

Credit River struggles to define its future

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In May, the board received and presented a study regarding the financial impact of each form of government. The study concluded that the status quo was not a viable option and that, among other changes, sooner or later, water and sewer hook-ups will be needed, which would be an enormous cost to residents.

At that meeting, the board asked Credit River's nearly 5,300 residents for feedback, but throughout the summer, only 63 responses trickled in.

"We felt it wasn't complete," said Leroy Schommer, chairman of the board. "To only get 63 back is a little disappointing."

The comments were generally mixed in preference, but residents said they like the township as it is now and would like to control growth; they want to keep property taxes low, and they want to be prudent regarding additional government services.

The board decided that it might be best to hire a consultant to help lay out options, give the board information on what other townships have done, and come up with an action plan and timetable. The consultant would also help facilitate community discussion.

"The board members recognize that this is the biggest decision we will ever make as elected officials, and we've got to

make sure we make the right decision to the best of our ability," Lawrence said.

Furthermore, board clerk Jerry Maas says the board wants to make sure the public is working from the same page.

"We're concerned that a lot of people are forming opinions out there that aren't based on solid information, but speculation," he said.

For those residents who have been following the issue closely, they're supportive of bringing in a consultant, but some already have strong opinions.

Mark Licke, who has lived in Credit River for five years, believes incorporation would give Credit River more control over development.

"By doing that we can kind of preserve a lot of the things we moved here for," he said. He says he's supportive of bringing in a consultant to move the process along.

John Kane, who has lived in the township 67 years, wants to see Credit River remain a township. Kane says there is no need to add another level of government when the county provides services such as police and planning.

"Township government is very, very efficient," he said. "We could function as a township very well for a long time."

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