



**NEWS RELEASE**

For media inquiries, contact: Nick Wolda  
nwolda@thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov

**Township and Pavilion delay Performing Arts Center process**

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (July 23, 2020) – Due to COVID-19 pandemic and current economic conditions, The Woodlands Township and The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion have put on hold the development of a Performing Arts Center to be located adjacent to the Pavilion.

This decision was reached in the last week by The Pavilion and at the July 22, 2020 meeting of the Township Board of Directors.

In January of this year, The Woodlands Township and the Center for Performing Arts at The Woodlands (The Pavilion) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop financing, parking and traffic flows for a proposed Performing Arts Center which included indoor performing spaces for many different types of performing arts.

In the MOU, the Pavilion Board of Directors and The Woodlands Township agreed that they desired to explore options of construction, maintenance and operation of a Performing Arts Center located on Township property adjacent to The Pavilion. The MOU, which expired in May, was a non-binding approach that allowed both parties to determine viability of the joint development of the Performing Arts Center.

The Woodlands Township's Economic Development Committee, chaired by Dr. Ann Snyder and with members Bruce Rieser and John Anthony Brown, had been working with Township consultants and staff regarding the needs of additional cultural facilities in The Woodlands.

"The Woodlands is known for its arts scene," said Dr. Ann Snyder, emphasizing the world-stature of The Pavilion and the recent establishment of The Waterway Arts District. "This is a venture that has been carefully researched with a great amount of public input along the way. It is a dream dating back to the initial days of the creation of the Town Center and George and Cynthia Mitchell. Taking care of our community needs during this pandemic is our focus and when economic conditions improve, we look forward to bringing this concept back."

The Pavilion initiated their operational and financial due diligence in early spring but were unable to complete their analysis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Township is completing other studies related to parking and traffic analysis.

"While today is not the time to progress along with how to finance this opportunity, we look forward to continuing this plan of enhancing the arts in The Woodlands at a future date," said Township Chairman Gordy Bunch.

“The Pavilion is still interested in the concept of a performing arts facility and working with the Township to develop the concept,” said Pavilion CEO Jerry MacDonald. “This project further extends The Pavilion’s mission of making the arts accessible to all in our community. We look forward to working together again once conditions and timing improves.”

Artist’s rendering of the Proposed Performing Arts Center at the Pavilion:



## **Background**

The Woodlands Township contracted with global design firm Gensler, in collaboration with Webb Management, an expert in cultural arts feasibility studies, to conduct a Cultural Arts Feasibility Study for the Township from 2016-2018. During Phase I of the Cultural Arts Feasibility Study, Gensler and Webb Management reviewed previous studies, conducted market analyses and trends to determine viability, conducted meetings and interviews and gathered information from community members and stakeholders and considered potential locations.

In early 2017, the consultants personally interviewed approximately 70 community leaders and stakeholders to gain their opinions and ideas on cultural arts needs in The Woodlands.

In addition to the interviews, and at the request of the Township Ad Hoc Economic Development Committee, Webb Management developed a public survey that was posted on the Township website to gain insight from the community at large. This survey was heavily promoted through Township communication channels and was online for 30 days with 1,270 respondents.

The consultants’ recommendation was for a performing arts center that would appeal to a local and regional demand, that does not currently exist in the region and that will serve the cultural development of The Woodlands. The Township Board determined a partnership with the Pavilion was the best approach and filled a need in the cultural scene in The Woodlands.