

**Docket #11-C-1 30-Day Material Rebuttal
By Ballot Question Committee - Citizens for Independent and Cooperative
Communities (CICC)**

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Correspondence From</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>CICC Rebuttal/Comments</u>
1	City of the Village of Douglas City Manager	Various	Oppose	None
2	City of the Saugatuck Mayor Jane Verplank	Various	Oppose	None
3	City of Saugatuck Mayor Pro Tem Bill Hess	Various	Oppose	None
4	Saugatuck Township Manager Phil Quade	Various	Oppose	None
5	Members of the General Public	Views on Proposed Incorporation	Oppose	See comments below.

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CICC Comments on Correspondence Included in Item #5

More than 50 individual pieces of correspondence from 64 citizens were received in opposition to the proposed consolidation of Saugatuck Township and/or the City of the Village of Douglas and the City of Saugatuck. Correspondence opposing consolidation was received from six former or current Mayors of the City of Saugatuck and the City of the Village of Douglas.

6	Members of the General Public	Views on Proposed Incorporation	Support	See rebuttal and comments below.
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CICC Rebuttal and Comments on Correspondence Included in Item #6

In comparison to the 64 individuals who submitted correspondence opposing consolidation only 10 individual submitted 7 documents supporting consolidation. Several of the individuals who submitted views supporting consolidation may have motives for wanting a change to the current governments that go beyond support for the consolidation proposal.

Note: **Juliet Michele** (document #8) is **not in favor** of consolidation of the area of the Township where she resides.

1. John Prozondek

- Mr. Prozondek will be a one-term Saugatuck City Council member as on November, 2012. He chose not to run for reelection
- Mr. Prozondek states that he was “asked by his constituency” to recommend consolidation, but fails to identify who his constituency is.
- Mr. Prozondek population statistics for the City of Saugatuck are inaccurate.
- Mr. Prozondek had brought a lawsuit against the City which he lost. This could explain

why he might want to “clean house”.

2. Marilyn Nor

- Ms. Nor served one term on the Douglas Village Council and was defeated for elected when Douglas became incorporated.
- Her claim that “*there have been many lawsuits between the two cities*” is incorrect. The municipalities have NEVER gone to court against each other. The most recent legal dispute over sewer capacities is being rectified outside of court by creating a new agreement.

3. Catherine L. Simon

- Ms. Simon is a member of the Consolidated Government Committee (CGC) the group proposing consolidation.
- During her tenure as Mayor or as a member of City Council, Ms. Simon did not advocate for consolidation or a study of the feasibility of consolidation.
- Ms. Simon provides inaccurate information about Saugatuck’s Single Trash Hauler Program. She supplies incorrect dates, there were no joint discussion with the City of Douglas, savings per household are overstated and in fact there are no savings from bidding the contract together. Most importantly, consolidation might force the elimination of the Single Trash Hauler program in Saugatuck.
- The lifting of snow plows blades, banners on light posts and ice skating rinks are not critical issues that support merging the municipalities.

4. Terry Stewart

- Mr. Stewart asks the State Boundary Commission to consider “*the silent majority*”, but provides no evidence that there is indeed a “silent majority”.

5. Lawrence Gammons and Carl Jennings: No comment or rebuttal.

6. Patricia Topping

- Ms. Topping and her husband, John W. Breen, are not residents, not voters, not property taxpayers of the City of Saugatuck. The property mentioned is currently under a land contract to a church that is claiming the property is being used as a parsonage to avoid the payment of property taxes.
- Mr. Breen has been a long critic of Saugatuck City government.
- Ms Topping/Mr. Breen (or their holding) company have been parties to a number of lawsuits with the City of Saugatuck.

7. Karen J. Dunn

- Ms. Dunn is a former Saugatuck City Council member who was defeated for reelection in the election following her being censured by the Saugatuck City Council.
- Ms. Dunn has been a party in a lawsuit against the City of Saugatuck.

