

CBTS POA and Citizens for Responsible Annexation

Meeting With Gary Edwards AP City Manager

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

10:00 am

Attendees:

Aransas Pass City Manager, Gary Edwards
Aransas County Commissioner Jack Chaney
Aransas County Navigation District Chair, Judy Vlasek
City by the Sea Property Owners Association and Citizens for Responsible Annexation, Freddie Morrill, William Morrill, and John Moore

Meeting Location: Aransas Pass City Hall Conference Room

Purpose of Meeting Called By AP City Manager Gary Edwards:

For AP to investigate CBTS residents interest towards annexation by Aransas Pass, as annexation north into the city's extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) has been, and is currently being discussed by AP city staff.

John Moore introduced the following neighbors, friends and elected officials here this morning on behalf of City by the Sea Property Owners Association and Citizens for Responsible Annexation. Commissioner Chaney represents southern Aransas County, and has done so for many years; and Judy Vlasek, Freddie Morrill and Bill Morrill. Judy, Freddie, Bill and I are residents of City by the Sea.

Judy is a retired journalist and Chairs Aransas County's Navigation District. Judy was the president of City by the Sea Property Owners Association for many years, and was a founding member of Citizens for Responsible Annexation (CRA).

Freddie is a contractor and an experienced community planner. Bill is an environmental scientist.

I am a certified public accountant and currently the Treasurer of CBTS Property Owners Association and Vice-president of CRA.

CRA represents more than 400 home and property owners in southern Aransas County. CRA's homes and property owners are primarily located in CBTS, La Buena Vida, Islands of Rockport, Bahia Bay, and Palm Harbor. Back in 2003, and then again in 2009, CRA's property owners were targeted for annexation by Aransas Pass. Today, these previously targeted canal communities remain in the city's extra territorial jurisdiction.

City Manager Edwards, we are here today at your request to listen to the city's annexation ideas and proposals. Judy, Freddie, Bill and I promise to listen to your proposals, provide this information to our stakeholders, compile our owners' annexation preferences, and report our findings back to you.

Reaching out to more than 400 owners and compiling their annexation preferences will take some time. If ok with you, we will update you in 30 to 45 days as to where we are in the process.

Mr. Edwards, we are here to listen. The meeting is all yours.

AP City Manager Edwards said he wanted to determine if there was any interest in CBTS owners being annexed by AP. Mr. Edwards seemed to think "offering" sewer connections would entice CBTS residents to consider annexation as that "seemed to be a sticking point" in the last annexation attempt (from his review). Mr. Edwards stated funds from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other Disaster Recovery Grants of a couple of million dollars were available to fund the building of sewer infrastructure to CBTS, but not within the subdivision.

AP City Manager Edwards kept attempting to get CBTS to favorably consider the idea of annexation. John and Judy gave several historical reasons for not wanting to be annexed, including the overall substantial degradation of existing fire, police, and emergency response currently provided to CBTS owners by Aransas County. The degraded services include the lack of timely response of emergency services, primarily caused by location, and logistical/distance problems. They discussed several of the critical errors discovered by CRA when analyzing Naismith Engineering's 2009 economics and cost estimates for providing critical infrastructure to the targeted canal communities.

AP City Manager Edwards did admit that Aransas Pass is currently in lawsuit with Naismith Engineering regarding construction projects in Conn Brown Harbor, and Naismith would not be used by the city in any upcoming construction projects.

John and Judy stated that there seemed to be "no desire for annexation by Aransas Pass" in CBTS, La Buena Vida, Islands of Rockport, Bahia Bay or Palm Harbor. Commissioner Chaney added that these residents were not given a meeting like this one before the last two times AP targeted these canal communities with unwanted annexation. Commissioner Chaney was appreciative of City Manager Edwards reaching out and hosting this meeting.

John Moore emphasized folks owning property in these canal communities have economic choices, and they each chose to live outside of the city limits of Rockport and AP. If AP forces another unwanted annexation attempt, the city should expect substantial push back opposition from CBTS, the other canal communities in southern Aransas County included in the targeted area, and from CRA. The annexation opposition will be well organized and funded, professionally researched, and strategically presented.

City Manager Edwards stated, "AP city council does not want a battle". He said that if there is not favorable interest from the residents of CBTS, then AP would not pursue annexation "at this time"; recognizing that AP wants to go in that direction for future annexation, but maybe "not now."

In a response to Bill's question, Mr. Edwards mentioned a Texas A&M professor, Dr. James Lee, helped city staff write grants for no charge, and if necessary, the city would look to him again to secure grants to fund legally required sewer and other infrastructure following a successful annexation.

CBTS represented they would report on the substance of the meeting to CRA members, and canvas southern Aransas County owners to determine if there is any interest in annexation, or the services AP would be legally required to provide after an annexation is complete.