**After the Visit Estes Park Lodging Tax Exploration Task Force:**

**Some Thoughts on Next Steps**

1. **Immediately, resolve the project organizational structure**:
   1. The organizational structure should inspire public confidence in the project
   2. Make a single organization ultimately responsible and accountable.
   3. Specify relationships with all other participating organizations.
   4. Specify how funding will be apportioned to housing and childcare.
   5. Clearly communicate to the public the organizational structure and how the public is assured that the decision makers are accountable to the people and that decision making is made in a transparent manner.
2. **Immediately, establish a Working Group to oversee development of descriptions of the structure, content, and process required to develop the Project Plan**:
   1. The Working Group members should have high public trust.
   2. Members must be available to make significant and knowledgeable contributions to the group’s work.
   3. Expect the detailed Project Plan would be developed by third-party subject matter experts.
   4. If advantageous, the Working Group may oversee Project Plan development by the subject matter experts.
3. **Immediately, objectively assess the advantages and disadvantages of alternative election dates and communicate the results to our community.**
4. **If going to election in November 2022:**
   1. Immediately, establish an Issue Committee to work on all the details of a successful campaign including fundraising, message testing, messenger selection, community education, etc.
   2. Immediately, prepare and communicate urgent action plans for years 0 to 5 that would identify current, urgent needs for workforce housing and workforce childcare and how funding availability for the urgent actions would effectively address the needs.
5. **Important issues to address beyond the Taskforce**
   1. If an increase in Lodging Tax is approved, should the Short-Term Rental Impact Fee be reconsidered?
   2. If an increase in Lodging Tax is approved, should the Fish Hatchery housing project be put on hold until it can be determined how it can fit into the larger workforce housing and childcare project plan?
6. **A Few thoughts on going to election with this issue in November 2022**
   1. I expect this to be a challenging election.
   2. I expect the negative campaigning seen so far to intensify and further diminish already low trust in government, making approval of a new tax more difficult.
   3. Historically, midterm elections have older demographic turnout, and they generally oppose taxes.
   4. While the final election day is Tuesday November 8, mail ballots may arrive about three weeks earlier, on or after October 17, further reducing campaign time, so there is a very short time to educate our community on the complex issues and prepare for a successful election.
   5. Absence of a credible project plan adds to the challenge.
   6. If there is not a project plan at the time of the election, a description of how the plan will be developed with oversight by individuals with high public trust and demonstrated project development competence may increase voter trust and likelihood of support.

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