

A special meeting of the City of Downs Planning Commission was held October 29, 2013, 5:30 p.m. at city hall. Members present: Doug Brush, Don Heiland, Bill Cushing, Linda Miller, Tim Parker, Jennifer Cooper. Absent: Randy Koops. Also attending: Mayor Jen Brush, Council President John Cary, Vickie Oviatt, Bruce Berkley, Ralph Becker, John Riggs.

Chairman Bill Cushing called the meeting to order.

Don moved, seconded by Doug, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as submitted. Carried.

John Riggs, Riggs Associates, Lindsborg, was in attendance as requested. Bill said that John had been invited to attend for guidance on the annexation process and to give the commission a starting point. Bill turned the meeting over to John Riggs. Mr. Riggs explained that annexation is controlled by state statutes. He presented copies of those state laws listing the conditions which permit annexation (#12-520), criteria to be considered, extending municipal services, etc. John noted that if it is something you benefit from, you pay for it and owe taxes on it just like anyone else. Although the city could extend the sewer system as an incentive. There was discussion.

Bill noted that Mr. Riggs had stressed keeping everyone informed. Mr. Riggs said that those involved could be sent a special invitation to a meeting, but it would still be a public meeting. The newly annexed would come into zoning, non-conforming, it would not stop what they are doing now unless it was considered a health issue.

John R. said the first step is to decide a land use pattern, start with a map showing who owns what, and identify what to annex. Do cost studies and have an idea of tax impact. This gave the commission a starting point.

Bill asked Mr. Riggs about allowing accessory buildings on empty lots. John replied that most cities do not allow accessory buildings unless there is a primary building. However more are considering it for tax base. John R. said he thinks it is a bad idea, and some do not find it attractive. However, it can be controlled by certain zones and added restrictions.

Following further discussion, Doug moved to adjourn the meeting. Jennifer seconded the motion. Carried. Meeting adjourned.