

Greenville Borough Council: Press Release

A statement on Greenville Borough Council’s unanimous decision to pass Ordinance 1578: “The Home Rule Charter Question”.

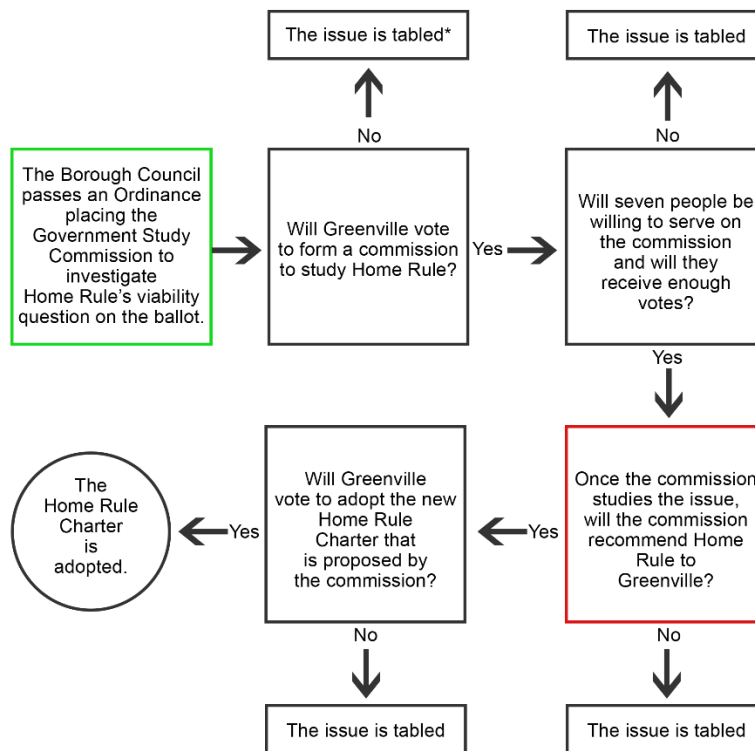
It has come to Council’s attention that there is some confusion regarding a recent Ordinance passed. The purpose of this statement is to clarify two things: (1) The content of the Ordinance. (2) Council’s intent.

1. The content of the Ordinance.

Ordinance 1578 reads as follows in *italics*:

“An Ordinance of the Borough of Greenville, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, requesting that the Mercer County Board of Elections submit to the voters the question of whether or not a commission should be elected to study the advisability of the adoption as a form of government a Home Rule Charter.”

Before we continue it is extremely important to point out at this time that what Council voted on was for a question to be placed on the ballot about the creation of a government study commission to investigate the potential a Home Rule Charter could bring to our local government. Council did not vote on Home Rule. To help illustrate the process, below is a flow chart showing what would need to happen for a formal adoption of a Home Rule Charter.



**"tabled" means to postpone or suspend consideration.

■ This has happened

■ Considerably the most important part of the process, taking up to 18 month to deliver it's recommendation

The Ordinance continues to read as follows:

“Be it enacted and ordained by the Council of the Borough of Greenville, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the authority of the same as follows;

Article One: The Borough of Greenville, a municipality of the County of Mercer, Pennsylvania hereby petitions the Mercer County Board of Elections to place the following question on the ballot at the next primary, municipal, or general election occurring not less than thirteenth (13) Tuesday after the ordinance is filed with the Board:”

The timing of when this is placed on the ballot in relationship to when the Ordinance is passed is Pennsylvania law. The question on the ballot will read as:

“Shall a government study commission of seven (7) members be elected to study the existing form of government of the municipality, to consider the advisability of the adoption of a Home Rule Charter; and if advisable, to draft and to recommend a Home Rule Charter?”

The remainder of the Ordinance reads:

“Article Two: This ordinance shall become effective upon passage.

Enacted and ordained this 8th day of January, 2018.”

2. Council’s intent.

First to provide some context, the investigation of Home Rule has been a part of the Greenville Borough Act 47 Recovery Plan for several years now.

Council firmly believes that there is value in the Government Study Commission investigating Home Rule as a possible mechanism for significant change to the current structure of local government. Because the study process is critical and a legally required step in determining whether or not there is benefit to the community in adopting a Home Rule Charter, Council at large does not intend, nor is it exercising its will, on the outcome of the study or the potential charter.

This is the most democratic process afforded to residences by the State of Pennsylvania to change the current structure of local government. Of course, such change is not made without some serious considerations and deliberation, which is the purpose and call to action for the Government Study Commission.

The following statements are from council members in regard to their affirmative vote to place the question of creating a Government Study Commission to explore Home Rule on the ballot.

“I voted to put the Home rule study commission on the ballot because it gives the voters a chance to really participate in what happens in Greenville. The voters will decide if the Study commission is formed and who will be on the commission as well as whether or not to accept the recommendation of the commission. Also, Home Rule as an option has been in the borough’s recovery plan. I believe that we need to do everything we can to get out of Act 47.” – Linda Zuschlag, Councilor

“I chose to vote to put the home rule charter on the ballot because we have to look at all of the options for the community. Although it may be popular for some, it is simply a provision allowing us to further investigate the pros and cons of home rule.” – Evian Zukas-Oguz, Councilor

“I believe that the Home Rule Study Commission gives our town the opportunity to look at our present functionality and explore a way to make their borough government function as they would like to see it. Strictly with the benefit of our community in mind.” – Dane Mincer, Councilor

“I voted for the Government Study Commission to investigate Home Rule to be placed on the ballot because I believe this is the most democratic opportunity Greenville residents are afforded in potentially transforming the structure and functions of the local government. To not even have the opportunity for a study to be conducted would be a huge loss.” – Benjamin Beck, Council President

“I want to remain open minded and I want to see what works best for the community of Greenville” – Tom Walsh, Councilor

“I voted to give the people of Greenville the opportunity to decide if home rule is something they want or don't want to explore. Something this important that could potentially change our body of government in my opinion should be decided by the people not the sitting body of government. so there for voting no would be taken the peoples choice away” – Paul Hamill, Council Vice-President