

July 5, 2013

To: Sedgwick County Board of Commissioners

Re: De-annexation request

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Marci Maschino, and I am a member of the Valley Center City Council, a position I have held since 2007. I was not on the Council when the properties in question were annexed into our City. I want to assure you that the governing body has always had concern for the level of services being provided to the annexed areas. Every year we have a budget workshop meeting where we outline our priorities for the preparation of next year's budget. There has not been a year go by when there was not discussion about making sure we were allocating sufficient resources to the annexed portions of our City.

Much has been said over the past several years regarding the street lights. Our street light plan was not put in place before the end of the five year period but followed within a couple of months. Many of the residents spoke of the street light plan in your meeting on August 25, 2010. Since then, the City has installed a whopping total of four street lights in the areas in question based on the street light plan. I have driven around the area, and the street lights are only at major intersections on West Street and/or 77<sup>th</sup> Street. They are on high poles and at what appears to be a reasonable distance away from homes. It is difficult to understand why they were so concerned about how we hadn't met the requirement of the street light plan and then at the same time also complained that they don't want the street lights. Why would the City go through the exercise of creating a street light plan with no lights in the plan? They seem to want to have it both ways – to have a plan but to have a plan with no lights in it. The City has met the requirements of the service plan and exceeded the service levels provided by the County by having approved a street line plan and having installed street lights at major intersections as set forth in the plan.

The majority of the comments made at the June 5 meeting centered on road maintenance. At this time, nearly all of the streets in Ranchos del Rio I and II have been chip sealed. Those which have not yet been chip sealed are slated to be chip sealed by the end of 2013. The non-chip sealed streets are being graded regularly, and Mr. Pile has provided you with grading logs. Your own Public Works director has stated that chip sealing is an upgrade from a gravel or sand road. Over the past several years, the City has chip sealed a number of roadways. While it is not to the level of asphalt or concrete, it is a road treatment that reduces the need for grading after every weather event and saves money over time. I would invite you to drive not only the roads in the Ranchos del Rio additions but some of our other chip sealed streets (High Point Road and Sullivan Street would be others) in the City to see how the chip sealing holds up, and I believe you would find that it holds up quite well. We have spent proportionately more money on these streets than we have on other city streets (except maybe for the major roadwork done at 5<sup>th</sup> and Meridian a year ago). While most City residents have paid specials for their streets in front of their homes, these residents received this very nice upgrade at no extra cost to them because the cost was borne by the city at large. While it is certainly not perfect and no road surface will ever be, it is

certain that if these folks were still in the County, they would be limited to grading of sand or gravel. There would be no road upgrades as we have done for them. I don't know how many, if any, of you have taken the time to fulfill your responsibility to make an informed decision by driving to the City to visit this area. I think you would find that the complaints are much overstated and the City has invested considerable resources to improve the roadways in the area.

What most frustrates me about this de-annexation hearing is that I had never heard from almost all of these residents prior to June 5. In my six years on City Council, the only homeowner in this neighborhood that has come before us is Sam Herr. Once he asked us to change the speed limit of the roadway adjacent to his property; once he came to express his displeasure with the dust coming from the roadway. The dust was making it difficult for him to see and breathe while he was mowing his property. Mr. Herr's concerns were promptly addressed. The City performed a traffic study and passed an ordinance to reduce the speed limit to 45 miles per hour. This was done in fifty days, not in more than one year as Mr. Herr stated at the June 5 meeting. It would be difficult for us to do the study, draft the ordinance, have two readings of the ordinance and publish it in the newspaper in any less time. The roadway adjacent to Mr. Herr's property has been chip sealed; thus, dust is no longer an issue. A few weeks ago when we passed our resolution stating we believe we have complied with the service requirements, the same homeowner was in attendance but offered no comments. The only Council member who voted against the resolution offered nothing, absolutely nothing, in the way of an explanation for his down vote. To say that we have not been willing to listen or take action on their concerns is patently false. It is frustrating that the residents stored up all of these complaints to unleash at us before the Commission. I suspect they did not want to bring their issues before us as they didn't really want us to resolve them. Then what would they have to convince you that they should be de-annexed?

It is my understanding that if the County de-annexes the properties in question, there will still be several homes in the area that will remain in the City because those property owners did not complain at the hearing two and a half years ago and did not sign the petition for de-annexation. It is remarkable that the Commission could find that we provided services to one household but not to those next door. We provide consistent service; we don't favor one neighbor over another or grade in front of one house but not in front of the next door neighbor's. In the future, it would be difficult and confusing, not to mention that it could jeopardize the health and safety of residents, if some homes are de-annexed while others remain in the City. Who are your dispatchers going to send – the Valley Center or County fire or police?

I believe the City has gone above and beyond its requirement to maintain the previous level of service received by the residents. I believe we have gone above that bar. I recognize they do not and will likely never agree. They didn't want to be annexed, and it's a wound that continues to fester because nothing has been final and they continue to hope their fortunes will turn. Commissioner Ranzau asked Mr. Pile how he could explain why such a large percentage of the homeowners signed the petition and spoke at the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. The answer is really quite simple: because it has to do with their pocketbooks. We overlook many things in life, but things that hit our pocketbooks get taken much more seriously than those that don't. I ask you to remember that the issue before you is not whether you believe annexation is appropriate, whether generally or specifically regarding this annexation case. Your job is to make an informed and objective decision about whether the City of Valley Center has provided a level of services that meets or exceeds the level of services the homeowners received previously. Please remember

that the homeowners are not objective and they are pursuing their agenda. The City has provided you significant objective evidence of the services we have provided. I appreciate your time and believe you will agree that the City has met its requirements in this matter.

Kind regards,

Marci Maschino

Valley Center City Council, Ward 3