

Street plans upset some

Share of the fixes too high, residents tell town council

By Wesley Young

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Brenda Mabe

Tamra Eccles cried when she talked to the town council last Thursday about the money the town is willing to spend toward fixing her road.

Larry Bolden appeared to be angry. He said that the town was going back on what residents were promised when they agreed to voluntary annexation several years ago.

The council and the residents talked about what to do about paving private streets to take them into the town's street system. Bolden and Eccles live on Chris Drive, a private, unpaved road where residents want help in street repair.

Council Member Brenda Mabe proposed that the town pay 30 percent of the cost of bringing the street up to standards, but later agreed with a 50 percent match when the mayor and other council members said that Mabe's number was too low.

The council unanimously voted to set the match at 50 percent. The council did not approve the policy last Thursday, but it passed a series of motions defining what the policy will be. The council could consider the policy at its April 26 meeting.

When Walkertown embarked on its temporary street-paving project, it set the number at 80 percent town participation in the costs.

Bolden spoke further to the council.

"I don't think it is right," Bolden said. "I took annexation into Walkertown and it said it would repair my street. Now you are saying it will take 50 percent. What you gave us to annex plainly stated that you would repair our street, and now you aren't going to do it."

After the meeting, Bolden said that when the town had encouraged voluntary annexation several years ago, it gave residents a sheet of paper that said that street lights, snow removal, garbage service and street maintenance were the services Walkertown had to offer for residents.

On Chris Drive, residents may have to pay more than 50 percent of the costs to pave the street. That is because some properties are in the town's limits and some are not. The policy the town is considering would make the amount the town pays cover half the

cost of paving the part that is within the town.

The town wouldn't cover any of the cost to pave the part outside the town limits.

"Fifty percent is tough on us," Eccles told the council.

She had to stop speaking to suppress her tears.

"The financial burden, even if you try to help us a little bit, is going to be tremendous for some households," Eccles said.

The town is considering a provision that would allow a town payment of more than 50 percent in some cases, although it is not spelled out what would trigger the extra help.

Steve Garland, the town's attorney, told council members that deviating from the policy is not something the town routinely could do. The town would have to spell out why it was doing more for a particular street.

Council members did not respond to Bolden's and Eccles' concerns.

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