



**Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform
Summary of Evansville Public Forum: September 26, 2007**

The excerpted statements below summarize verbal public comments received by Chief Justice Randall Shepard on behalf of the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform when he hosted a media availability and public input opportunity on September 26, 2007. Written public comments submitted at the event have been recorded with other individual submissions taken by web, e-mail, and regular mail.

- I am a landlord and must pass property tax on to my tenants. Most renters are poor and minorities. Could there be an element of discrimination?
- Amend ordinance to match with county purchasing ordinance. Although there is great cooperation, it is duplication. I studied unification of city and county, especially legislative with executive. Please see Dr. Phil Fisher's report about unification.
- Townships were created as a 6-mile square because all could reach the center at that time. This is no longer relevant. Populations vary greatly. Urban and rural trustees have different roles. Think about allowing counties to make trustee decisions.
- Health insurance is the most expensive cost sector and is increasing more than others. Our tax rate is \$.62 per \$100 assessed value and health insurance is \$.09. There are more efficient ways of doing this. Offer a menu of plans from which government employees could choose. The 293 school corporations, counties, cities, could get coverage under the state plan. You also could include fuel, paper, etc and purchase all from a web portal.
- I am a foster parent. The foster children can get health insurance, but my adopted child cannot. However, if the adopted child gets in trouble with the law, then she has access to Medicaid. People with green cards can get insurance. Why can't my adopted child?
- Please look at term limits. Some terms are limited by the state constitution. Get the issue up for vote or create an amendment. We would have a cleaner, less corrupt government.
- Property tax was the perfect storm. \$550 million in tax relief over two years is a band aid, not a tourniquet. Get off total dependency on property taxes. There are other opportunities to fund local government. It is a service industry. Think outside the box and look at ways other states deal with the problem.
- Have you looked at other studies or models?
- If we eliminate trustees, someone else must provide the services. Have county-wide levy so that poor townships do not have to bear the load. Corporations are exempt, but more fire equipment had to be purchased to protect the corporation when built in our township. That is unfair.
- Regarding township courts the constable and justice of the peace should be eliminated. Additional local option income tax (LOIT), Racetrack money could alleviate property tax. Repeal of the inventory tax was good for growth but provided LOIT.
- Look at Hometown Matters. Public does not know who is responsible for levying taxes. Be sure that it is truly a local tax. When there is a clear delineation about property tax, people will have better access to local government.
- Is there another source for funding besides property tax? Is there a way the city and county can talk to the state? Our city should utilize the riverfront.



- The burden on volunteer fire fighters is great in a growing community. There are more runs and a funding cap.
- If levels of government are eliminated will there be a provision for job-retraining?
- How do the Governor and State Chamber plan to address what the public and business communities would like to see? If the treasurer, recorder, surveyor, clerk are reduced to less function, from where will the services come? I suggest finding out what the services actually are before any cutting is done.
- Food Stamp privatization isn't working. Be careful when shifting responsibility. There is no accountability. A central location might make it hard for people to get to their Township Trustee.
- Our city draws shoppers and visitors from afar. If they have an accident or get in trouble with the law, or need medical assistance, our city has to pay for it. The judicial system should be a state purchase.
- Re-development process has been the problem. The ability to petition or remonstrate is not available so no one can discuss projects that go through. There is a lack of accountability.
- Look for all financial impacts. HB 1362 will be slow. Create a single point of leadership.
- We should have a single person to go to for governmental assistance.
- Please provide safe bicycle routes.
- The state should pick up the cost of courts and jails.