

Press Release - April 2, 2020

Petition Calls for Ranson Election to Return Pipestem Property to Jefferson County

Petition to trigger election in which Ranson voters will decide whether to return the property, which includes Jefferson Orchards and Tackley Mill parcel, to Jefferson County.

Ranson, WV, April 2, 2020 – A group of Ranson landowners and taxpayers, citing fairness and financial concerns, today petitioned the City of Ranson to hold an election to return certain property to the jurisdiction of Jefferson County.

The property at issue, which includes the Tackley Mill parcel and the Jefferson Orchards land, was previously annexed by the City of Ranson under a practice called pipestem or shoestring annexation. This was legal for a brief time from about 2001 to 2008 but which is now prohibited by West Virginia law.

Petition supporters said that returning the pipestem property to the County is the right thing to do for both Ranson and surrounding area residents. Reducing financial pressures on the City of Ranson is one key objective. As Ranson resident and petitioner Susie Wimer noted, “These types of annexations have been prohibited by the State for a reason. It really burdens the municipality to provide services to an area so far out in the County. It also leads to other unintended hardships on our community like inefficiencies in first responder deployment, for example. It would be more efficient if the County provided services to this land because it already provides services to all of the land around it, and it would spread the cost over a wider number of people.”

Fundamental fairness is another consideration, said Susie Wimer. “We think those who live right next to this land, like the people who live in Fox Glen and on Warm Springs Road, also deserve to have a say in what happens with the land right next to their house. This proposal, once approved, will give them a say through County elections and oversight. Since Ranson residents can still vote in County elections we will still have a say too.”

Citing West Virginia Code section 8-7-2, the petitioners in their filing noted that they had collected more than the required number of signatures and now an election is required under law. If a majority of voters agrees, the election will move the pipestem property out of the jurisdiction of the City of Ranson and back to Jefferson County.

The next step in the process is for the City of Ranson to announce the timing of the required election.