

Tollgate City? Tollgate Canyon resident asks about incorporation amid North Summit Fire suspension

KPCW | By Alexander Cramer

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Alexander Cramer / KPCW

Could Tollgate Canyon become its own city? Residents say the North Summit fire suspension has left the remote neighborhood with unacceptable emergency coverage. Now, they're looking for solutions.

Before early February, when the entire roster of North Summit firefighters was suspended, Tollgate Canyon was

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served by a crew of 10 or so volunteer first responders.

The remote, mountainous neighborhood is in the North Summit Fire District. These responders live there and responded to emergencies at their neighbor's homes before other help arrived.

After the Tollgate responders were told that they, too, were suspended, residents worried their emergency protection had disappeared. That includes Michelle Sutor, the secretary of a Tollgate homeowners association.

"It takes like 20 minutes to drive from the bottom of the canyon to our house," Sutor said. "And that's, you know, on a good day, when somebody didn't drive up the canyon that doesn't have four wheel drive and slid off the road and now the whole road's blocked."

On Wednesday, Sutor asked the Summit County Council about two possible remedies. Both, she said, are aimed at giving Tollgate residents a chance to influence the decision-making that governs emergency services in their neighborhood.

In a subsequent interview, Sutor clarified the HOA wasn't taking an official position, but rather exploring several

possible solutions.

“Representation really is, I think, one of the best ways to solve that, and we're trying to figure out how to get representation,” she said. “If we need to incorporate, that would be one avenue. And then we want to know what that looks like and what the steps are to take. It sounds like that's probably not the best solution for us.”

Council Chair Chris Robinson engaged in a back-and-forth with Suitor for several minutes, answering some of her questions. He said the Lt. Governor’s office handles the incorporation process. Robinson advised Suitor that Tollgate might have a hard time as a standalone city because the neighborhood doesn’t have businesses or commercial tax revenue.

Robinson appeared more open, however, to expanding North Summit’s administrative control board and possibly giving a seat to Tollgate Canyon.

“I would like to see an ordinance drafted that expands our ability to appoint additional members to the North Summit Fire District Administrative Control Board, so that we have leeway should we want additional representation on it,”

include not only more geographic representation, but it might also include a firefighter or two.”

There are five members of the board now — three at-large seats selected by the County Council and one each nominated by Henefer and Coalville. But the board can be expanded to have up to nine members.

Some in North Summit might welcome a firefighter having a seat on the board. At a public meeting last week, several commenters said North Summit firefighters’ concerns weren’t being heard, though board members said none had approached them. One firefighter specifically



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making process.

Suitor said she saw a path forward for Tollgate after Wednesday’s council meeting.

“I was very hopeful and it sounded like a favorable outcome last night and felt like it was a good meeting that they were listening to our concerns. And that they will continue to work with us to try to resolve, at least for the immediate future, our emergency responders’ ability to help out, and then how do we get representation on the

Ultimately, Suitor said, Tollgate Canyon residents want a staffed fire station in their neighborhood – something many say they’ve been promised.

Local News



Alexander Cramer

Alexander joined KPCW in 2021 after two years reporting on Summit County for The Park Record. While there, he won many awards for covering issues ranging from school curriculum to East Side legacy agriculture operations to land-use disputes. He arrived in Utah by way of Madison, Wisconsin, and western Massachusetts, with stints living in other areas across the country and world. When not attending a public meeting or trying to figure out what a PID is, Alexander enjoys skiing, reading and watching the Celtics.

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