CITY OF FIRCREST
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

JULY 18, 2016
7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
FIRCREST CITY HALL, 115 RAMSDELL STREET

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Matthew Jolibois called the special meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the pledge of allegiance. Councilmembers Blake Surina, Shannon Reynolds, Brett Wittner, Hunter T. George, Denny Waltier and Jason Medley were present.

Presentation and discussion on possible annexation to Fircrest of an area of Pierce County bordered on the south by 44th Street West and on the east by 60th Avenue Court West (aka 'the chair')

Planning and Building Administrator Stahlnecker stated that staff was approached a few months ago by Pierce County Planning who wanted to discuss the City of Fircrest entering into an interlocal agreement with Pierce County to annex 'the chair' from Pierce County to the City of Fircrest. Stahlnecker stated the area is within the City's Comprehensive Plan as a potential annexation area and Fircrest is a designated sewer service provider for parcels in 'the chair.'

Stahlnecker introduced Pierce County long-range planner Dan Cardwell who gave an overview on the Unincorporated Islands Method to annex territory to Fircrest. Cardwell indicated this process can be utilized for 'the chair' as it has at least 80% of its boundaries contiguous to the City of Fircrest, it contains residential property owners, it is within the same county and urban growth area as the City, and Fircrest is required to plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA). Cardwell highlighted the policies behind the annexation discussion:

- Per the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies, as well as the County's recently update Comprehensive Plan, annexations of the incorporated islands are a top priority for Pierce County to provide for a more efficient delivery of services (law enforcement, public works, etc.)
- The County's pro-annexation approach is reflective of the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040, the regional growth plan, as policies directly state that all of unincorporated urban Pierce County is to be either annexed or incorporated by 2040
- Pierce County received a conditional certification of its Comprehensive Plan from PSRC and the Plan encourages working with cities and towns when it comes to annexation

Cardwell outlined specifics of the annexation method, as follows:

- The process is begun by the legislative body of a qualifying city or county adopting a resolution "commencing negotiations" for an interlocal agreement with the county or a city for annexation of territory described in the agreement that is within the city's Urban Growth Area and that has at least 60% of its boundaries contiguous to the annexing city
- After a resolution is adopted, the county and city are to negotiate and try to reach an agreement regarding the annexation
- If the county and city reach an agreement, the respective legislative bodies must each hold a public hearing, which may be a joint hearing, before actual execution of the agreement

- The county and city must, either separately or jointly, publish the text of the agreement at least once a week for two weeks before the date of the hearing
- Following the public hearing(s) and adoption of the agreement between the county and city legislative bodies, the city council adopts an ordinance annexing the territory as described in the agreement
- The ordinance must set the date that the annexation is effective, but that date must be 45 days or more following the date of ordinance adoption to accommodate a referendum procedure
- The annexation ordinance is subject to a referendum election if, within 45 days of adoption of the ordinance, a sufficient referendum petition is filed with the city council. A referendum petition is sufficient if it is signed by registered voters representing not less than 15% of the number of votes cast at the last state general election in the area to be annexed
- If a sufficient petition is filed, an election on the annexation is to be held at a general election if it is within 90 days of the filing of the petition or at a special election

Cardwell stated the County would be willing to have a meeting with the neighborhood to answer questions before the public hearings.

In anticipation of the question of what benefit the annexation is to Fircrest, Cardwell stated it would (1) help to square off Fircrest's boundaries, (2) help to achieve Vision 2040, and (3) provide better and efficient delivery of services. Cardwell stated it might be possible if there are roadblocks to the annexation that incentives to bring pavement conditions in 'the chair' up to Fircrest's level of service might be available through the annexation negotiations.

Discussion continued as follows:

- The north half of 44th that is adjacent to 'the chair' is part of the annexation
- The area is served by Tacoma Power and Tacoma Water
- A concern that the residents in the area wouldn't be able to continue using the Pierce County Library (Caldwell stated if that is an obstacle and roadblock, the County would reach out to the Pierce County Library to see if there is a way to address that concern)
- The area is partially served by Fircrest sewer and the rest of the lots are on septic
- Pierce County recently completed a surface seal of 44th Street
- What are the property tax implications for homeowners (Stahlnecker stated a preliminary review of the numbers show that there would be a reduction to the property taxes)
- Does the neighborhood want to annex to Fircrest, and what is the history behind the prior annexation attempts
- At least half of the homeowners are new to 'the chair' since 2007
- It would be preferable to control half of 44th Street in lieu of it becoming part of the City of University Place's right of way
- Would there be any costs to the City following the annexation, i.e., what would occur if the septic systems failed
- If a resolution is adopted by Council, staff would move forward to work with County staff to outreach to the community to address concerns and would research the differences in costs of services and taxes
- The annexation could ultimately help with grants to improve 44th Street

- Sewer extension would be necessary for a new sewer line in the area
- If a resident's septic system fails, the cost to hook to Fircrest's sewer system would be borne by the resident, not the City, and would occur if the property was annexed or not, as the properties are already in Fircrest's sewer service area
- What are the conditions of the septic systems in 'the chair'
- Could the name of 60th Avenue Court West be changed to Rainier Drive following the annexation

Jolibois invited public comment.

Dan Moffett, 4422 72nd Avenue Court West, University Place, stated he was an owner of property in 'the chair' and indicated he was generally in favor of the annexation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:50 P.M. Jolibois stated that Council would take a five-minute recess and convene into Executive Session to discuss Item 6 – Labor negotiations, not to exceed the hour of 7:15 P.M. City Manager Rosenbladt and Special Legal Counsel Bruce Schroeder were invited to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Wittner, seconded by Reynolds, to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 P.M. Ayes: Surina, Reynolds, Wittner, Jolibois, George, Waltier and Medley. Noes: None. Motion carried.

Matthew Jolibois, Mayor

Lisa Keely, City Clerk