March 25, 2015 (Wednesday Edition)

At a public hearing this week, the village council voted in favor of an annexation petition as presented by Dan Jutte for approximately six acres on the south edge of town. This annexation included the request to assign commercial zoning to a portion of the plat and residential to the remaining portion. By the size of the crowd at the meeting this was an issue that many people had strong feelings about and felt the need for a commercial area to allow the construction of a Dollar General store here in Fort Recovery. While those in attendance were overwhelmingly in favor of this occurring, with the largest reason being personal shopping habits, I want to touch on a few points that I feel are important.

> 1) While there are points from both sides of the argument that are very important, the one thing that I was told most often by those wanting Dollar General in Fort Recovery is that this will allow them to stay in town and do their shopping. No need to travel to other towns for a Walmart or Dollar General trip thus leading to more shopping being done locally at the existing businesses. I hope all those that told me this and the many others that felt strongly about this situation follow through with that as it is extremely important that we continue to patronize our local businesses. These are the businesses that we count on every day to provide our families with products and services that are important to our quality of life in a small town.
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> 2) We are very fortunate to have the type of grocery store, pharmacy, flower shop, shoe store, restaurants, along with the many other retail businesses we have here in Fort Recovery. In order to keep those stores viable, we must support them regularly. It is a very difficult undertaking to keep small businesses operating in small rural communities and quite often we take for granted what we actually have.
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> 3) These are the same businesses that have for many years supported our community in many ways, whether it be by providing a quality product or service, opening for an emergency situation, providing financial support for our kids school functions, ball team sponsors, or the many community events that we hold annually. Many of our different events could not occur nor would they be nearly as successful without the support of the local business people. These are our friends and neighbors and many have put a great deal of time and effort into providing a quality product and/or service for you the customer.

I am not going to rehash the pros and cons of either side of this issue, but I will ask that this issue not divide our community. Please be willing to consider the opposition side to your position and understand that there are valid points to both sides of this issue whether you personally agree with them or not. This was not an easy decision for the council members and there was much discussion and thought put into this prior to the public hearing by these members.

Let’s continue to support our downtown businesses in order to keep our community strong and Fort Recovery a special place!!

Randy Diller, Village Administrator