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Polk Legislative Delegation Rejects Poinciana Incorporation Effort

Lawmakers won't try to put proposal on ballot to make Poinciana a city.

By [Bill Rufty](#)

Ledger *POLITICAL EDITOR*

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BARTOW | There will be no incorporation election for Poinciana in 2010.

The Polk County Legislative Delegation on Monday gave the third and final rejection of the idea of a city of Poinciana.

That was after the Osceola County delegation refused Friday to file a bill for a Poinciana incorporation vote next year.

Poinciana is a large, multi-village development that straddles the Osceola and Polk county line. To have a vote on incorporating, the Legislature must approve it for the ballot.

However, legislators seldom get involved in local issues that are opposed by delegation members from that area.

Supporters have said that becoming a city will allow the area to collect municipal taxes to improve roads, street lighting and security in the area that has been hard hit by the recession and foreclosures.

"We have been asking for help for some time," said Keith Laytham, chairman of the pro-



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State Representative Baxter Troutman R-Winter Haven, discusses the issue of incorporation of Poinciana during the Annual Polk County Legislative Delegation Meeting at the Polk County Commission Chamber Monday, December 21, 2009.

incorporation group, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change. "We pay \$60 million in sales taxes each year and what do we get for our \$60 million? We need more sidewalks, roads and (police) protection."

Opponents to the incorporation vote are largely from non-Poinciana developments like Solivita, included in the incorporation vote because they are surrounded by the villages of Poinciana.

The opponents said their needs are not the same, that incorporation would drive up their taxes without benefits.

Jeff Goldmacher, chairman of Citizens Opposed to Poinciana Incorporation (COPI) said the studies about incorporation were seriously flawed.

"We realize the issues that need to be addressed," Goldmacher said, "and COPI is willing to convert to CAP, Committee for the Advancement of Poinciana, if this incorporation vote is stopped."

Laytham said his group could not find another way to raise \$42 million that city taxes would bring in.

"But the foreclosure rate in Poinciana is exceptionally high - 40 percent, said Rep. Baxter Troutman, R-Winter Haven. "You won't be collecting that much.

Sen. Paula Dockery, R- Lakeland, and delegation Chairman Sen. J.D. Alexander, R-Lake Wales, agreed in their assessments that being a city won't make the issues go away and there must be consensus before asking for an incorporation vote.

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