

# **TEXASLAND UPDATE:**

## **CDWC Meeting with TexasLand Representatives (July 24, 2025 @ Hegemeyer Realty & Associates, Hempstead)**

On July 24, members of Citizens in Defense of Waller County (CDWC) met with representatives of TexasLand to discuss the proposed theme park development planned near FM 1887 and FM 3346. The conversation was candid, cordial, and open — and we appreciate TexasLand's willingness to engage with concerned citizens at this early stage.

Attendees included:

**TexasLand USA:** Lizzy McGee, James Underwood, Kirby Cannon, Melissa Hegemeyer

**CDWC:** John Erwin, Linda Alves, Maria Hare, Amanda Averitt, Jon Pressler

## **Project Overview**

TexasLand is envisioned as a family-friendly, Texas-themed destination inspired by Dollywood and Silver Dollar City, featuring a rodeo arena, rides, hotel lodging, retail space, and educational exhibits.

- A potential museum of local history is being considered utilizing artifacts from various other established museum's overflow.
- Space will be reserved for a hotel similar to Disneyland's "Wilderness Lodge" and it is planned for construction in a later project phase.
- The previously publicized "Alamo replica" is no longer part of the plan — developers clarified it was a conceptual image for marketing purposes only and has since been dropped.

This is "literally" a phased approach in overall development with **NO** final product in sight at this time. The project is in its early planning stages with groundbreaking expected no earlier than 2026 and a target opening in 2029.

## **Site Selection**

The current location was selected after reviewing over 30 sites statewide, with TexasLand citing accessibility, scenic quality, and community reception. While they assert community leaders welcomed the project, many residents expressed surprise, concern, and frustration over a lack of public input and early transparency.

## **Infrastructure & Environmental Concerns**

Residents raised serious questions about drainage, flooding, road capacity, school impacts, EMS response times, and utility demands. Developers assured that:

- Drainage and detention pond studies are in development
- San Bernard Electric has been engaged
- TexasLand has met with Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation district to discuss water
- Emergency services and safety protocols will be addressed as planning progresses
- Lighting using “dark sky” principles is being considered to reduce light pollution

No confirmed infrastructure upgrades have been secured, and developers acknowledged that timelines for TxDOT improvements remain unknown.

## **Special District & Taxation Discussion**

A major point of contention involved the use of a Municipal Management District (MMD) — a special taxing district governed by private board members, not elected officials. The developers confirmed that:

- TexasLand did confirm they were meeting with TCEQ to create a Municipal Management District (MMD) avoiding the legislative process.
- They said the MMD would allow them to capture sales tax on site to fund infrastructure
- They emphasized that residents wouldn’t be taxed directly

CDWC members pushed back on the lack of transparency, the private nature of district boards, and the potential for abuse or expansion

## **Community Engagement**

Developers pledged to:

- Maintain a small-group "open door" approach for now, but will consider a future public town hall or workshop
- Notify community members before major public announcements or signage
- Share updated plans after finalizing their master plan later this year or early next
- TexasLand stated they are not currently acquiring more land and that their plans include educational components, buy-local policies, and a “strict chaperone” model to reduce teen drop-offs.

CDWC emphasized the need for larger, more inclusive meetings and stronger safeguards for community input, especially given the scale of the proposed project and its impact on rural lifestyle, property values, and local identity.

### **CDWC Position**

We thank TexasLand USA for engaging in an open dialogue and clarifying several aspects of their project. However, CDWC remains very cautious. We will continue to monitor:

- The proposed use of a Municipal Management District (MMD) will give the developer immense public powers without submittal of a complete plan closely resembling a final project.
- TCEQ permit activity and potential infrastructure impacts. With this type of project will TCEQ “closely” review the impact to flood control, impacts to well water, drainage / environment impact to the Brazos River and all this effect on surrounding communities?
- Is Waller County even remotely ready for this project? The county is struggling to keep up with population growth without an influx of potential park visitors.
- While TexasLand claims to be pursuing responsible growth, they are planning for 1.1 million visitors annually, or 5,000 per day. This confirms our legitimate concerns about traffic, strain on existing utilities, and infrastructure. Average per day rates do **NOT** equate to volume during peak season and weekends.
- Is this Theme Park even viable?
- Lack of large-scale public engagement to date. Interaction with economic development groups, realtors and politicians is **NOT** public engagement or a “welcoming with open arms.”

We believe the people of Waller County deserve full transparency, a formal public forum, and binding assurances that rural life, infrastructure, and environmental resources will not be sacrificed for “speculative” commercial gain.

We will continue to advocate for accountability, responsible development, and meaningful community inclusion. Waller County **IS** growing by huge percentages and CDWC is not opposed to the growth. We are opposed to speculative projects moving faster than time, public money, and infrastructure will allow. Waller County and TxDot are already unprepared for what is here now. This is very likely the wrong project in the wrong place.