



► Feasibility Study shows Town of Palm Harbor can operate without any tax increases **Pg. 1**



► \$17,000,000.00 is our yearly gift to Pinellas County **Pg. 1**



► Get the most from incorporation – speak up now! **Pg. 2**

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# Palm Harbor *Coalition*

WORKING TO GIVE YOU A “YES” OR “NO” VOTE ON THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF PALM HARBOR.

*Florida Legislature allows Palm Harbor incorporation bill to die in the Intergovernmental Relations Committee under heavy pressure to focus on property tax issues.*

## House Bill 1359 Dies In Committee

Since 2006 the Palm Harbor Coalition has been doing the research to find out if an incorporated town of Palm Harbor could operate for the same or less than is currently available as an unincorporated area of Pinellas County. The reasons for this effort were many, but mainly focused on issues of self determination and equal treatment. Many felt that Pinellas County distributed discretionary funding to cities around the county at the expense of Palm Harbor, East Lake, Ozona and Crystal Beach.

When the study showed clear evidence that

funding was not equal the Coalition began the process required by Florida Statutes to give the voters a chance to decide if they wanted to incorporate. That effort resulted in HB 1359, sponsored by Peter Nehr in the House and Mike Fasano in the Senate.

The bill passed through all the necessary oversight committees without major difficulty. However, the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee noted that passage this year could “create irreparable budget short-falls for the county and existing municipal governments.”

Never mind the shortsightedness of that statement (see below), it more likely died simply because of other issues facing the Legislature this year. Tax reform, insurance, and the housing crisis took center stage from the opening day.

According to the last estimates, there are several hundred bills that will die in this year’s legislative session; HB 1359 was most likely just a casualty of time.

2009 is another opportunity; next time: better prepared and much smarter.



## \$17,000,000! Where did it go?

Governments collect taxes for themselves and the governments below them. After paying for federal, state or countywide services they then use a formula to return funds to jurisdictions below them. In Pinellas County, the revenue pays for countywide services and a defined portion is distributed to the existing 24 cities - the remainder goes to ?????? Did you see any multi-million dollar improvements in your neighborhood last year? The Florida Department of Revenue estimates that the four Palm Harbor communities share of that distribution would be \$17,000,000.00 a year. But, much like your minor child, there is no requirement that Pinellas County give us an allowance. They are free to use the money as they see fit.



# Getting the Most from Incorporation

*The incorporation of a new city is a onetime chance to “get it right” – so speak up!.*

We all watch the workings of our governments and just shake our heads. How often have you thought your 6 year old could make better decisions?

The current members of the Coalition believe deeply in the concept of “government-lite” or “city-lite”. That concept dictates that rather than creating large, unmanageable bureaucracies, government services can, in most cases, be better and more efficiently performed by contracts with existing government agencies (ie, Sheriff) and the private sector operating with a competitive profit motive rather

than under the largess of the government.

The mayor and town council will be made up of part-time citizens who are paid little more than for actual time in Council meetings. The very few required or mandated town officials will be trained and experienced professionals paid competitive salaries and rewarded for efficiency.

Beyond that, the direction and

methods of the town are up to you.

Protection for Preserves?  
Community Overlay Districts?  
Campaign Finance Restrictions?  
Zoning Reform? Limits on  
Condemnation? Internet  
Referendums and Voting?

Now is the time to shape your town to mandate that failures of the past are not repeated and our communities retain their unique identities.

**Volunteer now.** Take a “hands on” approach to crafting a new town. Help us “get it right.”

[WWW.PALMHARBORCOALITION.ORG](http://WWW.PALMHARBORCOALITION.ORG)

**FIND OUT MORE:**  
**Community Resources**



[PalmHarborCoalition.org](http://PalmHarborCoalition.org)

[Ozona.us](http://Ozona.us)

[OzonaFl.com](http://OzonaFl.com)

[CrystalBeachCommunity.com](http://CrystalBeachCommunity.com)

[PalmHarborCC.com](http://PalmHarborCC.com)

[www.oldpalmharbormainstreet.net](http://www.oldpalmharbormainstreet.net)



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