

CONCORD TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What was the rationale for forming a Government Study Commission for Concord Township?

The original structure of Concord Township occurred numerous years ago long before the township's residential and commercial growth. Concord's leadership determined this was an appropriate time to review the current structure of local government given the changes in population, land usage and taxes to name a few.

What is the role of the Study Commission?

Once elected, the members of the government study commission serve as representatives of the community at large in examining the current local government, considering alternatives, reaching decisions on how the local government might best be run, and presenting their recommendations to the voters. This process is a local one; although outside help is available, local citizens do the bulk of the work, and the decisions reached are their responsibility. The process is also a public process. The commissioners are elected by the citizens and are to conduct their affairs with the maximum feasible public involvement and discussion. The commission's recommendations for any change in local government would be placed before the voters for decision.

In summary the commission's role is:

- To conduct an in-depth study of the current municipal government and compare it to other available forms under the laws of PA, and,
- Determine whether or not in its judgment the government could be strengthened or made more clearly responsible or accountable to the people or whether its operation would become more economical or efficient under a changed form of government.
- To look outside the municipality to discover improved practices that might be applied and adopted.
- To develop from its studies a recommendation for same or a better form of government.
- To conduct its affairs in a clear and transparent manner.

How will the commission conduct its study?

There are **two** phases during the Commission's work:

During the **Study Phase**, the first substantive task of the government commission is a thorough review of the structure and operation of the existing form of government in Concord Township. Each commissioner will become familiar with the current administrative organization and methods of operation. The initial fact-finding process is important, since the commission should not begin their deliberations with any

preconceived notions. Rather, the commissioners must base their deliberations on the information they gather, and the initial fact-finding process is an important stage in their work. Part of the information gathering is examining alternative approaches used in other areas or new structural proposals to meet emerging needs.

In the **Deliberation Phase**, the commission, based on their review and study, must develop a recommendation for the same or better form of government. If another form of government is recommended, the commission must outline a clear and logical framework for consideration by the voters.

What is the schedule for completing the Commission's work?

The Commission has an initial 9 months for the date of the election (November 4, 2014) to reach one of the following decisions:

1) Recommend no change to the current form of government (i.e. remain a Township of the 2nd Class). At this point, the Commission's report is issued and the Commission's work is ended.

2) Recommend adopting one of the four Optional Plans listed in the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plan Law. Following this decision, the Commission issues its report and the Commission's recommendation is placed on the ballot at the next election. The electorate then votes to either adopt or reject the Commission's recommendation.

3) Recommend developing a Home Rule Charter.

If the Commission decides to develop a Home Rule Charter, the Commission has an additional 9 months to develop the Charter. Once the charter is developed, the Commission issues its report and the Commission's recommendation to adopt the Home Rule Charter is placed on the ballot at the next election. The electorate then votes to either adopt or reject the Commission's recommendation.

What is the difference between public meetings and public hearings?

Public hearings are a time to gain the public's views on the existing government structure and generate public support and attention to the Commission's activities. Also, a public hearing may be held just prior to the Commission's preparation of a final recommendation of home rule, optional plan or no change.

How can I stay informed about the Commission's work other than attending the meetings?

The minutes of every public meeting or hearing are recorded and once adopted in a subsequent meeting, will be placed on the Township website. Further, hearing transcripts and reports will be kept for a period of five years.

Where can I find more information about the Home Rule and Optional Plans Law?

For additional information about the Government Study Commission process, you can visit the Concord Township website at <http://townshipofconcord.com/> or, the Governor's Center for Local Government Services at www.state.pa.us .

Where can I find more information about Townships of the First and Second Class?

<http://www.psats.org/subpage.php?pageid=secondclasstownshipcode>

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/1931/0/0331..HTM>