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Annexation doubles size of Fort Mill

Town Council approves 5,000-acre addition

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FORT MILL -- Fort Mill doubled in size Monday, thanks to annexations and development agreements approved by the Town Council covering more than 5,000 acres.

The votes, which came during an early morning workshop, covered two long-awaited projects: the development of remaining Clear Springs Development villages and a new Culture and Heritage Commission museum and surrounding 340-acre development called Kanawha.

"In about 25 years it will probably be a really good thing for Fort Mill on the revenue side," Councilman Grady Ervin said. "It will take a number of years for it to develop."

Clear Springs, which controls about 2,700 of the annexed acres, plans to begin developing Kingsley Village first. The project spans several hundred acres from S.C. 160 West north between Interstate 77 and U.S. 21. The village will include both commercial and residential development, similar to Baxter Village, but with more commercial buildings, according to company officials. Clear Springs is still creating detailed development plans for the village and others, and construction is still likely more than a year away.

"It was a great day, a very historic day for Fort Mill," Mayor Danny Funderburk said. "And we did it in an effective way with smart growth principals."

The plan calls for an initial focus on commercial development which will help the tax base grow before more homes are built. It concentrates density in specific areas to spread growth around the town, Funderburk explained. It also respects the environment and leaves large swaths of land untouched by bulldozers.

The Clear Springs Development agreement covering all 2,700 acres lasts 20 years with the option to renew it for another 20 years. That, in conjunction with the town's recently completed comprehensive long-term development plan, gives local leaders a view of the future of Fort Mill and allows for planning to meet the coming needs, Funderburk said.

Additionally, Leroy Springs and Co. sought and received annexation of the 1,800-acre Anne Springs Close Greenway. Except for an as yet undetermined 10-acre parcel, which was allowed for in the conservation easement covering the Greenway, the only development that will occur on the Greenway will be enhancements to its current amenities.

West of I-77 and south of Sutton Road, officials with the Culture and Heritage Commission and Cherokee Partners are finalizing plans for a new museum on the Catawba River and the Kanawha Development on about 400 acres.

The plan includes 40 to 50 acres of commercial development and 337 single-family homes, 111 town houses and as many as 267 apartments.

Kanawha developer Cherokee SDG plans to start with a small section of homes near the museum site as models and testbeds for sustainable and "green" design and technologies that may be incorporated in the overall development, said Project Manager Allen Harrington.

The Kanawha plan also includes a 15.4-acre site set aside for the Fort Mill school district for an elementary school.

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