunity for annexation to achieve a sustainable city.

Valerie Caldwell, City Administrator