

The Texarkana, Texas, City Council on Monday will begin a process that could result in more than 21 acres being added to the city at the landowners' request.

Owners of the land—a wooded area fronting the east side of Gin Road and the north side of Moores Lane—have asked for it to be brought into the city limits to facilitate its development.

During the council's regular meeting Monday, it will hear a first briefing on the initial step toward annexing the land, a study of the feasibility and cost of extending city services there. A public hearing and council vote on whether to authorize the study will follow in future meetings.

Because this annexation would be voluntary, owners of the property do not anticipate the process to be as contentious as a group of Texas-side annexations last year, most of which were enacted despite residents' protests against them.

"I don't think so, unless there's a neighbor that doesn't want the adjoining property to be annexed next to them. We don't see it as controversial, because the (parcel's) frontage on Richmond Road is actually already in the city, and all we're doing is asking them to make the whole tract consistent with the frontage," said Don Morriss, a co-owner of the land, on Friday.

Access to city water, sewer and other services would make it easier for retailers or other businesses to locate on the property, he said.

If the council authorizes the study, it must conduct at least two further public hearings on the matter before voting whether to annex the land.

The city annexed six pieces of Bowie County property in August 2018. In public hearings and council meetings beforehand, many residents made clear that they did not want to become part of the city.

In the end, the council voted to annex six of the original seven proposed territories, making their residents subject to municipal laws and taxation while entitling them to city services.

Anti-annexation activists filed petitions in an attempt to repeal the council's actions according to a procedure spelled out in the City Charter. But the city attorney quashed the effort, citing legal precedent to argue that the law disallows using a referendum to repeal annexations.