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He says ... Moratorium could stop meeting merry-go-round

By [Joe Croley](#)

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He says ...

When life is fair, my entry will be awarded the top prize in the contest that the Bluffton Town Council proposed for the best design for the soon-to-beannexed Graves property along U.S. 278 and the impaired Okatie River.

I say "soon-to-be," since at the end of the informationonly review, one member of council said, "Welcome to the town," not bothering to deal with the legalities of two readings and a public hearing.

My plan will be posted after I get over my fear of flying; I'll have someone take me over the land to snap a photo of how it exists today. No need for anyone to submit another entry, the contest is indisputably over. Its current land use cannot be improved upon, and anything else will only cause more harm to the environment.

I may even Photoshop it, posthumously adding a few buffalo to honor those that used to roam there until we shot them for trespassing on the Buckwalter Parkway.

Since there is no other reason to ask to be annexed into the town except to have it rezoned for more density than allowed by the county, my photo may also go down in history as the last one of a large tract of privately owned grazing ground, south of the Broad River.

This probable annexation will come on the heels of the town approving some 250 acres of commercial space near the Toyota dealership and the inevitable approval of another commercial center on the banks of the river.

Within 14 hours of the informational annexation meeting there was a meeting in the very same town building to discuss saving the May River watershed from ourselves.

It has become increasingly obvious that the additional volume of water coming from all of our approved development and its associated impervious surfaces is the main culprit in the majority of our river's problems. This committee spent a lot of time discussing measurement methods but not how to stop this destructive growth.

Then, 36 hours later, the ever-vigilant (he says facetiously) Department of Health and Environmental Control held a meeting to discuss a request to fill in over two acres of wetlands so that the Sembler Corp. can build close to 2 million square feet of commercial space just west of the Okatie River.

DHEC's motto seems to be, "Put whatever you like into the river, just don't eat anything from it."

So we have three meetings in two days to discuss adding more development, measuring development and controlling development. When is this merry-go-round going to stop? Does the word "moratorium" come to mind?

Finally, I suspect my prize for winning the contest will be a dead fish pulled directly from the Okatie River, or possibly a locally grown polluted oyster.

In the meantime, you can contact **Joe Croley** at whenlifeisfair@hargray.com