



Media Release

Homer Glen Mayors Endorse Creation of Village Public Works Department

Move would make the Village no longer beholden to Township

Homer Glen, (October 20, 2020)

Every Homer Glen Mayor – past and present – has announced support for the Village to establish its own public works department.

Former Mayors James P. Daley and Russ Petrizzo and current Mayor George Yukich believe that by creating a public works department, the Village would provide residents and taxpayers with financial security, accountability and control over the 135 miles of streets within the boundaries of the Village.

Currently, the Homer Township Road District has jurisdiction of maintenance and funding of those streets. But the Homer Township Board would take over control of the Village-owned roads through a binding referendum it placed on the Nov. 3 ballot.

The three Mayors warned that the referendum may cause confusion among voters because of its wording.

The referendum asks voters if they want the Homer Township board to take control of the Road District's assets, property and the services it provides, including road maintenance and snow removal.

The mayors noted that passage of the referendum – with more than 50 percent of Township residents voting YES – would prove costly to taxpayers and undermine the creation of the Village's public works department. Most important, it would also mean relinquishing control of the Village streets and funding from the Road District to the Township Board – and not the Village, which owns the roads.

If voters vote NO on the referendum, the Village can move forward with plans to secure the stewardship of the roads more efficiently and gain control of Homer Glen taxpayers streets, which will benefit taxpayers.

In a letter to residents, former Homer Glen Mayor Russ Petrizzo wrote that giving up control of the Township streets would create uncertainty that could end up costing taxpayers more in the long run. That's because if Homer Township has its way and takes control of our roads, it could end the intergovernmental agreement with Homer Glen within one year, leaving the Village to build a new public works department from the ground up, which means buying new equipment, purchasing property and hiring new workers – all of which would cost residents millions in taxes.

“Every other municipality in Homer Township (Lockport, Lemont, New Lenox) and most every municipality in Illinois maintains its streets with its own public works department – for good reason,” wrote Petrizzo who served as the Village's first mayor. “Just like we needed two decades in forming the Village, we must control our own destiny and not let others dictate our future for us. The Village now has the capability and means to seize this opportunity.”

Former Mayor James Daley who served two terms from 2008 to 2014, took aim at the Township Board's tactics for rushing to put the referendum on the ballot and voting to sue the Village, and therefore “suing their own residents.”

“It's time that the Village moves forward with this plan and becomes completely independent from the Township,” Daley said. “Independence and self-control were the reasons we incorporated 20 years ago.”

Mayor Yukich noted that the Village entered into an intergovernmental agreement for the Road District to maintain Homer Glen roads when the Village formed in 2001 because it lacked the resources and finances to fund its own public works department. But the Village has grown significantly throughout the years and is now ready to take the next step and operate its own public works department independently from other governmental entities like other municipalities. Of the roads that the Road District services, just 18 miles out of the 153 are located outside of Homer Glen. Therefore, a legal transfer of stewardship, including the road district assets to the Village makes sense.

“Homer Glen residents have been paying for the Road District's assets and equipment – and paying its staff – for the past two decades and we own the vast majority of streets that the Road District maintains,” Yukich said. “The transfer makes sense for many reasons but most importantly, maintaining the status quo puts the Village at risk. In doing so, we will remain beholden to the whims of an outside government entity that not only controls our funding but has the authority to tell us what roads to maintain, what roads to fix and what roads to plow.”

If you have any questions, please call Village Hall at 708-301-0632 or email village@homerglenil.org. For additional information, please visit www.homerglenil.org

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