

Signatures sought for referendum

By Gary Budzak - February 3, 2024

Signatures are currently being collected regarding the city's recent annexation of land in Brown and Delaware townships.

"There is a petition referendum under way on Delaware Ordinance No. 24-01 as passed on Jan 8, 2024, for annexation of 230.7 acres known as Kilbourne 521 Annexation," said Philip Taraska, one of the organizers, in an email to The Gazette. Council approved the annexation by a 7-0 vote.

According to the city's ordinance exhibits, the annexed property is bounded on three sides by railroad tracks, the Kensington Place subdivision and Kilbourne Road (state Route 521). A notice for the annexation was filed on Aug. 31, 2023, with the Delaware County Board of Commissioners approving the annexation on Oct. 12. On Sept. 11, council had approved a resolution of services, described in the city's ordinance as "a statement as to what services, if any, the City will provide and an approximate date by which it will provide them to the territory proposed for annexation."

"Given the magnitude of this annexation and the citizen's overwhelming outcry over the proposed use of the land, we feel that this issue should be put on the ballot for the citizens of Delaware to decide this November in the general election," Taraska said. "We did quite a bit of research on the Marysville referendum from this last fall and all the steps that led up to it finally being on the ballot."

Last October, media outlets reported that the Ohio Supreme Court affirmed placing an antiannexation referendum on the ballot for 263 acres of land west of Marysville and south of U.S. routes 33 and 36 from Paris Township. In that instance, voters rejected the ordinance

adopted by Marysville City Council by a wide margin.

Taraska said signatures are being collected in the neighborhoods being impacted, as well as the Delaware County District Library, 84 E. Winter St., Delaware.

There is also a website, kilbourne521annexation.com with a copy of the petition. "Let Delaware voters decide," said the site pages.

"We, the undersigned, electors of the City of Delaware, Ohio, respectfully order that Ordinance No. 24-01, passed by the council of this city on the 8th day of January, 2024, be submitted to the electors of such city, village or township for their approval or rejection at the general election to be held on the 5th day of November, 2024," the petition states.

Ohio law says "this petition must be signed by 10% of the number of electors in the city, village or township who voted for governor at the preceding gubernatorial election and must be filed with the City Auditor within 30 days after the ordinance was filed with the mayor of a city ..."