

About the City
By
Councilman Kingery

Over the last four years the City Council has done our best to make decisions that would benefit the people and the City of Douglas. You may not have always agreed with us but we have always done what we believed was best at the time. I look forward to continue working as a team member and to do what the Council believes is best for the citizens of Douglas.

We hope you will stay abreast of what is going on with the City and the City Council and continue to give us your feedback. If you attend City Council meetings and City Council Study Sessions, you will be more knowledgeable of the information we have available to us and will better understand the decisions we make. If you are there, you will have more opportunities to share your concerns and opinions, both of which are important to us. Our meetings and study sessions are open to the public and are posted on the City website along with lots of other information about our City.

At present, it appears that we are going to have lots of activity going on with the City of Douglas for several years. It should be interesting for you, as well as the City employees and City Council, and it is important that you stay involved.

You have likely heard of the proposed annexation of the Seven Trails subdivision on the west side of Interstate 25. The most recent proposal now includes land on the east side of Interstate 25 that incorporates the former drive-in theater land as well as the land located south of the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy and north of the Fort Fetterman highway (Highway 93) junction. This will be a very large annexation project that will provide a lot of information, planning and discussion between the developer, the City Community Development Department, the City Council, City Engineers and likely many other groups. The best way to get the truth about what is being planned is to be at meetings and hear and see what is happening. Much misinformation has been, and will likely continue to be, provided by interested parties as well. It will not be an easy task to sort out the important information from the unimportant and the truth from the untruth. All of us need to be open-minded and do our best all the time.

As with all annexations, it is the responsibility of the developer to bear the cost of the infrastructure needed in the newly annexed area, such as streets, sewer, and water systems. This will result in a lot of cost to the developer before a return on their investment is realized. This is what developers have to be able to do as part of their responsibility if they want to be included in the City and have the City services available to their development.

Seven Trails developers have asked the City to consider a proposal whereby the sales tax generated by the commercial part of their development might be shared with them over a period of time, to help reimburse part of the infrastructure costs directly attributable to the commercial development. Sales tax is a large contributor to the City budget for maintaining infrastructure so it is important for the City to have sales tax revenue; any business that produces sales tax helps maintain the financial health of our community. It would be a form of an incentive to encourage businesses to come to Douglas. While Douglas has not used this type of incentive in the past, some people think we should have some type of incentive program to encourage business and thus long-term stability to our community. Previous developers in Douglas have not had the advantage of a sales tax sharing program, and apparently no town in Wyoming has used such a program; however, other incentive programs do exist and have been used. To consider such a program, we must look at the legal side of doing something like this first. If it is determined to be legal, we would need to set up guidelines that would apply to any developer in the future that might want to apply for the program. Guidelines would likely include such things as the percentage of total infrastructure cost to be reimbursed, the percentage of sales tax generated to be shared, the total length of time to be considered for the sharing process, perhaps effects upon existing business's sales tax generation, whether the development could occur without the sales tax sharing program, and likely many other considerations. Before we can consider such a plan, we need to have answers to such questions, and then set up a City Ordinance to deal with such a plan.

The Seven Trails annexation is just one of the situations facing us in the near future, but perhaps the one that will have the most controversy. I will try to keep you posted on some other items soon, such as the new Transfer Station at the landfill, the Business Park development going on, and the development being planned at the previous County Airport that has been used recently for the drag racing events. We recently had an excellent article in the Budget from Ms. Cross concerning the Seven Trails development. She had some good thoughts and made an eloquent presentation of her concerns. This is your/our community. Stay involved and stay informed!