

LIFE

The future of Summerfield Farms could be decided by the General Assembly

Summerfield's town council says there is talk of de-annexing the nearly 1,000 acres where Summerfield Farms would go. That decision could be up to state lawmakers.



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GUILFORD COUNTY, N.C. — Summerfield's town council says there's talk at the State Capital about de-annexing the land where Summerfield Farms would go.

This action would take it out of town limits leaving it under Guilford County's control.

The UNC School of Government says this process happens a hand full of times every year, but it would require the approval of the General Assembly.

At a special meeting Thursday night, a big crowd gathered to ask state lawmakers not to do this.

"I support our town council's resolution in opposition to the potential bill or rider. De-annexation of this acreage would be opening a can of worms in our area and for the state's other small towns," said one of several who spoke during public comment.

David Couch bought Summerfield Fams hoping to turn it into nearly 1,000 acres of housing, retail, and walking trails.

"The planning board who approved this project twice by the way decided to write their own ordinance which was approved and that's the issue that I've had. I've been at this now for six years and I feel like most of what's been said tonight is simply untrue about the effort that I've given," said Couch.

Leaders from both parties were at Thursday's town hall listening to concerns.

"I appreciate everyone coming and expressing their views and opinions about a number of issues. I believe there was one that seemed to dominate, but I do appreciate hearing from everyone," said Senator Phil Berger.

"I'm with you Summerfield. Y'all have heard from me, I've heard from 200 plus of you and a lot of you heard that I'm opposed to us usurping control of this issue. So, just know I'm still here," said Representative Pricey Harrison.

Once again, this is only a proposal.

"I don't know if the plans submitted by a local developer should or should not be approved by the local board. What I do know is the Triad is attracting billions of dollars in new economic development, and as our area continues to grow, additionally housing is urgently needed so the nurses, teachers, first responders, and construction workers our area relies on can live in the communities they serve," said Senator Berger in a statement.

Experts say a few de-annexation bills come through the General Assembly every year or two.

If a potential bill does pass, Assistant Professor Jim Joyce with UNC School of Government says changes will have to be made.

"The owner of property that is de-annexed will not have to pay city taxes and the city then loses out on that tax revenue. At the same time, the city no longer has to provide services whether that's water and sewer or trash collection out to that particular property," said Joyce.

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