

## Governance Update - continued

- Promote and facilitate public safety and health, mobility, traffic circulation, and mass transportation in the area;
- Preserve and promote scenic and aesthetic beauty in the area;
- Promote and advance employment and business relocation and retention in the area;
- Reduce unemployment and underemployment in the area; and,
- Protect and secure the general welfare of the area and its citizens.

### Legislative Amendments

The 1999 moratorium on the City of Houston's annexation of the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) located inside the unincorporated area of The Woodlands will expire in 2014. In preparation, the community has continued to explore future governance alternatives. In the wake of the historic December 2006 announcement of a proposed regional participation agreement between the City of Houston and The Woodlands and the City of Conroe, The Woodlands Township has emerged as the governmental body to facilitate the transition to local self-governance.

### Governance Transition

The Woodlands Township has since entered into a Transition Agreement with the Community Associations to provide for the seamless consolidation of services into a single governing body for the benefit of the community.



Signers to the Transition Agreement were, left to right, The Woodlands Community Association President Jeff Lang, The Woodlands Association and The Woodlands Commercial Owners Association President Joel Deretchin, The Woodlands Township Chairman Nelda Blair and The Woodlands Community Service Corporation Chairman and The Woodlands Fire Department President Bruce Tough.

Photo by Laura Govey

The Transition Agreement intends to provide for a cooperative community effort to transition from a property owners assessment to fund community services to a model that utilizes an ad valorem tax, sales tax and hotel occupancy tax to fund such services. It is anticipated that the use of sales tax will result in a reduced overall tax burden for property owners.

### Next Steps

In the short term, The Woodlands Township will develop and approve its budget this summer, expecting to set the new tax rate in August 2009. A schedule of the public meetings can be found on the Township's Web site at [www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov](http://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov).

Following the setting of the rate, tax bills will be sent out through the office of Montgomery County Tax Assessor J. R. Moore in the fall. Community Association assessments will not be charged or billed.

The legislation that will confirm the transition of services from the Community Associations to the Township was presented

at the Texas State Legislature in four bills this spring (Texas House Bill 4782, Texas House Bill 2515, Texas House Bill 2726 and Texas Senate Bill 2053). As of press time, full approval had not taken place, but more information can be found at Texas Legislature Online, [www.legis.state.tx.us](http://www.legis.state.tx.us).

In the longer term, providing the passage of the legislation, transition of staff and services from the Community Associations to The Woodlands Township will take place on January 1, 2010. The President and Board of Directors of the Township are working to find a central location to house the employees of the combined organization, as well as for town meetings.

Please watch for additional information about these historic times in each issue of The Woodlands Community Magazine through the Governance Update articles.

*Editor's note: Information in this article was provided by The Woodlands Development Company, The Woodlands Township and the Community Associations of The Woodlands.*

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