

Lisa Clausen

From: Public Council Inbox
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 4:43 PM
To: 'Lollyco@aol.com'
Subject: Re: Annexation of Unincorporated Highline North

Thank you for writing to the Burien City Council. Your message will be included in the Correspondence for the Record for an upcoming City Council meeting.

L. Clausen
City Manager's Office

From: Lollyco@aol.com [mailto:Lollyco@aol.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 20, 2010 7:53 PM
To: Public Council Inbox
Subject: Annexation of Unincorporated Highline North

Dear Burien City Council,

I am shocked to see most of you conducting business based on your whims and emotions. Seattle's Mayor and Council are conducting business based on facts and numbers. I am appalled at your attempt to ram through annexation of North Unincorporated Highline, especially in light of the Burien citizens' vote that they did not want to annex any of Unincorporated Highline.

I, and many, many of your constituents will be working vigorously to get those of you voting pro-annexation off the council, and that includes Mayor Joan McGilton. Those of you who want the North Highline way of life in Burien, please spare us all who live in and love present Burien, and move to North Highline.

I would like both articles below put into the Council minutes and public record.

Lolly (Priscilla) Randall
16767 Maplewild Ave SW
Burien, WA 98166

White Center annexation vote put on hold by Seattle

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and the City Council have decided to delay an annexation of the White Center area until at least 2011 because paying for services there would be so expensive.

By Emily Heffter Seattle Times staff reporter

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and the City Council have decided to delay an annexation of the White Center area until at least 2011 because paying for services there would be so expensive.

Annexing the area, part of the North Highline annexation area, could cost Seattle \$12.6 million a year more than it would generate in new taxes, plus \$8.7 million in one-time costs, according to a preliminary analysis by the city Budget Office. The area has about 20,000 residents.

With the city facing a \$50 million shortfall in its general fund, the mayor decided to withdraw his earlier recommendation and campaign promise that residents of that area vote this fall on whether they want to join Seattle.

CFTR: 04/05/10

"Unfortunately, this is coming at a time when the city's financial circumstances are really strained," said Beth Goldberg, the acting director of the Budget Office.

Goldberg presented her analysis Friday to the council's Regional Development and Sustainability Committee. Although an annexation of the White Center area has been discussed for more than a year, council members said Goldberg's presentation was the first real cost estimate they had seen.

The presentation Friday included a look at crime statistics in the annexation area. They showed crime rates much higher than in other, comparable neighborhoods in Seattle. For example, while there were three to five rapes reported in similar Seattle neighborhoods in 2009, the North Highline area saw 18, according to Deputy Seattle Police Chief Clark Kimerer.

There were 60 to 65 burglaries and property crimes in comparable Seattle neighborhoods, and 241 in the annexation area; 15 to 30 vehicle thefts were reported in comparable neighborhoods, and 156 were reported in the annexation area.

The council will have to decide on a 2011 annexation ballot measure by next March. Goldberg said she would present a more thorough financial analysis early next year.

Voters in the southern part of the North Highline community voted in August to join Burien.

Emily Heffter: 206-464-8246 or eheffter@seattletimes.com

Now a word from one of our Council members.....

Burien knows what it wants

Burien is getting feisty. The small city is not counting itself out as a home to the northern neighborhoods of North Highline.

Burien is getting feisty.

The small city is not counting itself out as a home to the northern neighborhoods of North Highline.

There has been an understanding that Burien would annex mostly residential southern North Highline and Seattle would absorb the northern area, which includes the White Center business district.

Burien and voters moved ahead, while in Seattle the mayor and City Council disagreed on whether to act.

In April, the southern part of North Highline officially becomes part of Burien.

King County has been encouraging cities to take in unincorporated areas that strain county resources.

Last month I wrote that Burien had done its part and now Seattle should go ahead and ask White Center residents to vote on joining us. I said it would be a good fit.

But Burien City Councilmember Kathy Keene, said no, no, no.

Keene asked me to come visit and find out why Burien would be better.

She's had her eye on White Center for a while, and it was she who pulled other, initially reluctant Burien officials to her way of thinking.

I met with Keene, Mayor Joan McGilton and City Manager Mike Martin at Burien's new City Hall, which shares space with a county library. That cohabitation is part of Burien's innovativeness, and openness, they told me.

The council meets in a room separated from the library lobby by a glass wall. They kept saying what you see is what you get, and what you get is down-to-earth people.

While we chatted, the office dog wandered by chewing on a squeaky toy turtle.

The folks in White Center are just like us, they said. Their pitch is accessibility and kinship, and a small-town feel.

"In Burien they will be 18,000 of 45,000," Keene said. In Seattle, White Center would be lost among more than a half-million people, she said. "How much power does that give them?"

And, Keene said, Seattle is always talking about "densification." The thought of skinny houses, without yards for kids and dogs to play in, makes her cringe.

Keene drove me around town. She's a retired Teamster who spent most of her career driving for Boeing.

We roamed from the "Gold Coast" Seahurst homes right on the Sound, to housing developments for low-income residents, many of them immigrants and refugees.

She pointed out small businesses along the redone 152nd Street Southwest, and the place where a 10-screen theater is proposed and the land where the city wants to relocate the car dealerships it is known for.

Keene noted every fire hydrant we passed. "We take care of our fire hydrants, unlike Seattle," she said. They were nicely painted.

Keene is in her first term on the City Council, but she's been a commissioner for Water District 20 for two decades.

She moved to the area 23 years ago because she wanted a community like Ballard was when she was growing up, small and connected.

Burien has traditionally been a community in which people were born, grew up, raised families, retired and died. But in recent years it has seen an influx of new people from Asia and Latin America.

Earlier, Martin agreed Burien doesn't have Seattle's resources for outreach, but she said they are working at it. Keene said the newcomers don't need or want to be coddled, anyway.

Our conversation moved from what's best for White Center to what is in Burien's best interest. The question that focused the city's attention on North Highline is where else can the city grow?

Keene said she's looking years ahead and that it makes sense for Burien to add territory while it's available. She said the city missed out when the city of SeaTac was incorporated on taking a chunk of land that could have been part of Burien.

Burien has been on the short end of regional development before.

An aerial photograph on the wall of Martin's office shows Burien in the '60s with a multiblock empty space, an area that was cleared out for a new mall, a mall that went instead to Tukwila.

That was a painful setback.

McGilton said if Seattle is going to be aggressive about acquiring territory, then Burien should be ready to make a move, too.

The Seattle City Council is expected to decide soon whether to ask North Highline residents to vote on joining the city.

Next Monday, Burien's council will discuss whether to formalize its interest.

Burien is flashing its feathers and strutting its stuff.

Which suitor will White Center embrace?

Jerry Large's column appears Monday and Thursday. Reach him at 206-464-3346 or jlarge@seattletimes.com.