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Opinions mixed on RV parks in Youngsville

Youngsville City Council votes to introduce ordinance

By Nick Fontenot Special to The Advocate

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YOUNGSMVILLE — Mixed opinions were evident as the City Council on Thursday introduced a proposed ordinance on the location and standards for RV parks.

Youngsville resident Frances Hicks called for a ban on all RV parks in light of John Trahan's planned 6.4-acre development near her neighborhood. She cited an increase in crime associated with RV parks and a decrease in property values when RV parks enter a community.

"Youngsville is a very small town," Hicks said. "This will be far-reaching and affect all residents. If we allow RV parks in Youngsville, this will continue to negatively impact our property values and with reduced property



values comes reduced taxes.”
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Hicks said since the proposed RV park has been mentioned, a number of homes have been listed for sale for as much as 7 percent below market value.

“These homeowners lost scheduled showings because potential buyers hear there might be an RV park,” she said. “So far, three houses have sold under market value. Just the threat of this RV park has reduced prices.”

Trahan, a lifelong resident of Youngsville, along with his wife, Tia, touted the quality of RVs that will be frequenting his proposed park. He downplayed the crime concerns, citing statistics he received from RV parks in neighboring communities.

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“There were four calls at the park and the majority were juveniles stealing ice chests,” Trahan said. “I would ask the council to talk to people who camp. Go to campsites. It is nice and recreational. We are going to have issues; there are going to be pros and cons. But you are going to have that in all of our walks of life.”

Trahan gained support from Gary Williams, a 52-year resident of Youngsville who said no one should dictate what someone can do with their property.

“Mr. Trahan, being within his rights, should be allowed to build the RV park and shouldn’t be asked to do anything outside of the ordinance,” Williams said. “What Mr. Trahan is asking to do is within our ordinance. When the residents chose to move near undeveloped land, one would think they would do their due diligence and ask what would become of this land.

“Certainly, no one would think undeveloped land would stay undeveloped for eternity. Last I checked, we are still in America. If anyone wants to dictate what he can and cannot do

with his property, they need to purchase the property.”
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Trahan bought the property off Detente Road in 2007. He initially had no plans for the land, but decided on the RV park after he “did my homework and saw that you are not looking at riffraff frequenting those parks.”

Councilwoman Dianne McClelland offered support for Trahan’s ability to do as he desires with his property, under the condition he agree to maintain the standards the community expects.

“We have a very well-kept community, and I know this will be an asset,” McClelland said.

“We are not Broussard. We are not Lafayette. We have low-income apartments and premier showcased subdivisions. We have a pride in

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our community, and I think this will be an asset.”

Councilwoman Lauren Michel expressed concern not about Trahan’s proposed park but the potential for future RV parks.

“We represent this entire city, and we take all matters into consideration,” Michel said.

“Everyone has a right to pursue their projects, but equally the citizens have a right to voice their concerns. This is not one section of people versus another.”

Tia Trahan said she and her husband see Youngsville as an oasis for Acadiana. She said her goal will be to welcome visitors, not turn them away,

“We don’t want to say, ‘Because you’re visiting, we don’t want you here to use our nice park,’ ” Tia Trahan said. “We don’t want them going to Broussard or Lafayette. We want our RV park to complement our community. We want to make sure the ordinances are in place so there are rules we have to follow. We want to keep Youngsville the way that it is.”