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Allegood replies to objection

Apr 11, 2015

Mayor Tommy Allegood is making concessions related to the annexation of about 40 acres into Acworth to satisfy the objections of a former county commissioner.

The annexation, accomplished by a bill in the state legislature, is nearly complete. It will be finalized when Gov. Nathan Deal signs the bill.

Senate Bill 217 passed the legislature this session to allow 39 acres owned by the Army Corps of Engineers at the intersection of Cobb Parkway and Lake Acworth Drive to be annexed into the city.

An advertisement for Fisher Investments. On the left is a portrait of a man with grey hair, wearing a white shirt and a dark tie. To the right of the portrait, the text reads: "Is It Time To Retire?" followed by "If you have a \$500,000 portfolio, download the guide by columnist and money manager Ken Fisher's firm called 'When To Retire.'" Below this text is a yellow button with the words "Learn More" in red. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text "FISHER INVESTMENTS" is displayed in a small, grey font.

Now that the bill passed, Allegood said Acworth's Board of Aldermen is prepared to agree to uphold the county land use standards for the area, a commitment former northwest Cobb Commissioner Helen Goreham said the city never agreed to in the past.

Approval of the annexation came from legislators after Goreham, who retired in December, spoke out against the proposed annexation at a March 10 commission meeting.

Goreham said she objected to the annexation multiple times during her 12 years in office because

she feared the city would fail to uphold the county land use standards for the land.

Commissioner Bob Weatherford, who now represents the area, said he supports the annexation because it allows Acworth staff and public safety officials to manage the park instead of Cobb staff. The Corps of Engineer land will be well-maintained because the city will be restricted from building anything there, Weatherford added.

“There’s nothing you could really build on that anyway,” Weatherford said.



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Goreham said she worries Acworth officials might not follow the county’s guidelines on keeping the land in good condition to protect the lake.

State Rep. Ed Setzler (R-Acworth) said he was involved the compromise of how the land should be regulated.

Setzler said Acworth is prepared to agree to a resolution stating any land near Corps of Engineers land that the city plans to annex in the future must comply with county land use standards, meaning the city could not rezone that land to a denser category than the county has in place now.

In addition, Setzler said the city will agree to adopt a study of the area, called the Northwest Corridor Vulnerability Study that stated the area should remain rural in nature.

Goreham said she was “pleased” that the city agreed to incorporate the study into its plan for the land. The Northwest Corridor Vulnerability Study was put together between 2012 and 2014 by county staff and included public input.



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Goreham said she wanted the public to have a say in what happened to the land even if Acworth annexed it.

Lastly, Setzler said Acworth will work on developing new city ordinances to preserve rural residential areas since the city doesn't have a low density residential zoning category. The city plans to complete the three requirements by June 30, Setzler said.

"I just want to be sure that for my constituents in unincorporated northwest Cobb County who really value the low density, rural residential feel of that area — that the same feel could be maintained over time even if the city began to annex and take responsibility for that part of the county. I'm friendly with the city doing it. I just want to be sure that the interests of folks and the quality of life in that area ... maintain that careful balance," Setzler said.

Allegood said he hopes the concessions the council made will satisfy Goreham's objection.

Goreham responded that she was glad a compromise was reached, but she still has requests related to the area, including that Acworth stop expanding into northwest Cobb.

“This sets them up for additional annexations in the future,” Goreham said. “I would like to see the other properties (near the Corps of Engineers land) remain in the county and under the county’s land use standards.”



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