

A Message from Citizens Research Group

June 17, 2024

2023 PIB SURVEY FOLLOW-UP

Last summer a survey of 356 PIB Township residents (which included the Village of PIB as well as all islands) was conducted. Of the surveys sent out 224 responses were received, for a very high participation rate of 63%. One topic covered by the survey was how respondents felt about the current dual forms of government (Village and Township) vs only having a single form of government. The results of that survey indicated that over 80% of the people who responded thought that a single form of government was worth pursuing for our islands. The survey did not ask which form of government, Village or Township, was preferred. In light of this result a group of interested citizens last year formed a group to investigate the idea of possibly reorganizing the governance of the islands of Put-in-Bay Township. This group is operating under the name Citizens Research Group, or "CRG." The members of the CRG come from both the Village and the Township and represent business owners as well as non-business owners. This CRG is not connected to nor does it include any member of either Village Council or the Township Trustees.

CITIZENS RESEARCH GROUP FOCUS

The CRG has met at least monthly over the past year and has progressed to the point that it is now a registered nonprofit Corporation. The purpose of the CRG is to gather information to determine whether it might be advisable to pursue re-defining the governance of the Bass Islands.

BGSU STUDY UPDATE

Many of you may recall that in 2001, Bowling Green State University did a study of this very subject at a cost to the Put-in-Bay Property Owners' Association (PIBPOA) of \$25,000. (This study is available to all on the PIBPOA website.) The CRG has reached out to BGSU again and was able this time to obtain a funding grant to have BGSU update that 2001 study at no cost. As part of this updated study BGSU will be interviewing individual residents, conducting larger focus groups, conducting another survey (this one more focused on the governance of the islands topic) as well as updating statistical and demographic data from the 2001 study. The goal of this re-study by BGSU is to gain a non-biased view of the status of the growth of the islands since 2001, both economically and demographically, and to offer insights into how the current dual-forms of government are meeting, or not meeting, the needs of the residents. BGSU will gather and present its findings but will not make any recommendations. Rather, what to do with its findings is left to the recipients of the report.

LOCAL GOV CONSULTANTS

To that end CRG has also hired an independent company called Local Gov Consultants. Local Gov Consultants (LGC) describes itself and its mission as : “Local Gov Consultants is a consortium of professionals with vast experience, empathy and a passion for public service. Our mission is to help local governments and nongovernmental organizations succeed where they’ve become tangled up in time and obstacles.” LGC will work alongside BGSU but will also take the next step of making governance recommendations based on BGSU’s and its own findings.

LGC CHARGE

LGC is charging the CRG \$45,000.00 for its efforts on this project.

FUNDING

The CRG has started to raise funds to pay for LGC’s services and is already close to having one-half of this fee raised. Anyone interested in making a contribution to the work of the CRG and LGC is encouraged to do so via Zelle or by writing a check to Citizens Research Group and mailing it to PO Box 601, Put-In-Bay, OH 43456. (Please be aware that the CRG is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit so that contributions are *not* tax deductible.)

TIMEFRAME

There is no hard deadline for completing this research project because the CRG wants to be thorough in its research. The CRG, BGSU and LGC will be presenting at the PIB Property Owners’ Association meeting in September to discuss what has been accomplished by that time and to provide a status to the community.

CRG STATUS

In the meantime, if you are approached by either BGSU or LGC and asked to participate as either an individual interviewee, or to participate in a larger focus group, the members of the CRG hope that you will agree to participate and be a part of the process.

QUESTIONS

For those with questions, please feel free to e-mail them to citizensresearchgroup@yahoo.com

CRG MEMBERS

CRG Members: Sara Booker, Brian Cultice, John Fisher, Laura Fogg, Billy Market, Kim Stoiber Morrison, Kate Richardson (Middle Bass Island) and Dave Schafer