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<u>Item #</u>	<u>Correspondence From</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>CICC Rebuttal/Comments</u>
7	Consolidated Government Committee (CGC)	Various	Support	See rebuttal and comments below.
				<p>1. Population: No comment or rebuttal</p> <p>2. Land Use: The CGC's statement "<i>Center Street in Douglas...has the parking and vacant land to further expand as a government center</i>" would indicate the two current cities halls and Department of Public Works facilities are inadequate for a combined city and new facilities would need to be built. There is no estimate of the cost for these facilities.</p> <p>3. Assessed Valuation: No comment or rebuttal</p> <p>4. Topography: No comment or rebuttal.</p> <p>5. Natural Boundaries and Drainage Basins: The CGC's comments regarding the City of Saugatuck's "enclave" fails to mention that north of Saugatuck's city boundary is land that is in Saugatuck Township's boundaries. This property's roads are maintained by Allegan County. The CGC's proposal would create an island of Saugatuck Township property accessible only through the City. Of note, a large portion is actually owned by the City of Saugatuck, e.g. the 173 area Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area (west section) which was just deeded to the City in 2011 and the 122 acre Tallmadge Woods (north section) which was placed in a Conservation Easement in 2008.</p> <p>6. Past and Probable Future Urban Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CGC's continues to emphasis the contribution of the Kalamazoo River's harbor land channel as an economical driver for the three municipalities is indeed well taken. - The statistics and documents the CGC cites in this section provide no reasoning as to why the consolidation of the two cities would remedy the issues facing the harbor. - The two cities already are addressing the issues of the river and harbor with the formation of the Kalamazoo River Harbor Authority. Once the CGC excluded the Township from their consolidation proposal, the need to consolidate to save the harbor became moot. In fact, the consolidation of the two cities would impede the progress made by the current Harbor Authority by requiring the authority to be reestablished. <p>7. Comparative Data for he Incorporating Municipality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CGC does not provide any background data to support the statement "...it is expected economies will be realized in the particular areas of Public Works, Community & Economic Development, Recreation & Culture and Capital Outlay at a minimum." Interestingly, the areas of public works, community & economic development. recreation & culture and capital outlay were budget items never identified previously as affording cost savings from consolidation. - How can the CGC say consolidation will save \$500,000 on general government expenses when it states the two cities currently spend about \$887,000 total (Saugatuck - \$488,0015 and Douglas - \$399,117)? Is it reasonable to think a city twice the size of each of the individual cites can be operated for only 44% (\$887,000 x 44% = \$387,000) of what it costs to run the two cities? <p>8. Need for Organized Community Services: Would question if "municipal structures" would be categorized as "community services".</p> <p>9. Present Cost and Adequacy of Governmental Services: The CGC statement does not provide an answer to this criteria.</p>
				<p>10. Probable Future Needs for Services:</p>

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Are the topics listed here services?

10-1 Joint Economic Planning

With Saugatuck Township excluded from the consolidation proposal, no real "joint planning" can be achieved.

10-2 Joint Planning Commission

Under the CGC's new proposal for just the two cities to consolidate, a tri-community Joint Planning Commission would still face many of the same issues the current Commission faces. Whether it be two or three municipalities, there would be multiple municipals involved in a Joint Planning Commission. Consolidation, in and of itself, would not result in changes to the Joint Planning Commission.

10-3 Harbor Committee and Harbor Authority

As with a Joint Planning Commission, without the Township's inclusion in the consolidated city, the Harbor Authority now in place would essentially be the same. The entire consolidation process would be a hindrance to the ability of the newly established Harbor Authority to function effectively.

10-4 Primary Urgent Health Care

Would the consolidation of the two cities actually have any impact on the availability of health care? It is questionable. The availability of these services are based on economic factors and population not governments. Why did the physician and hospital leave the tri-community? It wasn't because there were three governments. The population did not support these services and medical services are only a short distance away.

11. Practicability of Supplying Such Services:

Without the Township inclusion in the consolidated municipality, it is very impractical to supply these "services".

12. Probable Effect of Proposed Incorporation (and of alternative courses of action) on the Cost and Adequacy of Service:

The members of the CGC apparently does not know if they support consolidation to reduce taxes (though no estimate of the millage rate for the proposed municipally has been made by the CGC) or for capital projects. The CGC's lack of a complete plan for consolidation is very evident in there statement to Criteria No. 13.

13. The Probable Increase in Taxes in the Area to be Incorporated in Relation to Benefits Expected to Accrue:

Since the CGC has not identified the costs associated with consolidation or developed a annual budget for the proposed new city, the statement "No increase in taxes and the likelihood is a decrease in taxes will be realized" is purely conjecture.

14. Financial Ability of Incorporating Municipalities to Maintain Urban Type Services:

The CGC once again makes a broad , very generalized statement - "*Not only can services be maintained, but they can be improved upon while new service can be added.*" - without any specifics. What services can be maintained and improved and what services can be added? The statement points up the lack of detail in their proposal.

15. General Effect upon the Entire Community of the Proposed Actions:

Monetary: The CGC's statement that "*taxes are already too high*" is another general statement not substantiated by fact. The operating millage rates for Saugatuck and Douglas are in the bottom 1/3 of cities in Allegan County. The CGC does not seem to know what they want to do with the purported tax savings - reduce taxes or investment in infrastructure. They can't do both.

Focus: This statement is opinion only, not fact.

Emotion: The statement does not provide any information about what the effect upon the entire community would be.

8	Consolidated Government Committee (CGC)	Questionnaire	Support	No additional comments or rebuttal other than those included in Item 7.
9	City of the Village of Douglas	City Manager Questionnaire	Oppose	None
10	Citizens for Independent And Cooperating Communities (CICC)	Questionnaire	Oppose	None
11	City of Saugatuck	Questionnaire	Oppose	None
12	Saugatuck Township	Questionnaire	Oppose	None

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