

Reporter

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Maintain home rule

to keep our taxes low

Shall the village of Downers Grove cease to be a home rule unit? Vote no!

As a Village Council member from 1975-1983 and the mayor from 1983-1999, I'd like to share some vital information with Downers Grove voters.

When home rule authority was granted to Downers Grove in 1970, Mayor Frank Houck and the Village Council immediately instituted a policy specifying notification to voters of actions to be adopted under home rule. Although the policy has been amended from time to time, I believe it is still a strong village policy. Downers Grove has been commended as the only Home Rule community in Illinois with such a policy.

Most of the current statements in support of ending home rule have nothing to do with the village's home rule powers. They simply express distrust and dissatisfaction with our current village government. We should not reject the many benefits of home rule because of non-home rule actions, such as construction of the downtown parking deck.

Proponents of ending home rule also imply that communities that rescinded home rule around 1970-1980 now pay less property tax. Those communities are Rockford, Lisle, Lombard and Villa Park. In fact, the municipal tax rate (including fire protection) for each of these communities is now greater than ours in Downers Grove:

Downers Grove: \$0.4367 (includes mandated pensions \$0.1258)

Rockford: \$2.2329

Lisle: \$1.6520 (includes \$0.6166 for fire protection)

Villa Park: \$0.8356

Lombard: \$0.4983

Actually, only 8.8 percent of my total property tax bill goes to the village of Downers Grove. Our municipal property taxes are projected to yield \$7.5 million in the new 2006-07 budget year; police and fire costs during that same period are budgeted at \$25.4 million.

Use of several home rule revenue sources helps to hold down the village share of property taxes. Thus, less than 9 percent of my tax bill is needed to pay a portion of village public safety costs to protect my family and my property. What a bargain!

Keep taxes low. Vote no!

Betty Cheever

Downers Grove