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Public comment on Quigley closes again

City staff and developer to draw up draft annexation agreement

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The Hailey City Council has once again closed public comment on an annexation request by developer David Hennessy that could bring 365 homes and an 18-hole golf course into the city limits.

The council will hold no more public hearings on the proposed development in Quigley Canyon until city staff has drawn up a draft annexation agreement with the developer.

"This will be where the rubber hits the road," Councilman Don Keirn said.

Hennessy recently reduced the scope of his group's development plans in environmentally sensitive areas above Quigley Pond and in Deadman Gulch. The new plan reduced the number of acres proposed for annexation from about 1,100 to 720, and removed 14 homes from the proposed development.

The new proposal would extend Hailey's city limits to the mouth of Deadman Gulch and the eastern side of Quigley Pond, east of the city, leaving county officials to decide the extent of development in the more controversial areas.

Public comment at Monday's City Council meeting centered around the developer's chance of developing in these areas, as well as the overall significance of the annexation to the local economy.

Hailey resident Peter Lobb said accepting Hennessy's new plan would result in "de facto" development in the controversial areas, because county officials would not be able to push housing density down the canyon and into the city.

"The county would be trapped," Lobb said. "If they denied development in these areas, it would be considered 'takings.'"

County officials would not comment on the recent changes to Hennessy's plan.

Construction worker Nick Uberuaga said the city has already lost control of what goes on in upper Quigley Canyon and in Deadman, and has a lot more to lose if Hennessy is not granted annexation.

"He could put a lot of us to work right now," Uberuaga said. "This would mean an opportunity for us to stay in town and pay our mortgages."

An updated fiscal-impact study that incorporates the changes to Hennessy's plan was presented Monday by development consultant Rich Caplan, who said the net impact to the city's general fund would be an increase of \$112,162 over the first 10 years.

City staff was instructed to negotiate with the developer in workshop sessions in weeks to come, to establish cost-sharing agreements for improvements to city infrastructure associated with the proposed development. These include upgrades to the city's water and wastewater systems, road improvements and community housing costs.

When a draft annexation agreement has taken shape, the council will hold a meeting to discuss it, as well as another round of public comment on the proposal.

"We are deciding if the city could annex, but not whether or not the city should annex," said Councilwoman Carol Brown.

"That conversation still has to happen."

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