

Greater Avon Study Committee
Report to
Avon Town Council
Washington Township Board
April 25, 2012

Summary of Committee activities to date

Selected committee name to be Greater Avon Study Committee

Formed Sub-committees with certain responsibilities

Find facts for the function

Discover pros for consolidation in the function

Discover cons for consolidation in the function

Report any “deal stoppers” in the function

Determine Town and Township elected officials attitude toward consolidation of function

Assess public attitudes toward consolidation

Adopted a work plan for the committee:

- The charge of this committee and its sub-committees will be:
 - Find a workable plan for the consolidation of Avon and Washington Township
 - If no workable plan can be found, state the critical factors that support that conclusion
- Sub-committees will study the government functions of the consolidated entity to find a workable plan
 - Seek facts related to each function
 - Seek public input related to each function

- Find out the positions of town and township leaders of each public function with respect to consolidation
- Identify areas of difficulty in each function
- Recommend resolution of areas of difficulty in each function
- The committee and its sub-committees will insure that all areas of inquiry required by law are studied and appropriate recommendations made
- The committee will prepare a report to be made to the Town of Avon Council and the Washington Township Board.

Established a timeline for the committee's work attached as Schedule A.

Assigned Sub-committees as shown on Schedule B

Work assigned to sub-committees as shown in attached Schedule C.

General approach of the committee's work effort

The reorganized entity will be the Town of Avon

The committee will develop a plan for the reorganization of the Town of Avon and Washington Township that gives elected officials as much flexibility as possible to develop the reorganized town.

Taxes for the reorganized town will not be increased any more than absolutely necessary

Existing services will be maintained where possible including appropriate interlocal agreements.

Schedule A: Timeline

Time line for Merger Study Report

Month	Day	Event / Activity
Feb		1 Form Committee Research & 16 Organize Com Sub-com.formation
Mar		28 Form sub-committees
Apr	25	Report to Township
May	23	Sub Committees gather input from stakeholders
Jun	27	
Jul	25	Report to Township
Aug		22 Sub Council contract w/ contractors
Sep		18 Township Board contract w/ contractors
Oct		26 Sub-committee Reports & Study votes on study Township Present Study
Nov		28 Study Revisions as needed

Schedule B: Subcommittee Members

Subcommittees

Finance

Steve Blacketer, Chair
Brock Bowsher
John Moore

Governance

Patricia Tutsie, Chair
Fred Palmer
Don Ulrey
Marquita Walker

Infrastructure/Administration

Ed Martin, Chair
Steve Eisenbarth
Greg Zusan

Parks

Ed Boda, Chair
Tim Callahan
Scott Munoz

Public Safety

Oran True, Chair
Charlie Dorton
Gerald George

Zoning and Planning

Matt Bailey, Chair
John Lazaro
Mason Pike
Dale Kruse

Schedule C

Recommendations on Items to Consider in Each Subcommittee

Ken Ferstle

Subcommittee Descriptions:

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and a mechanism for including omitted issues will have to be devised by the committee.

General recommendations:

Identify and reach out to key constituents including recruitment into the subcommittees.

Identify differences between the two government units in the relevant services and operations and propose possible efficiencies. Identify any possible problems for unification.

Identify opportunities for alternative revenues.

Identify present boards and commissions and how they may be integrated, expanded or abolished.

Ensure legal compliance with state statutes and the resolution for the inter-local Agreement between the Township and Town.

Maintain a consistent method of record keeping between the subcommittees.

Planning/Zoning:

KEY Question: Should there be one or two zoning codes ? One for the existing Town boundaries using the Town zoning code and one for the unincorporated areas using the County zoning code.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, here are issues that need to be addressed:

How could service districts be assigned and defined?

How will current local zoning and planning codes be changed or grandfathered for a unified town?

How may future economic development projects and undertakings be influenced by zoning rules?

How would different zoning and zoning appeals issues be governed? How would such a board be composed?

How are business interests and development interests influenced by the idea of unification?

