



## FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR

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21 December 2006

### MEMORANDUM REGARDING MYERS' FARM ANNEXATION POLL

Thurmont Residents,

The Board of Commissioners will be considering the annexation of the Myers' Farm property just north of Thurmont in the near future and it is my desire to get as broad a response from Thurmont residents whether we should, or should not annex.

It is my desire to provide as much information as possible to you before you cast your vote on this poll to ensure you have as many facts that go into this important decision.

The Board of Commissioners cannot or should not support nor reject such requests without the applicant having the right under Maryland law to go through the proper process for such action and without extensive dialogue with our residents, The town's Planning Commission, and Public hearings. This is one facet of that process.

Now that the applicant has provided their initial offer to the town I am requesting your opinion on this poll to serve as a guide for the Board of Commissioners.

This is only a Poll and is not legally binding on the Board of Commissioners. However, it serves as a serious indication of your desires regarding this issue.

As a factual representation of the offer to the town I will list what the developer has offered, what the town requires and I will provide information on the town's current needs regarding infrastructure repairs.

#### **VOLUNTARY OFFER BY THE DEVELOPER (ALL NEGOTIABLE) WHICH IS LEGALLY BINDING**

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| \$5,000 for the first 150 homes | \$750,000          |
| \$6,000 for the next 150 homes  | \$900,000          |
| \$7,000 for the last 50 homes   | \$350,000          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>\$2,000,000</b> |

The developer will build/provide their own State of the Art Waste Water Treatment Plant to accommodate their entire facility which would have no adverse impact to our current sewer system. This treatment plant would cost approximately :

**\$2,000,000**

The developer would provide their own water for the development at no cost to the town. Well development, connection & treatment usually average the town approximately.

**\$300,000-\$400,000**

The developer has promised to donate **\$45,000** to the Thurmont Lions Club Trolley Line rehabilitation.

The developer has offered to reimburse **\$50,000** to the town of Thurmont for the cost associated with the review and approval of this project.

The developer has offered to donate \$50,000 for the planning of a Industrial Parkway.

**REQUIRED BY THE TOWN (MANDATORY FEES)**

|                              |                     |                    |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Water Service Connection Fee | \$2,500 per home=\$ | 875,000            |
| Sewer Service Connection Fee | \$2,500 per home=\$ | 875,000            |
| Sewer Pump Station Fee       | \$ 250 per home=\$  | 87,500             |
| Water Impact Fee             | \$2,885 per home=\$ | 1,009,750          |
| Wastewater Impact Fee        | \$2,275 per home=\$ | 796,250            |
| Roads Impact Fee             | \$1,500 per home=\$ | 525,000            |
| Parks Impact Fee             | \$1,500 per home=\$ | 525,000            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 |                     | <b>\$4,693,500</b> |

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Offered Fees Total  | \$4,495,000 approximate |
| Required Fees Total | \$4,693,500 approximate |
| Grand Total         | \$9,188,500 approximate |

The town has to pay for approximately \$1.6 million dollars worth of sewer system repairs just completed. We also have to pay for another \$4.6 million dollar project in the upcoming fiscal year or Fiscal Year 2008. My concern is can the current residents afford the cost of those repairs themselves? These projects would cause an increase \$4.00 - \$5.00 to the existing sewer rate. To put it into perspective I am providing real data from a household with a family of 5 and a retired couple, who live in Thurmont. An increase of \$4.00 would cost:

|                           |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Family of 5: Current Rate | \$5.95 X 25,000 gallons = | \$148.75 every quarter        |
| Family of 5: New Rate     | \$9.95 x 25,000 gallons = | \$248.75 every quarter        |
| <b>INCREASE</b>           |                           | <b>\$100.00 every quarter</b> |

|                              |                          |                               |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Retired couple: Current Rate | \$5.95 x 6,000 gallons = | \$ 35.70 every quarter        |
| Retired Couple: New Rate     | \$9.95 x 6,000 gallons = | \$ 59.70 every quarter        |
| <b>INCREASE</b>              |                          | <b>\$ 24.00 every quarter</b> |

The current offer from the developer would pay for both Sewer Projects and has the potential to benefit the current residents significantly. That will enable us to keep the rates low. If you choose not to Annex the cost will be bore by the current residents. The town is obligated to fix the sewer system now that we are aware that problems exist.

