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## Legislators nix Poinciana incorporation effort

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POINCIANA - The decision by local legislators to not take the issue of incorporation for this community to their colleagues in Tallahassee has effectively killed the attempt to make Poinciana a city.

"We are extremely disappointed," said Keith Laytham, a Poinciana resident who supports incorporation and had presented arguments for the measure to legislators from both Osceola and Polk counties.

Laytham's comment came after legislators representing the Osceola County side of Poinciana decided Dec. 18 not to present the request for incorporation to the full Legislature, which is the next step necessary to getting lawmakers in Tallahassee to agree to allow the issue to be placed on the ballot for local voters to decide.

During a meeting of the delegation in Kissimmee, state Rep. Darren Soto, D-Kissimmee, made a motion to move the question forward to the full Legislature. But it died for lack of a second as state senators Paula Dockery, R- Lakeland, and Mike Haridopoulos, R-Melbourne, and state Reps. Mike Horner R-Kissimmee, or Stephen Precourt, R-Orlando, were unwilling to move it to the next level.

The question of incorporation has been a controversial one in the sprawling community - which straddles eastern Polk County and western Osceola County - since the Association of Poinciana Villages, the community's homeowners association, announced earlier this year that it was spending \$76,000 to fund an incorporation feasibility study to be conducted by the University of Central Florida.

When the completed study came back and reported it was financially feasible for Poinciana to become a city, a firestorm of opposition erupted, with people questioning the study's facts and figures.

Among those in opposition has been Jeffery Goldmacher, who helped found COPI - the Committee Opposed to Poinciana Incorporation.

Goldmacher said he was pleased with the decision and said the legislative delegation wasn't convinced by the feasibility study.

"They just don't think it's in the best interests of the community," he said.

Goldmacher said one of the major mistakes made by the university team that did the study was to include areas that are not really a part of Poinciana in the boundary for the proposed city. He noted that communities such as Solivita and those along the northern portion of Poinciana Boulevard and east of Pleasant Hill Road would not benefit from incorporation, and that residents of those areas are not willing to pay the increased taxes that a new city would demand.

When asked whether he thought the incorporation issue was now dead, Goldmacher said he didn't see the issue coming up again soon because of the high cost of going through the process and changing the study to make it more palatable to legislators.

Laytham, however, was more hopeful about the chances of getting incorporation done at a future date.

"If you look at these things historically in Florida, most incorporations that have succeeded required multiple iterations," he said.

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