

Brief Summary of the Home Rule Charter and the Government Study Commission

Why change the form of our government from a Borough to a Home Rule Municipality? (We won't change our name from Malvern Borough however).

A home rule municipality can act anywhere except where they are limited by state law. A Borough can only act where specifically authorized by state law. Our home rule study effort was begun in order to allow the Borough to have flexibility to maintain our present revenue sources without relying on the actions or inactions of the Great Valley School District. Specifically, if we do not become a home rule community and if the school district levies an earned income tax, half of the Borough's income would need to be switched from what is now generated from earned income tax to an increase in real estate taxes.

What is the home rule charter?

The home rule charter can be likened to a local constitution for the municipality. Home rule shifts responsibility for the local government from the State Legislature to the local community. Once the charter is adopted by a vote of the citizens in the Borough, the only way it can be changed is through another vote of the citizens. The local governing body (Borough Council) will not be able to change the charter through Council action alone.

What are the significant changes from the Borough form of government proposed in the charter besides taxing authority?

During the Government Study Commissions review of the potential charter changes we found we can further shift responsibility for local government by providing for citizen initiatives and referendum whereby citizens can propose or repeal ordinances and amend the charter.

Another significant change proposed in the Charter is the imposition of term limits on Borough Council and the Mayor. Term limits will provide for the revitalization and accountability of Borough Council.

A stringent code of ethics is proposed in the Charter for not only Borough Council members, but all appointed Borough Officials. The proposed ethical standards surpass the requirements of the Borough Code.

Lastly, the Borough Code had some requirements viewed as restrictive and complex for our Borough operations which have been streamlined. These issues relate to the Tax Collector, Vacancy Board, Shade Tree Commission, Civil Service participation in recruiting police officers and certain requirements for procurement.