



## **Transcript: TownshipFuture Public Comments Regarding Incorporation on November 2020 Ballot**

*The Woodlands Township Board Special Virtual Meeting via ZOOM*

*August 17, 2020 at 9:00am*

*Made by Amy Lecocq*

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This is Amy Lecocq and I am speaking this morning on behalf of TownshipFuture. The first governing principle of TownshipFuture is to support the lowest taxes necessary to provide needed services –

We hope that the Board will agree this morning that the middle of a pandemic is NOT the time to impose additional taxes on our residents.

The long-term economic impacts of the pandemic are unknown and need to be assessed fully and shared with the public before the costs of incorporation can be accurately calculated.

The economic models used by the incorporation consultant assumed conservative economic growth in future years. But as a result of COVID The Township now expects to see NEGATIVE revenue growth in the next year. The ongoing economic impacts remain substantial and the duration of such impacts is unknown. We all know that when Sales taxes and hotel occupancy taxes are negatively impacted, this places significant pressure on property tax rates.

Much more work is needed to reliably model the costs of incorporation in light of COVID and to share those costs with the public for discussion. This needs to be done BEFORE incorporation is placed on the ballot.

Not only has the pandemic drastically affected current and future economic conditions of the Township, our residents and businesses, but the Incorporation Study has not been completed.

1. There is still outstanding financial material unrelated to COVID due from Novak, the consultants. We were promised a completed study.

2. We were promised public outreach to educate residents on incorporation issues and a second Town Hall with the final study results. Once the Novak study is complete and the COVID consequences are more fully realized we should engage in an education plan, but not until then.
3. We were promised a resident survey prior to placing incorporation on the ballot. Public input does not seem to be valued by the Board leadership – as an example, the bullish, controlling approach to filling a recent Board vacancy.
4. Lastly, we were promised that the incorporation issue would not be placed on the November 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot. There is no compelling reason to prematurely call a vote on incorporation. Forced annexation is no longer a threat. We can work with our Sheriff to renegotiate the transition of the 25.5 county-funded police officers as we complete the study, educate the public and then ask for public input by surveying the residents before we place incorporation on the ballot.

**TownshipFuture believes that the issue of incorporation should not be placed on the ballot in November 2020.**