



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Township Chairman Bunch delivers State of The Woodlands Township to local business leaders

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (January 12, 2017) – The Woodlands Township Chairman Gordy Bunch delivered a State of The Woodlands Township to area business leaders at The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership luncheon held Tuesday, January 10, 2017.

Mr. Bunch is the Chief Executive Officer of The Woodlands Financial Group and serves on The Woodlands Township Board of Directors in a volunteer capacity. During his presentation, Chairman Bunch discussed the financial condition of the Township as well as its programs and services for the residents and businesses of The Woodlands.

“The Woodlands Township is in excellent financial condition,” said Chairman Bunch. “This credit goes to the Board of Directors and staff at The Woodlands Township in properly planning and caring for our residents and businesses, not only today but into the future.”

Chairman Bunch highlighted that The Woodlands Township has a strong business climate that produces strong sales tax, hotel tax, program revenues, and other revenues which account for 64 percent of the Township’s total revenue sources, while property tax accounts for 36 percent. Additionally, The Woodlands Township has bond ratings of excellent investment quality (AA - Standard & Poor’s and A1 – Moody’s).

Chairman Bunch talked about how The Woodlands Township looks to the future to care for its residents and businesses and makes sure “our investments here” stay strong throughout the years. Chairman Bunch also highlighted several points of key decisions made by the Township Directors, including setting one of the lowest tax rates of any city/town in the state, having one of the top fire departments in North America, and building a strong financial base to prepare for the future.

“As The Woodlands continues to address future governance and as the infrastructure matures, we need to be prepared,” he said. “As parks and pathways begin to age, we need to be prepared to replace and keep the freshness for our residents.”

Chairman Bunch acknowledged several Township initiatives in the past year including The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center, turf improvements at Town Green Park, a sports field at



Gosling, and renovation of North Shore Park, one of the busiest residential parks in The Woodlands.

Chairman Bunch addressed the importance of The Woodlands for visitor dollars. The 14 hotel properties in The Woodlands collectively have over 820,000 hotel room nights available each year, Bunch said. “We have developed into a great destination for corporate and convention meetings.”

Tax revenue generated by the tourism industry is invested back into improving The Woodlands Township infrastructure and programs, he said.

Looking forward, Chairman Bunch said The Woodlands Township would be focusing on major initiatives including the 2018 Budget and Five-Year Plan, the Bear Branch Park Master Plan, a Cultural Arts Study, the acquisition of YMCA Creekside Park property and associated renovation, a residential survey, legislative planning and capital improvements among many other topics. Further description includes the following:

2018 Budget and Five-Year Plan

The Township will develop the 2018 budget in keeping with the Five-Year Plan. In this process, the Township will consider the impact of community growth and make any required budget changes and continue to monitor changing economic conditions and consider adjustments if necessary. Additional initiatives for 2018 will be determined during the budget planning process.

Bear Branch Park Master Plan Update

In 2016, the Board authorized an update to the park’s master plan to address unmet recreational needs of the community as well as future facility requirements. The Township Board has engaged a consulting firm to develop a master plan for the 19.57-acre Bear Branch Park, which is scheduled to undergo a major renovation in 2018. As part of this review process, the Board may consider the addition of a 50-meter swimming pool at this park. The consulting firm will be seeking input from community groups and residents and will develop conceptual plans based on this public input.

Cultural Arts Study

In 2016, a contract was awarded to conduct a Cultural Arts Feasibility Study for The Woodlands to consider a need and/or support for a potential cultural arts facility that may house space for performing arts, a museum or other similar purposes. This study is anticipated to be performed in two phases. The first phase is a Needs Assessment, which is anticipated to be completed by the end of March 2017. The second phase of the study is a Management / Business Plan and Financial Pro Forma. At the conclusion of the Needs Assessment phase, the Board will



determine whether to proceed with the second phase of the study based on the outcome of the first phase.

Acquisition of YMCA Creekside Park Property

In late 2016, the Township agreed to purchase the former YMCA facility and related property in the Village of Creekside Park. The Township offer is contingent on the completion of due diligence which is expected to be completed in January 2017.

Renovation of YMCA Facility

Pending completion of the purchase of the former YMCA facility, the Township has reviewed and approved renovation and improvement plans in order to make the facility ready for Township Park and Recreation and other uses. This additional cost was discussed with the Board before making the offer on the property. Although most of the operating costs are expected to be offset with additional revenue generated from programming at the facility, the Board set aside \$100,000 in the 2017 budget to assist in this transition. Upon completion of the purchase, the facility renovation is anticipated to start in early 2017 and should take three to four months to complete.

Residential Survey

A community survey is currently underway and the results will be presented to the Board in the spring of 2017. The Township has historically initiated a community survey every 18 to 24 months to seek resident feedback on the community and their overall satisfaction with Township services and well as their suggested improvements. Results of the survey are typically used assist in prioritizing funding and service initiatives during the budget process.

Legislative Planning

The Township considered legislation and initiatives beneficial to operation of the Township and works with local legislators for filing during the Texas 85th legislative session during 2017. The Township will also monitor 2017 proposed legislation for potential impact on the Township.

A full copy of his presentation can be found on The Woodlands Township's website located at www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov.

[View the presentation](#)



The Woodlands Township Chairman Gordy Bunch delivered a State of the Township address to business leaders in The Woodlands at The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership Luncheon.



The State of the Township was attended by numerous community leaders, including from left, Gil Staley of The Woodlands Area EDP, Township President Don Norrell, Township Vice Chairman John McMullan, Township Treasurer Dr. Ann Snyder, Township Chairman Gordy Bunch, Township Director Brian Boniface, Township Director John Anthony Brown, and EDP Chair Debbie Sukin, also CEO of Methodist Hospital The Woodlands.