

10-28-2020 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions #1

ITEM #18: Consider an Amendment to the Water and Sewer Service Area Boundary (WASMPBA Amendment)

Council Question:

What is the reason for this petition/how does this fit in with Council goals, strategic plan, etc.? I understand some property owners are petitioning but I'm not really clear on why?

Staff Response:

The property owners made this petition because they wish to access OWASA water and sewer service for their lots. The two lots in question are adjacent to existing OWASA lines and therefore no extension is required. Staff is recommending the boundary change because it would create an equitable water and sewer policy for all lots in the Hunt's Reserve neighborhood.

Council Question:

My understanding is that past work with the boundary were done through conversation amongst all the governing bodies, not just one approving and sending it on to others to agree to or say no, which then leads to conflict between boards. Could we come up with a better process to consider these requests to extend the boundary so that we understand what and why we are and we discuss with the other boards so communications are smooth and transparent? AOG or some other venue to consider things that all the boards have to consider together?

Staff Response:

The process for amending WASMPBA does not include a joint meeting as a required step, though we recognize this would be useful for consideration of significant boundary changes. In this case, however, the boundary change is considered to be fairly minor. Further, the area in question falls solely within Chapel Hill's Planning Jurisdiction.

Planning staff of the five partner agencies did hold a joint staff meeting after the petition was received, and have stayed in communication on the topic in the months since. Town staff have been advised that other agencies would like Chapel Hill to consider the boundary amendment first. If Chapel Hill approves, partner agency staff do not anticipate any objections by their respective boards. Council's decision will be a key factor in the decision-making by other governing boards. This is based on the particular circumstances of this amendment proposal, and would not set a precedent for the process of considering more substantive amendments.