

**RESOLUTION OF THE LANDINGS ASSOCIATION, INC.
SUPPORTING THE MUNICIPAL INCORPORATION OF SKIDAWAY ISLAND**

In execution of its Strategic Plan, The Landings Association, Inc. began exploring incorporation by commissioning a 2016-17 Feasibility Study from Georgia State University's Andrew Young School Center for State and Local Finance. The Study concluded that a City of Skidaway Island would be financially feasible.

Five Study Committees of island residents with subject matter expertise then conducted extensive analysis, including vetting the Andrew Young report, and also concluded that a City of Skidaway Island would be financially feasible. Complete details from the Study Committees were shared with the community, and the community expressed clear support to secure the right to vote on the matter of incorporation.

After considering all materials and weighing the potential pros and cons to the Association and its members, **the Board concludes incorporation is in the best interest of the Association and its members and recommends a "Yes" vote.** The most compelling reasons for incorporation are the following:

- 1) **IMPROVED REPRESENTATION.** A government directly accountable to island residents is more responsive to our needs, represents our interests, and works for the benefit of Skidaway Island residents.
 - ✓ Local Control. Incorporation provides direct island control of decisions that impact us...decisions currently made by County Commissioners, a majority of whom **do not live in or represent residents of the Special Service District but decide on our service levels, rates of taxation, and fees.**
 - ✓ Replaces layer of government. Incorporation would transfer the off-island decision making for County Special Service District functions to the City. On-island services would be administered by our own City Council – people we have elected.

- 2) **TAXATION AND FEE EQUITY.** Revenue to run the City would come from taxes and fees that residents already pay, but from which they do not receive the full benefit. More of these tax dollars and fees would be returned to the island for local services, providing a more equitable share of these dollars.
 - ✓ Lower Millage Rate. Residents would enjoy lower millage rates (4.13 vs. 4.99) for the same or better service levels, while also no longer paying the \$85/year dry trash fee. The millage rate would be capped and would require a non-binding referendum before City Council could raise it.
 - ✓ Local Revenue Streams Stay on Island. The island would receive a proportionate share of fees and taxes paid by residents that currently go to the County and the cities. Those include the following annual estimates: Local Option Sales Tax (\$1.9 million), Franchise Fees (\$466,000), Insurance (\$450,000), and Other (\$140,000). Those alone total almost \$3 million/year that would be spent directly on island needs.

3) **LOCAL CONTROL OF GOVERNANCE.** Self-governance of the island provides the ability to establish service levels and priorities that better meet island needs and provides greater citizen participation in decisions.

- ✓ Land Use (zoning), Planning, and Development. The City can adopt ordinances to require public hearings on development proposals (unlike with Indigo Hall/Thrive) and standards requiring traffic studies and adequate landscape buffers for appropriate development.
- ✓ Improved Service Levels. Timely maintenance, repair, and replacement of City streets (unlike the long-delayed McWhorter Drive repaving) and rights-of-way, including mowing and traffic signs, rapid police response to emergencies and accidents, on-schedule yard waste collection, and on-island building and construction permitting services would be established. The Landings Association would save an estimated \$144,000 per year on such services (mowing and right-of-way maintenance outside the gates and off-duty police inside the gates), as the projected City budget includes such services.
- ✓ Emergency Management. In the event of a major emergency, the City would respond promptly to address health and safety needs of residents, including storm debris removal from yards, unlike Chatham County which waited six weeks after Hurricane Mathew to begin debris removal in the gated communities. The City could be reimbursed by FEMA and the State for up to 95% of the cleanup cost. In addition, the island would have an equal vote as other cities at the CEMA Policy Command Group during planning and management of emergency events.

4) **CONTROL OUR OWN DESTINY:** No matter what the future holds, incorporation gives island residents a stronger voice in any future governmental reorganization.

- ✓ We Decide. As a City, residents would have a much stronger voice, since cities can opt in or out of any future proposed absorption of Skidaway Island into another entity.

For these and other reasons, the Board of Directors of The Landings Association, Inc. hereby resolves and recommends that Landings residents who are Skidaway Island registered voters **vote “yes” to incorporate** the City of Skidaway Island.

LeeAnn Williams President	Hank Policinski Vice President	Diane Thompson Treasurer	Kathleen Field Secretary
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