

To grow beyond a second class township government, a couple of things need to happen:

Water and Sewer: For the past three years I have been focused on developing a partnership with Ohio American Water to provide sewer and water for the undeveloped portions of the Township. This will allow development to occur inside the Township in accordance with the comprehensive plan developed with Township residents input and adopted by the board in 2003. Why do we need water and sewer? First, without water and sewer the only alternative for development is annexation of Township property into the City of Columbus. Once the property is within the city limits, it will be developed in accordance with the standards of the Columbus Development Department. The Township's comprehensive plan will no longer apply. Second, without sewer and water, as the vast majority of Township land is annexed into the city, the tax base supporting the current level of Township services becomes smaller and smaller. The services that the Township provides today can not be supported if the only remaining portions of the Township after annexation are the areas that are developed today. Providing an alternative source for water and sewer other than annexation insures the township financial viability and development in accordance to the Township comprehensive plan.

Property Maintenance Code: There has been a lot of public discussion concerning the property maintenance code passed by the board in December. I am a life long resident of the Township, and it saddens me to say that areas of Prairie have deteriorated to the point that it is having an impact on the resale value of homes in the Township. Prior to 2002, the previous board had chosen not to enforce the Township's zoning resolution in all instances, thus picking and choosing who will receive violation notices and when. When I arrived in office in January of 2002, I directed the zoning officers to enforce the zoning resolution fairly and evenly across both residential and commercial property. I am not bothered that a group of citizens circulated a referendum petition to place an option to repeal the property maintenance code on the November ballot. The maintenance code, as written, parallels the Township's existing zoning resolution with very few additions. The major difference between the zoning resolution and the property maintenance code is that the code allows the Township to issue modest fines against violators whereas the zoning resolution only allows us to take action through the court system at great expense to the Township. There is nothing in the code that dictates the style or color of your house. I encourage you to read the maintenance code before you decide to repeal it by voting "yes" or allowing it to take effect by voting "no" on the referendum. I am in favor of the property maintenance code and will be voting against the referendum to repeal the code.

In closing, the Township is at the crossroads of developing in one of two directions. Either your township government stands up and perpetuates the growth and vision of the comprehensive plan developed by Township residents by pursuing alternative sources for water and sewer and having a basic maintenance code; or, the Township is annexed much like our neighboring Franking Township where the only remaining portions of the Township are islands surrounded by the City of Columbus. Don't let grumblings of a few residents sway your opinion, review the facts, read the maintenance code and make up your own mind. Participate in Township meetings and activities. Don't let loud talkers talk you out of your quality of life.