



PROCEDURES Annexation

Initial Contact

A property owner or property owners desiring to annex property into the Town of Bel Air are encouraged to meet and discuss the annexation with the Director of Planning and the Director of Public Works to ensure that the annexation is feasible and in basic compliance with State and Town laws and policies. For large annexation requests or requests which could have a potentially significant financial impact on the Town, the Town Administrator will be included in the initial discussions.

Procedures

If the annexation of a requested parcel of land into the Town appears to be feasible after discussion with appropriate Town officials, the property owner or owners are instructed to prepare a letter (petition) to the Board of Town Commissioners requesting annexation into the Town. The letter should be accompanied by an Annexation Justification statement, the deed to the property in question, a plat to scale of the property, metes and bounds description of the property; and the appropriate application/review fee as established by the Town Code.

When the documentation requesting annexation is received by the Town, it will be placed on the Town Board meeting agenda to be considered formally by the Board of Town Commissioners. If the Board decides to receive the petition for annexation, it will request that the Town Counsel and relevant Departments examine the petition for sufficiency. If sufficient, an Annexation Resolution including the metes and bounds description of the site and conditions of Annexation will be prepared by Town Staff for Town Board receipt and consideration.

The Department of Public Works will review the metes and bounds description to assure that the proposed boundary closes and is contiguous with the current municipal boundaries. The Planning Commission will review the request to determine whether the annexation is consistent with the Town Comprehensive Plan and whether the requested zoning designation is appropriate. The Planning Commission recommendation will be provided to the Town Board as part of its deliberation process.

An Annexation Plan, consistent with state requirements as prepared by Town staff, will be formally submitted to the Board of Town Commissioners for approval. The Annexation Plan will then, along with the Annexation Resolution, be forwarded to Harford County Government, the Maryland Department of Planning and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council for review and comment. In accordance with the Local Government, Division II, Title 4, Subtitle 4, of the Maryland Annotated Code. These agencies are given thirty (30) days to review and comment on the annexation request.

Simultaneously, the Town must place a public notice in a paper of general circulation describing the property, the conditions of annexation and the date for a public hearing on the proposed annexation. The public notice must be placed in a local newspaper of general circulation for four (4) consecutive weeks, if the property is greater than 25 acres and two (2) consecutive weeks if less than 25 acres. The public hearing must be held no less than fifteen (15) days after the date of the last newspaper notice.

3. Public Hearing

After the requisite advertising and public hearing and approval of the proposed annexation, the Town Clerk will prepare and process necessary public notices per State requirements and submit all information required by the Local Government, Division II, Title 4, Subtitle 4 to the State Department of Legislative Services. The Planning Director will notify Maryland Department of Planning in order to comply with the Smart Growth Act requirements related to annexation, and to certify Priority Funding status. The Planning Department also notifies the Harford County Clerk of the Court, the Maryland State Tax Assessment office and the Bureau of the Census, noting the boundary changes resulting from the annexation. If approved, the annexation becomes effective no less than forty-five (45) days from the date of approval/enactment.

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