

FAQ'S

- 1) **Could the threat of annexation have been prevented?** *Yes, Harlem Township is an unincorporated Township. If it became an incorporated Township, which is a simple task, it would have prevented the annexation threat. It is too late now as the township must have filed before the nearest municipality is 3 miles away, otherwise they need permission to do so from those municipalities. In this case, Columbus/New Albany is about 1 mile away from Harlem boundary.*

- 2) **Will Harlem Township be annexed?** *The future will tell. This is likely to occur slowly, though keep in mind when it does, it will be in small pieces (less than 500 acres) and not one large swoop. We will still have a Harlem Township but with these annexations, development dominos start to fall, i.e., wider roads, more construction, updated utility projects, too many new developments to fight and resident apathy increases. That is why early intervention is needed by residents to shape the future. Also, new sewer lines don't mean automatic annexation. Personally speaking, I was cautioned by Genoa Township consultants, "it is easy to lose control of your township and Harlem Township still has a chance; for us it is too late."*

- 3) **What is the Township's argument for allowing High Density Development?** *The townships position as expressed during August 23rd, 2022 is that if they allow High Density Developments, including condos, apartment buildings, a commercial district, they can facilitate and negotiate things like tree placements that minimize views of the of the development, non-annexation promises from these developers, etc. They further added the threat that if the township declined these developer wishes, they would seek annexation anyway and we would face risk of losing those new tax dollars. They presented only 2 options, there is a 3rd option---referendum.*

4) How come I am learning about this High-Density Development now?

Because of ongoing growing changes. Let me explain, ten years ago, a zoning change may have not raised any concern among residents unless it was in your backyard. I have lived here for over 30-years and can tell you our demographics have changed. There has been an ongoing push by many to increase our population and our density for financial reasons. Not only will there be more tax dollars, but several in our Township Government are land millionaires. They will reap huge financial windfalls with high density developments. I find our trustees and zoning professionals are fine and upstanding citizens. Their efforts over the years have made Harlem Township a much better place to live for everyone in this township. They are owed our gratitude. The issue is zoning, and historically they do what they want in zoning, and not what citizens want.

5) I heard that the Harlem Township Government used a junk survey to justify changes in the zoning master plan that included high density developments.

That is correct. During 2020, when the pandemic was in full force, they sent out a survey to residents about desires/changes for developing Harlem Township. I did not get one, and many, many other residents didn't also. Only about 9% of residents filled it out. From that 9% they determined what the other 91% of residents would want. Harlem is not homogenous-we have farmers, elderly, young professionals, long-time residents, recent new builds with young families, etc. I have reviewed the survey and there are numerous major design flaws rendering it invalid. Some filling out the survey even answered more than once to a question despite that it was a single answer question. I taught research stats at the university level, this is a junk/invalid survey. I told this to the Harlem Trustees and Delaware County Regional Planning rep. Despite this, they turned it over to Harlem Township Strategic Planning Commission and did what they wanted to create the current high-density development plan.

HarlemZoningNews@Gmail.Com

- 6) **You can't stop progress?** *I have heard this many times from residents who feel powerless. You need to use different words. Progress is in the eye of the beholder; progress in reducing congestion, progress in maintaining a dark county sky at night, progress in maintaining a rural and country feel, progress in feeling safe to bike or walk along the road. These aspirational ideas are documented in the previous Master Plans have been around for decades. We are not making progress in these areas. We are making progress in urban sprawl and soon to be high density developments. The word "progress" is being mischaracterized and overgeneralized.*
- 7) **How will changing the Township Zoning Plan to 5-acre lot minimum for future developments help?** *The Township use to be 5-acre lot minimum. Currently, the whole township has a permissive 2-acre requirement. If the threat of annexation is from the outside borders inward, the 5-acre requirement is in essence a land preservation measure for the interior of the township. Developers can purchase farm land and make 5-acre developments which has been done in the past. More smaller developers are likely to pursue 5-acre developments, with many of the larger ones seeking high density. Keep in mind that the Intel scare coming in 3 years will make 5-acre lots attractive. Some people in Harlem live on small lots, no problem, this is only impacting new acquisitions given that the current sprawl concerns didn't exist when these smaller lots were permitted.*
- 8) **What is the Timeline for all these changes?** *Nobody knows. That is a good thing. The housing market is in a period of cooldown and adjustment. We are coming out of a record decade long bull market and a 2+ year world-wide pandemic. Every bull market is always followed by recession, market consolidation, and/or inflation. There are too many variables to predict. Intel pressure is the only certainty and nobody knows how much we will experience. We do have 5-acre+ lots for sale.*

9) What was the general theme of the May 23rd, 2022 Township meeting?

There are a variety of ways to look at it. It is good to have outside consultants come in. The summation of the message was: You must agree to the townships plan to allow high density development, which in turn allows them to negotiate terms that are deemed beneficial to the township or face annexation. It literally was painted black and white with repeated stories of zoning disasters that resulted in annexation in other places in Ohio. It was a fear-based theme painted with the brush stroke that only our township leaders can save us partially by their committee generated high density development plan; The one plan based upon the junk survey 9% of the residents filled out.

- 10) **Why should I register my name and email with this cause?** *Power not only rests with the law for residents to change the Township Zoning Plan, but also with politics. The more organized the better. Future referendums, notices of items on the voting ballot, and political turnout are important with regard to local and county issues. What is at stake is more than land, but lifestyle, values, protecting your investment, historical legacy, social networks, and safety. Do you like the low traffic flow, the clear nights of winter sky, the peace and low noise, the ability for your child to raise livestock for 4H, the ability to target shoot in your yard, ride your quad runner around your property, to walk or bike ride on a country road, or hunt on your property. These and many others intangibles of rural life are being incrementally taken from you, with the Township's Blessings, so that others can maximize their profits. You have a say in all this by the power of the State of Ohio Constitution. Silence is tacit approval- Please speak out and educate your neighbors.*