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Commissioner Richard Ranzau
525 N Main #320
Wichita, Ks 67203

JUL 02 2013
Commission Office

Mark Koehn
3700 W 77th St N
Valley Center, Ks 67147

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Sedgwick Co. Clerk

Mr Ranzau,

I live at 3700 W 77th St N in the Ranchos Del Rio home owners association that was annexed by Valley Center in 2005. I've lived at this address since January 1986.

What I like about living here in the Ranchos Del Rio addition is that:

- 1) Each house is allocated 2 to 5 acres,
- 2) Each house is private (not physically close to a neighbor),
- 3) The area is very quiet (no excessive car or factory noise)
- 4) The neighborhood is dark and secluded (Little Arkansas to east, Big Ditch to west)

The charter of Ranchos Del Rio allowed for 1 horse per acre of property. Ranchos Del Rio home owners association lets its residents live the country life.

I feel the way the city of Valley Center has treated Ranchos Del Rio residents is a "case study" in how not to treat people. In 2005, when Valley Center decided they wanted to annex Ranchos Del Rio, they did not do it because they wanted to find a way to serve us better for the same or less money, they wanted to annex us because they believed Ranchos Del Rio residents owed them money and they had the power to extract that money from us by annexing us.

I think it is worth pointing out that we signed a document in 2005 stating that all 22 family owners in Ranchos Del Rio do not wish to be annexed. The night they were to decide on annexation, many of the Rancho Del Rio homeowners attended and the Valley Center city hall meeting and the Valley Center leaders ended up deferring to a later date. Then a month later, they annexed us when Ranchos Del Rio people were not in attendance. They could not annex us when we were at the meeting; they did it later when no Ranchos Del Rio resident saw them doing it.

We at Ranchos Del Rio have no problem paying for police protection, fire protection and road maintenance. As Art Wood provided, we were paying about \$450 per year per household to get these services through Sedgwick County. After Valley Center annexed us, we were forced to start paying ~\$1000 per year per household. What did we get for this additional \$550 a year per household? As Joel Pyle pointed out, it was because we might be using their swimming pool, we might be using their library and we might be driving on Valley Center's streets.

In my case, I have my own swimming pool and have never been in the Valley Center swimming pool.

In my case, when I used to go to the library, I had a Wichita library card, not a Valley Center library card. With all the information available on the internet, I'm not sure we even need libraries modeled the same as they existed 50 to 100 years ago.

In my case, it is very easy for me to get to Wal-mart at 53rd & Meridian without going through Valley Center by initially going south on West street. It is very easy for me to get to Wichita by going south on Ridge road without going through Valley Center. I do drive on Valley Center streets because the Valley Center merchants need business to survive. Could I live at Ranchos Del Rio if Valley Center wasn't nearby? You bet, there are plenty of alternatives to Valley Center merchants and services.

What could Valley Center leaders have done differently in the case of annexing Ranchos Del Rio?

- 1) They could have attended some of our annual homeowners meetings to become knowledgeable about our needs and desires. The only thing Valley Center leaders seem to know is that we would like better road maintenance. In addition to road maintenance, we have issues with water quality. Our well water has a redish rust substance in it that clogs lines and stains things red. We have high house insurance because we don't have a water hydrant within 1000 feet of our houses. We have issues with the Little Arkansas banks eroding away.
- 2) Many of us in Ranchos Del Rio are retired and are sensitive to additional costs. Valley Center leaders could have said we will start at the same property tax cost as was being billed from the county in 2005 and gradually bring property tax up to the new city rates over a 5 year period. I don't think doing us a favor by easing the cost of higher taxes over time ever crossed their minds.
- 3) Ranchos Del Rio residents acquire water via wells and handle sewage with septic tanks systems. Two years ago, Valley Center started charging Ranchos Del Rio residents \$3 per month to test water runoff. Our area is very flat and rains generally soak in, it doesn't run off. I feel like they invented this cost just so they could send me a water bill even though they don't provide us a water or sewage service. Who knows what they are going to do next to increase the water bill they send me.
- 4) This year, Valley Center leaders assessed an additional cost for owning animals that most likely only exist in Ranchos Del Rio. How does owning a horse create the need for additional animal control costs?

So to the main question that is associated with Ranchos Del Rio de-annexation from Valley Center. Does Valley Center maintain Ranchos Del Rio roads at least as good as when the county maintained them? For me the answer is NO. The road in front of my house no longer has a sufficient crown so water can run off. Grading can only happen properly when material exists on the road that allows the road to be graded properly. I think the Sedgwick County road maintenance people knew how to build up, maintain and

grade a country road. I think Valley Center maintenance people know how to grade a city road. I have a country road in front of my house, not a city road. As for the chip & seal roads in the neighborhood, I think Valley Center is doing the cheapest job possible that would be sufficient to avoid our de-annexation. I think these roads cost less than the money they have received from us in property taxes and in a few years, these chip and seal roads are going to start falling apart badly because there isn't sufficient sub-grade material.

I ask that you please consider voting to allow us to be de-annexed from Valley Center. We have been a part of Valley Center for nearly 8 years and they still don't know how to understand and serve Rancho Del Rio residents.

Mark Koehn