OTHER SUGGESTIONS:

Much more of a practical / “nuts’n’bolts” approach to the discussion:

How many permits per year in Township? Town? How many variances? How many rezoning requests? Plats?

How many staffers for Town? Township? Staffers specifically assigned, or shared throughout county?

How do costs compare? Permit costs? Inspection fees?

What ordinances/zoning districts make up what percentage of the area? How many acres AG? Biz? Dense residential? Multi-family?

What unique uses are out there in the township – ex. something like Beasley Orchard (not all AG, not all retail)?

How do Town and County processes compare? Does County have a TAC? Are final plats administrative?

Essentially, what is the current baseline of service?

General question for the subcommittee members – how much do you know/understand about P&Z in Indiana? Specific experience w/ County? w/ Avon? Elsewhere?

Finance:

KEY QUESTIONS: 1. What is the cost of having one service territory with Avon Police and Avon Public Works provided service for the entire unit compared to two service territories that would be the existing Town boundaries as one territory with Town police and road maintenance and the unincorporated area as a second territory with County Sheriff and County road maintenance?

2. Will the Plainfield, Brownsburg and Danville Washington Township areas continue to pay taxes to the new unit for parks debt, parks operating, township assistance and general operations? If not, what is the impact on the remaining taxpayers in the new unit?

Conduct Financial Analysis showing all revenue and expenses including debt based on alternatives: one service territory and two service territories. Analysis should include the following:

Discuss how the Township emergency loan will be addressed.

Inventory of assets and liabilities. Examination of the range of revenues and expenditures in the unified tax district.

Examine plausibility of a revenue and expense neutral unification process.

Arrive at estimates on the likely reductions in revenue and expenditures if the incorporated sections of the townships are removed.

Examine likely tax differentials between service districts comprised of the current unincorporated township and the current town.

Gain an overall appraisal of potential revenues given tax caps and circuit breakers.

Values of non-property tax sources of revenue and how they are likely to change in unified town. Identify efficiencies for costs where possible.

Identify possible new alternative sources of revenue. Identify sources of revenue available to a new town through state and federal funds.

Projection of growth in revenues and expenditures based on population growth and development.

Include costs of debt service.

NOTE: This list should be reviewed with the financial consultant to get their input on what is needed in the financial analysis.

Governance:

Key Analysis: Provide recommendation for the type of local government that will exist. (e.g. town, city third class, city second class) and the number of members of the governing body.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, here are key issues to be addressed:

Establish interaction between possible unification based on timeline with general elections.

Examine ways to alter, retain, dissolve or combine existing boards and commissions (paying special attention to issues of equal representation on boards and commissions between the town and township). This will have some overlap with other subcommittee: Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals (zoning and planning subcommittee); Police Merit Board and Fire Merit Board (public safety subcommittee); Parks Advisory Council (parks subcommittee).

Provide recommendations for how changes may take place to governance structures after the unification takes place.

Provide recommendation on the existence or nonexistence of a transition body council, including representation (district seats v at large seats). If transition council exists who will be on it (status of incumbent legislators). Size of transition council.

The size of the unified council and its composition. (Should districts be set aside for the current town and township or should districts incorporate both?) (At large districts and single representative districts

Determine how each Council member is elected: by all of the voters in the new unit or just the district voters for their district representative and all of the voters in the new unit for at large representatives.

Describe how districts may be formed (relating to census).

Ensure overall compliance with state statutes and the resolution for the inter-local Agreement between the Township and Town.

What is the jurisdiction of the Town Court: only traffic and town code violations or is it expanded to include misdemeanors?

What other government offices will exist? Will they be elected or appointed? By whom will appointed offices be appointed?

Infrastructure/administration/general services:

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, here are key questions:

How might services districts be used? How may services between districts differ?
What use of inter-local agreements with the county exist now and how might they be amended in the instance of a unified town?

