



SPECIAL CALLED REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021  
CITY AUDITORIUM/ZOOM/FACEBOOK LIVE MEETING  
6:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Wendy Davis (Chair), Jim Bojo, Randy Quick, Craig McDaniel, Sammy Rich, Joe Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM:

Jamie Doss, Sundai Stevenson

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She discussed that the purpose of this special called meeting was to have a community conversation about the possible annexation of the Celanese/Riverside community and to discuss the pros and cons, the changes in services, the impact on schools and address concerns. She acknowledged the two speakers that had signed up to speak, Ron Swinford, Celanese resident and Dr. Glenn White, Floyd County Schools Superintendent. Both Commissioners Quick and Bojo agreed that this was an opportunity to hear from the residents and hoped that all would be open-minded and fair. Mayor Craig McDaniel restated that this gathering was an opportunity to have a community conversation and offered his thanks to the Redevelopment Committee for the work that they had done over the last several months. Davis discussed the annexation spreadsheet and said that by plugging in the fair market value of an individual's property, one could see the change in property tax from county to city and agreed that it did increase, but not as dramatically as some speculate. She went on to discuss the savings that would be incurred changing from county to city water and sewer. She offered all residents to contact the City Manager's office to have their own property analyzed in the spreadsheet.

Dr. Glenn White, Superintendent of the Floyd County Schools, spoke in opposition to annexation of the Celanese/Riverside community. He explained that approximately 90-100 students live in the area and currently attend the Model schools. He stated that if the community were to be annexed into the City, they would lose approximately \$300,000 in property taxes and \$800,000-\$900,000 in state funding. He further discussed the declining enrollment that the school system is dealing with at present as well as the desire for the people in the community to maintain their connection to the Model school district.

Chairperson Davis asked Dr. White if parents in the area could choose to send their children to the Model schools if the area were annexed. Dr. White replied that the Floyd County Schools would accept the children from outside the school district if necessary, but felt it would be unreasonable to take away \$300,000 in property taxes but rely on Floyd County Schools to educate them.

Ron Swinford, Celanese resident, also spoke in opposition to the annexation. Swinford discussed issues that the area has had in the past with annexation. He mentioned that he feels that the annexation spreadsheet does not properly portray how people's taxes and utilities will be affected. He also mentioned that Riverside Garbage Service services the area and will lose \$60,000 in revenue if Celanese is annexed. Swinford, as the spokesperson for the community, also discussed other reasons that the people of Celanese are opposed to annexation including: disdain with SPLOST projects that they feel were never completed, storm water issues, complaints about the way the traffic roundabout was engineered and the fact that the community is just not interested in annexing into the City of Rome.

Randy Lambert, another resident of Celanese, asked to speak. At this time, he asked Dr. White if the students chose to continue attending the Model schools, would the county cover the cost of buses picking the children up for school. Dr. White replied that if the decision is up to him, he would definitely use county buses to transport the students to and from school.

Blakely Hall, Celanese resident, asked to speak and discussed that as a single homeowner, he felt he had no voice as compared to the voices of the 9 city commissioners. He stated that he moved from Summerville Park to Celanese for the tax savings and had no interest in annexing into the city and paying higher taxes.

Finally, Barry McCullough, Celanese resident, stated that he would never be in favor of annexation because of the tax increase that he would incur. He further stated that he felt that the whole discussion around annexation was only about the city getting more tax money even though no one would admit it.

At this time, Chairperson Davis thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Kelley Parker  
Executive Assistant,  
City Manager's Office