

Richlawn City Commission
Minutes of the Special Meeting to discuss the possible Merger with St. Matthews
July 7, 2014

The special meeting of the Richlawn City Council was held on Monday, July 7, 2014, at the St. Matthews Firehouse on Sears Avenue. Present were Mayor Pat Coomes, Commissioners Dirk Gowin, Roger Rymarz, Henry Thoben and Rae Taylor, along with Clerk/Treasurer Jeff Barrick and Richlawn Attorney Steve Porter. Also in attendance were approximately 40-50 Richlawn Residents and St. Matthews city Commissioners Rick Tonini and Frank Flynn.

Mayor Coomes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- Each member of the Richlawn City Council introduced themselves
 - Attorney Steve Porter read the procedure for annexation
 - Part of that procedure is if the Richlawn City Council determines it will be better served by the annexing city (St. Matthews) it should be put on the general election ballot for annexation.
 - There are four declarations that must be made:
 - There must be financial consideration
 - Resolution of taxes
 - Zoning/land use must be the same for all residents
 - Assets of Richlawn become assets of St. Matthews
 - If on the ballot in November, the St. Matthews city council can accept or rejects the annexation. If they accept, and a majority of Richlawn voters votes in favor of the annexation, it passes.
 - Mayor Coomes opened the meeting to questions which are summarized below
1. Can Richlawn set any terms & conditions on what happens after the annexation
 - a. No – all restrictions must be in place prior to annexation
 2. Would the St. Matthews Council increase and would Richlawn be represented?
 - a. No, council would not increase and no, Richlawn would not have a representative, but all St. Matthews residents are able to run for city council
 3. St. Matthews has zoning control, does Richlawn have zoning control?
 - a. No, Richlawn does not have zoning powers, must follow Louisville Metro
 4. What does Richlawn get back from St. Matthews?
 - a. Richlawn gets police protection from the St. Matthews Police department
 5. Who would Richlawn's contact be at the St. Matthews city council
 - a. St. Matthews has a full-time staff and all council members provide cell phones and emails
 6. Can Richlawn just contract St. Matthews police?
 - a. No, St. Matthews has had many requests for police coverage and they do not offer this service.
 7. What are the Pro's and Con's for Richlawn to merge with St. Matthews?
 - a. Richlawn has \$350,000 in city reserves, if not spent, this would be handed over to St. Matthews
 - b. Police coverage, snow removal, leaf pick up, Richlawn cannot enforce ordinances
 8. Summary of Metro Police coverage: 5th division has 8 officers, they cover a very large area. If they are unavailable, they contact St. Matthews to cover the call. If St. Matthews cannot cover, it is ignored.
 9. How did all this talk of merging with St. Matthews start?
 - a. Current Richlawn city council was in favor of it
 - b. The discussion started because of break-ins
 - c. A resident stated he has lived in Richlawn for 28 years and has had 2 break-ins. He believes neighbors watching neighbors is the best protection
 - d. Comment was the current Neighborhood watch program will not be dissolved and St. Matthews police responds immediately
 10. What will happen to property values if Richlawn merges?
 - a. Resident mentioned property values in Richlawn seem to be better than average
 - b. When Wal-Mart went in, the Richlawn City Council fought for the residents and had the brick wall built
 11. Comment – if Richlawn has the money to pay for extra police coverage, why not pay for it?
 12. What happens to the Richlawn name?
 - a. Richlawn would exist as the Richlawn subdivision
 13. Comment from St. Matthews commissioners was St. Matthews is not trying to take Richlawn. He stated St. Matthews has a better tax rate and more services. He encouraged Richlawn to spend their surplus.
 14. If Richlawn spends their surplus and then need services, would we be put at the bottom of the list?
 - a. No, St. Matthews takes care of all of its residents
 15. What is the budget line item of \$7,280 for Police Protection?
 - a. Richlawn currently contracts with a private company for police surveillance for approximately 6 hours per week
 16. Comment from a Richlawn commissioner – He feels it is the responsibility of the council to give the people the option and if the merger is defeated, Richlawn will need a full slate of officers to run for office (1 Mayor and 4 Commissioners)
 17. Comment from a Richlawn commissioner – He feels things in Richlawn are not getting better and has seen St. Matthews grow in a positive way
 18. Quote from St. Matthews commissioner – Richlawn is a hidden gem
 19. Does Richlawn have zoning power?
 - a. No, but St. Matthews does because it is a 4th class city
 20. Can Richlawn be a subdivision and put decorations up?
 - a. Decorations would not go up unless privately funded
 21. Would Richlawn's street signs be replaced?
 - a. The current street signs do not meet federal regulation, so yes, if they were knocked down, they would be replaced with standard signs.

22. How would the merger affect our current trash/recycling pickups?
 - a. There would be virtually no change. St. Matthews offers back yard pickup
 - i. Is Backyard pick up by special request?
 1. No
23. Would landscaping in Richlawn be maintained by St. Matthews?
 - a. That would have to be determined by the St. Matthews city council
24. Comment by St. Matthews Commissioner – St. Matthews wants to obtain green space, so there is no worry about developing Lang Field or selling the property. St. Matthews is not trying to take Richlawn. They treat all residents equally and respond to its residents. The best service they can provide is police protection.
25. A Richlawn resident who lives on Hubbards Lane commented they do not consider themselves Richlawn residents, they consider themselves St. Matthews residents already
26. Comment from Richlawn City Council member – How is Richlawn going to divvy up the current assets held by Richlawn
 - a. It would have to be spent or given to St. Matthews
 - b. Richlawn road would cost ~ \$150,000 to replace
 - c. Replace canopy trees at full cost
 - d. Work with MSD to fix sink holes
27. The meeting ended promptly at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Jeff Barrick
Clerk/Treasurer

Patrick Coomes
Mayor

APPROVED