Infrastructure:

KEY QUESTION: One or two service territories for infrastructure?
What is the current use of inter-local agreements, services distinctions and tax differentials between service districts for roads and other infrastructure services?
What level of service is currently provided by the Town vs. by the County?
Drainage- How will drainage maintenance and capital improvements be managed?
Should legal drains continue under the jurisdiction of the County Surveyor or should the legal drains become urban drains and managed by the new unit?
Roads, pathways, trails and sidewalks maintenance – if there are different districts, how will road maintenance and capital projects be managed?
How will services for snow removal be provided?

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created:

Would there be any impact to Legal Drains? Could legal drains be vacated? If so what liabilities are created? What is benefit of having localized control and vision of drainage system as a whole?
What would the impact be to the Town and Township if a Storm water utility was in place?
What kind of liability or deficit would be created by consolidation due to responsibility for safety and capacity improvements?
What benefits are achieved by having more localized control and vision on what improvements take place and where?

Administration:

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, the following services need to be addressed:

How is the Organizational Chart structured or is this an item to be left to the new unit's governing body?

Public assistance – How and in what office of a new unit of government will public assistance be assigned? Will the new unit be required to provide assistance in the Plainfield, Brownsburg and Danville incorporated areas within Washington Township? If not, who will provide that service?

Cemeteries – How and where in the new unit of government will the care of abandoned cemeteries be assigned?

Weed control- How and where in the new unit of government will the care of problematic weeds be assigned?

Fence disputes: How and where in the new unit of government will fence dispute resolutions be settled?

Municipal Code: Will the existing Town Code provisions apply to the entire area of the new unit? Zoning Ordinances will be addressed in the Zoning and Planning subcommittee.

Identify changes in Justice- how unification would alter relationship with local courts and how the existing court may need to be expanded or changed with unification.

Parks and Recreation:

The Committee must decide if issues of the Park Pavilion debt should be assigned to the finance subcommittee of the parks and recreation subcommittee.

NOTE: The Town and Township have two different revenue sources for their park operations: The Town solely uses Food and Beverage Tax and the Township uses property tax.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, here are issues that need to be addressed:

How would the operations of the parks department be integrated? What revenue sources would be used to fund the operations and debt?

What is the range for increased or decreased revenues from the food and beverage tax that currently helps to fund the Avon Parks Department? NOTE: This is part of the financial analysis.

Are there efficiencies of services?

What are revenues from pavilion rental space and other park functions likely to be? NOTE: This is part of the financial analysis.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, how will it affect the Town of Avon park impact fees? Would it generate additional revenue or cause a deficit of parks amenities that would need to be addressed prior to being allowed to spend the park impact fee revenue?

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, how will it impact The Town's current Parks Capital Improvement Plans?

Public Safety:

NOTE: There are separate issues related to police services and fire services, so some of the questions may only pertain to police or fire.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, here are key questions:

KEY QUESTIONS: 1. Should Avon Police provide service to the entire new unit? What is the cost for service to the entire unit by the Avon Police? Can the levy be increased to cover the expense?
2. How will the emergency loan be addressed for fire?

My personal recommendation is to leave the issues of fire debt with the Public Safety subcommittee and the park pavilion debt with the Parks and Recreation subcommittee. This will leave finance able to deal with revenue and expenditure projections based on property taxes. NOTE: The fire debt and the emergency loan need to be addressed in the financial analysis.

Efforts should focus on identifying current and possible future inter-local agreement to continue to ensure public safety for all residents currently under Avon/Washington public safety protection. Keep in mind how current agreements may need to be amended.

If a new unit of government that combines the Town and Township is created, the following issues need to be addressed:

Identify if any areas such as those in incorporated sections of the township would be dropped from fire or police protection.

What will the status of the Washington Fire department be: Should it be a fire department or fire territory? Will Fire provide service to the Town of Avon incorporated areas in Lincoln Township?

If Avon Police does not provide service for entire unit, how would the current unincorporated areas be serviced?

What would the interaction and division of responsibility between county sheriffs and the Town of Avon Police department be?

How will the Police Model Merit Law be impacted?

What is the structure of the Merit Boards for Police and Fire?

Who will appoint the Police and Fire Chief?