To put it into perspective the town has approximately \$1.4 Million Dollars for Capital Improvements in this current budget (Excluding Electric) as the electric utility will be provided by Allegheny. With the amount of money offered by the developer the town can keep rates and taxes lower, and provide years worth of additional capital projects at no cost to current residents.

The town also has an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) that would not allow building if the current facilities are not adequate to handle the growth proposed. It is my opinion after discussing with the Board that we will not deviate from our APFO. All rules and regulations from the town, County and State will have to be adhered to.

Lastly, The developer has offered to provide approximately 12% of the homes as Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) to provide for affordable housing.

**Money is not everything as we all know, but it is a serious aspect to consider, but so is small town character, quality of life.**

The proposed development has "pros" and it also has many "cons" the pros & cons consist of:

**Pros**

**\$9.2 Million Dollars worth of Tax & Rate saving proffers**

**Large retail store, and office spaces**

**New jobs creation**

**Increase in Available housing**

**35 homes per year not starting until 2009 or later (Slow Controlled Growth)**

**Increased tax base**

**Cons**

**Increased traffic**

**Increased population**

**Increase in school capacity**

**Decrease in scenic vistas**

**Increase in potential maintenance costs and labor**

The proposed annexation runs counter to Maryland's Smart Growth policies by growing the town outside the town growth limits (for part of the proposed development).

The building of a Wal-Mart (or similar store), a strip mall, and hundreds of new homes would increase traffic congestion and potential for accidents along both Rt. 15 and 550 and the small rural roads of Kelbaugh Rd., North Franklinville Rd., Orchard Rd., and other surrounding roads. The current "at-grade" intersections would become more dangerous and accident prone.

Congestion would increase for local recreational areas such as parks, ball fields, etc.

Such a large retail and residential development would have a negative environmental impact on the land and streams surrounding the proposed annexation area. A separate sewage treatment plant would be required, which the town would be required to assume management control of, and financial responsibility for, at some point.

The effects of so many houses and stores on the local water table and the Owens Creek watershed are unknown, and adverse consequences to the wells currently in the area could result.

Noise and light pollution would greatly increase in an area that is currently a peaceful, rural setting.

A Wal-Mart (or other similar large box store) could lead to the de-vitalization of the downtown Thurmont business area and could adversely affect a number of current and long-time businesses.

This in no way is meant to reflect ALL of the Pros and Cons to this project, but it is a fair representation of the major issues associated with both.

I appreciate you taking the time to comment on the proposed Myers' Farm Annexation. I will compile the results and present them to the Thurmont Board of Commissioners, the Thurmont Planning Commission, and the County Commissioners for their consideration as appropriate.

Martin A. Burns

*Martin A. Burns*

Mayor, Thurmont MD

Please take the time to fill out the form on the next page and drop it off at the town office as soon as possible so we can determine the desires of our residents.

# MYERS' FARM ANNEXATION POLL

IF YOU WANT THIS VOTE TO COUNT

You must check one of the boxes below, PRINT your NAME and ADDRESS, and SIGN the form (to verify residency). Please send this poll form back as soon as possible. If you would like to discuss this before you send it back please feel free to call me at 301-271-4859 or email me at mburns@thurmont.com

**YES (FOR THE ANNEXATION)**

**NO (AGAINST THE ANNEXATION)**

**INDIFFERENT**

(NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST & WHATEVER THE COMMISSIONERS DECIDE IS OK)

I have read the Mayors memo dated 21 December regarding the Myers farm annexation and submit this poll as an indication on my opinion regarding this important town issue.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ONE VOTE PER FORM**