

Bachtold property sells to new LLC

Cottonwood Investors LLC and its unnamed members do not wish to annex at this time.

By CHLOE LeVALLEY
of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

The property owned by Jon and Mary Christine Bachtold off Cottonwood Road involved in a lengthy annexation process with the city of Walla Walla over the last three years has sold to a new

limited liability company called Cottonwood Investors, according to records.

The new owner, according to the city, doesn't want to pursue annexation at this time but is reserving the right to apply in the future.

James Hayner, a Walla Walla real estate attorney, is listed as the registered agent and governing person for Cottonwood Investors LLC on the Secretary of State website. Hayner was also the attorney for the Bachtolds

when they were applying for annexation, according to city records.

Hayner declined to provide any information on the land purchase or the new LLC to the Union-Bulletin on Monday, citing client confidentiality.

The Bachtolds were originally going to sell the property to Hayden Homes, which proposed developing a 105-acre, 372-home subdivision on the open farmland.

The Bachtolds and Hayden

Homes began the process of annexation Jan. 11, 2016, but were met with community opposition because of the residents' concerns about drainage, whether the proposed project is really affordable housing, increased traffic, safety issues, economics and aesthetics, according to previous reporting by the U-B.

City staff spent three years working with the developer and land owner on this process of annexation, including a land development agreement to be

established before annexation.

At its regular meeting Monday night, the city Planning Commission discussed the possible creation of a \$1,600 annexation application fee, "to cover the costs of staff time and work sessions," said Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain.

Cottonwood Investors LLC, which was incorporated on Oct. 3, purchased the Bachtold property on Oct. 18, according to city documents, although

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✓Hayden Homes withdrew annexation application

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the property sale hasn't yet been recorded on the county Assessor's site, and Walla Walla County Assessor Debra Antes said she had no further details on the purchase Monday.

Hayden Homes withdrew their application for annexation with the city on Oct. 23. A decision to officially repeal the annexation will

be made at Wednesday night's City Council meeting "to close the loop on the annexation proceeding initiated by the Bachtolds ... to avoid future confusion regarding the status of the now closed matter," according to the agenda notes.

The new owner does not want to continue the annexation process at this time, according to official documents, but "may at

some point in the future petition to annex, and may do so by filing a notice of intention to commence annexation proceedings."

A letter from Hayner to the city stated: "I am advised by Cottonwood Investors that they are not prepared at this time to file a new annexation petition and application for development agreement. I understand from your

letter of October 23, 2019, that abandoning the pending annexation application filed by Jon Bachtold will not prejudice the right of Cottonwood Investors to pursue and file for annexation in the future."

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