

**Mayor's column for  
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In the upcoming weeks, the City Council will consider the possibility of annexing the unincorporated area of Snohomish County known as Esperance. This pocket of county is essentially surrounded by the city of Edmonds. The very rough boundaries are 220<sup>th</sup> to the north, Maple Lane to the south, Highway 99 to the east, and 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to the west. The residents of this area have steadfastly refused to join the City of Edmonds in past annexation attempts, usually by voting against the idea at the ballot box. The last annexation effort took place seven or eight years ago.

During my tenure as mayor (six years) I have been approached by many folks who live in the Esperance area who expressed a desire to be a part of Edmonds. They asked how this could be accomplished. The State Legislature has bounced all over the place in recent years on methods for annexation. They finally settled on the following three methods: the election method, the election method by resolution, or the island annexation by interlocal agreement.

Under the last scenario, the interlocal agreement method, the City would pass a resolution to initiate the process by entering into negotiations with Snohomish County to develop an interlocal agreement. Once an interlocal agreement is reached, the City Council would have to pass an ordinance annexing the island area and giving notice to the residents of the City's intent. After the ordinance has been approved, it does not become effective for 45 days.

Residents who oppose annexation have that 45-day period to collect signatures on a referendum petition to force the issue to a vote. Those signatures must represent at least 15 percent of the people who voted in the last general election. Once validated, an election must take place at the next general election if it is within 90 days of that date; otherwise, a special election must be held.

I understand from several folks in the area who are opposed to annexation that a petition drive is already underway even before the Council has made a decision. Clearly there is opposition. If you are in favor of annexation, then I would suggest that you get organized as well. The Council will come to a decision soon, and if the decision is to annex, then the 45-day period will commence.

On a different topic, the Council approved a more strongly worded resolution against any expansion of the use at Paine Field, which joins us with Woodway and Mountlake Terrace, who also passed resolutions last week. Five weeks ago, at a meeting held in Mukilteo by the Save Our Communities group, County Executive Reardon promised to form a committee to study the issue of airport expansion and, in particular, the agreement that the County signed years ago not to expand the use at the airport. As of my writing, according to the Executive, he is waiting on the County Council to decide if they want to become a part of the committee.

The Council also directed staff to send a letter of intent to the Edmonds School District to purchase the old Woodway Elementary site, located in the southern part of Edmonds. It's always

exciting to be able to add to our park system inventory; however, I do have some concerns about the method in which the Council made their decision. While the Council and I agree that it would be good thing to acquire the property, we certainly disagree on how to go about it. I believe that before we attempt to buy property, we should know what we are going to use it for, how much it's going to cost to purchase, and what other costs may be involved, such as demolition and long-term maintenance costs associated with the planned use. I believe those factors need to be addressed before we move forward with a purchase and sale agreement or even a letter of intent. Council sets our policy and we will do as they have requested, but I must state publicly my objection to the process. Staff will be giving the Council additional information in the weeks ahead to help them guide their further deliberations on the issue. I applaud them on their desire to acquire more parkland for the City of Edmonds. In the end, we all will benefit from that desire.