October 18, 2017

**Statement from Mayor Regarding Comments at Gretna Annexation Meeting**

I would not otherwise comment on Gretna’s proposed annexation, except that I would like to address the comments made by Gretna City Council members, which were reported in the Omaha World-Herald, accusing the City of Papillion as being “bullies.”

First, fear is not a valid planning tool and does not lead to orderly growth in the county. The City of Papillion has no intention or desire to annex the City of Gretna. Instead, we would rather be partners in economic growth.

The stated goal as mentioned in the opening section of the September Gretna Annexation Study is to control the 192nd Street and I-80 interchange to provide a new gateway entrance (via Tract 1) and to control the community entrance at Highway 370 and I-80 (via Tract 2).

As Mayor of Papillion, I have never stated intent to cross over the interstate and fully control interchanges. The opposite has been demonstrated.

Specific to Tract 2, former Gretna Mayor Sally McGuire and I established a friendly boundary that drew a line down the middle of I-80 so we could both share a presence and each have a gateway entrance. That agreement was unanimously approved by both the Gretna and Papillion City Councils, and we have honored that partial boundary agreement. A look at the current western edge of Papillion’s extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction will show that it does not sweep across the interstate, but stops at the defined boundary line. With that current agreement, Gretna already controls their Highway 370 gateway to the west, and so the objective of the study is already met without annexing the Industrial Tract 2. Friends and partners — not bullies.

Specific to Tract 1, I have shared publicly that Papillion would like a presence at the future 192nd/I-80 interchange, but not full control. We have stated a desire that we share the interchange and each stay on our respective side of the interstate as demonstrated with the current partial boundary agreement. An annexation of the Rural Tract 1 is not required to accomplish the goal of a gateway. A simple amendment to our current boundary agreement to share the interchange would meet that goal.

Papillion has not questioned that Gretna should have a gateway to the west from the interstate. Papillion has stated it also sees gateways to the east from the interstate — shared gateways as friends and partners for orderly growth.

As announced in our previous news release, Papillion’s annexation is not in response to Gretna’s, and if both are completed, Papillion still is within the bounds of the current boundary agreement and our city limits still do not touch.

— Mayor David Black

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