

May 22, 2009

Dear Editor,

Given the recent controversy regarding a charter change being considered by the City of Seaford, I feel the need to clearly state my position.

At issue is a proposal to change the way city government adds (annexes) new property to Seaford. Currently, citizens must vote in a referendum to approve an annexation. The charter change city council has voted to seek would remove that mechanism, allowing the council to make those decisions unilaterally.

Charter changes must be approved by the Delaware General Assembly and are usually sponsored by the senator or representative in whose district the municipality is located. Let me be clear. I will not sponsor such a bill in the State House of Representatives.

I understand that giving council this authority would streamline the annexation process and eliminate the estimated \$1,000 the city spends each time it holds a referendum. However, I see \$1,000 as a small price to pay to ensure that citizens are given the opportunity to express their opinions on decisions that'll impact the future shape, size and nature of their city.

As a former mayor and city councilman, I know referendums are cumbersome and inconvenient. It places a burden on city government to make its case with Seaford's citizens that expanding the borders of the city is in their best interests. Adopting the proposed change would disenfranchise citizens for the sake of expediency.

Unless a referendum is held on this issue, with the majority of Seaford residents supporting the change, I will not support this amendment.

Sincerely,

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State Rep. Dan Short