

Flint Township Officers and Trustees...

cc: Suggestion Committee: Township Attorney

Yesterday our Supervisor forwarded a copy of an email I sent to our Survey Contractor asking him to put on hold, for now, any activity he might be doing as part of the contract we issued to him.

We are in a hold mode because of concerns the Township Attorney has with the process of changing our name. He is reviewing state law that indicates that the County Board of Commissioners can act upon a petition of 20% of the Freeholders and is looking to guide us in the process.

There are a number of concerns about which he and I have spoken to the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. And by the way, there is no record in the Secretary of States office of any Township changing its name. The only Township that has changed its name, that we can find, is Flint Township when it changed its name from Garland Township in the mid 1800's. Those references are not precise and seem to come only from recollections - we are researching this further. We are unable to find a precedence or guidance for us from previous name change activity.

The Township Attorney's concern is first with the term "Freeholders" This term is usually defined as a land owner. In the past one had to be a land owner to vote. That has changed and now all residents are eligible to vote. If we follow this precisely, it might be challenged as unconstitutional because all residents are now eligible to participated in their governance.

His second concern is the form of the petition. There are several forms of petitions used for elections and for petitioning the courts. There are also online petitions for some activities. We have not been able to obtain a clear definition of the form of the petition and our work could be thrown out if a petition is declared to be invalid because of form.

It appears that clarity could come with a simple addition to the Michigan Charter Township Act.

The Michigan Townships Association is the group that works on these type of legislative activities in behalf of Michigan Townships. We have a call into their Legislative Director to see if this is a project they would like to shepherd. Unfortunately she is on vacation and will not return for 2 weeks.

So - we are on hold until we have a response from MTA.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone at 810-348-4777.