

# Boerne residents oppose truck stop

City considers annexing 28 acres being eyed by Pilot

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**BOERNE, Texas** - Boerne City Council members got an earful Tuesday night from dozens of residents who are concerned about a piece of land the city is considering annexing.

The residents are worried the annexation would pave the way for a large Pilot Flying J truck stop to be built there.

The 28 acre tract of land in question is located about 2 miles North of the small Hill Country town's bustling main street on Highway 87.

Boerne Mayor Mike Schultz said the property would be a good place to expand the city's growing industrial park.

"Our current industrial park is almost full so this 28 acres came up as an addition to be able to grow that industrial area," Schultz said adding the city has been interested in the land for some time. "The 28 acres has been on our radar for about the last 18-24 months. What is being perceived is that we're doing this annexation right now as a result of Pilot, that's not the case."

Schultz said last November the current property owners petitioned the city to be annexed.

That annexation became controversial when residents heard rumors that Pilot is interested in building a travel center on a portion of the land but no deals have been made.

"The zoning that we have currently for industrial will allow for this to go in that area but we have not gotten any formal proposal from Pilot at this point," Schultz said.

Many residents only recently heard about the request for annexation and Pilot's interests in the land. Some feel the city was trying to "sneak" something past them by keeping the project quiet which they said explains why no one showed up to comment about the proposed annexation at the first public hearing that was held in December.

The second public hearing was held Tuesday night and the council chambers were so packed dozens of residents spilled out into the lobby to listen to the proceedings.

During the public comment portion of the meeting several residents expressed their concerns about having a big truck stop in their little community.

"I do not want a truck stop in my backyard," said Tommy Manfield who lives right behind the property. "I do not want to listen to diesel trucks all night long. I don't want to smell the fumes."

Many residents expressed concerns about increased traffic and crime that could come with a truck stop.

"It is naive to think that a truck stop would not attract a transient population of individuals who would be looking for drugs and opportunity for theft," said Tamara Oesterling who owns a veterinarian clinic in the industrial park next to the 28 acre property.

Several residents urged the council to proceed cautiously and slow the process down.

"Let's take a breath and learn the facts," said Otis McCracken. "Let's protect Boerne, Texas, one of the most lovely cities in America and not have it become just another truck stop."

Despite the opposition Schultz said a truck stop would be an appropriate business for the area and annexing the property would give the city more control over any future development.

"Development can go there whether we annex or not," Schultz said. "It's really how much control you want over what is going to go there whether that be Pilot or anybody else."

A vote on the annexation isn't likely until next month.