



# Home Rule Greenville, PA

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# On the Agenda



1. Introduction to Home Rule
2. Greenville's Home Rule Charter
3. Home Rule Commission
4. Adoption of Home Rule
5. Role of Government
6. Grant of Powers
7. Fiscal Procedures
8. Taxation
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10. Community Development
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# What is Home Rule



- A local charter adopted and voted for by citizens.
- It's a shift of power from state legislature to local government.
- Allows for customization of local government.
- Home rule can act anywhere unless limited by state law.

# Greenville's Home Rule Charter

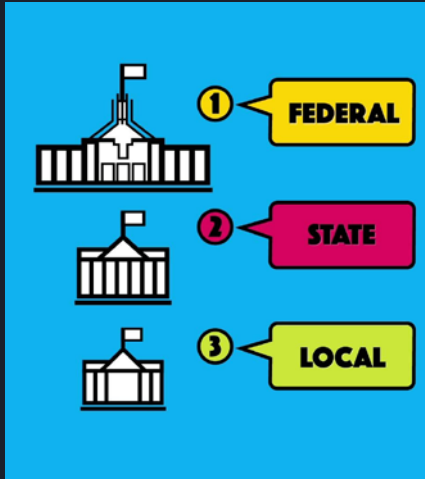
Prop. 1  
**YES!**

✓ **Yes! on Home Rule**  
*Let the People Decide*



- Framework given by legislature changed to fit local needs
- Changes may include:
  - Rights guaranteed to local citizens
  - How local government is organized
  - Procedural requirements
  - Limitations on powers

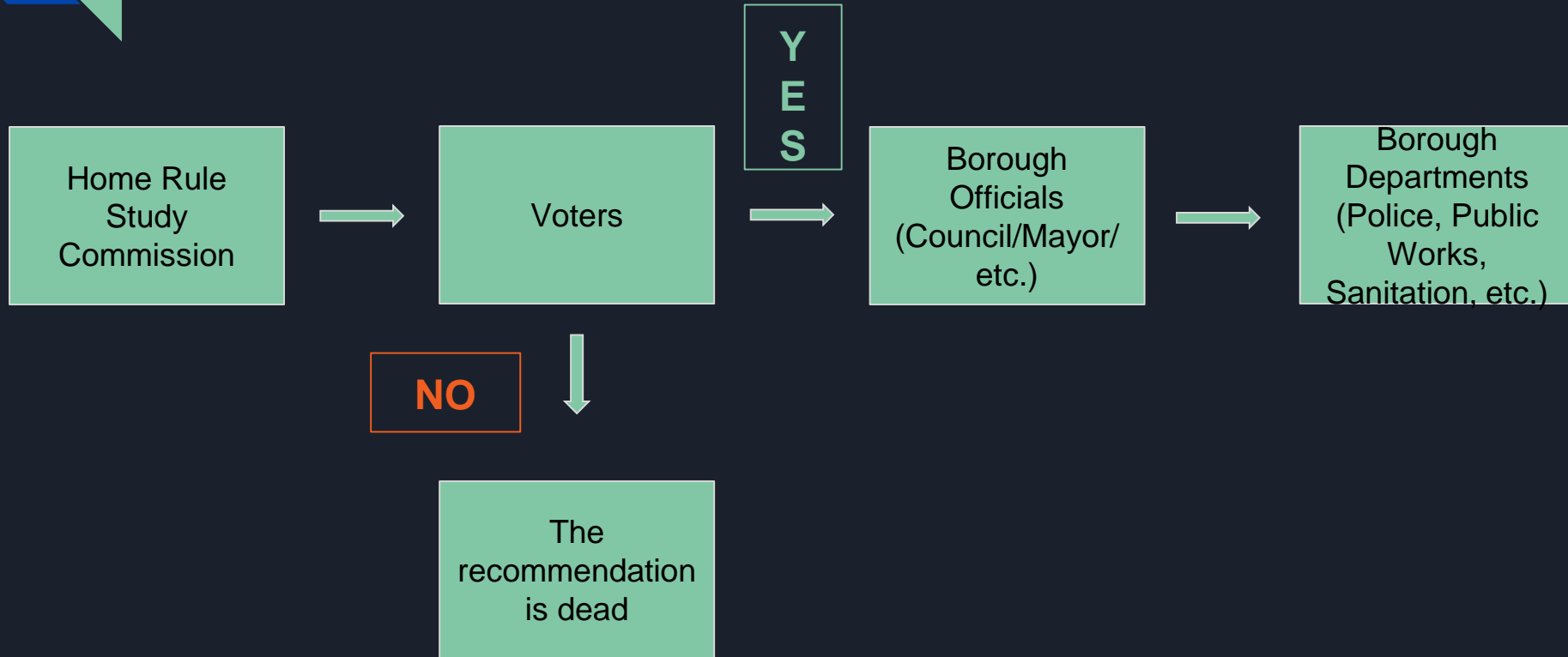
# Greenville's Home Rule Charter (Cont.)



- Home Rule government will remain subject to:
  - Pennsylvania & the United States Constitutions
  - Locally enacted ordinances & political culture



# Home Rule Commission



# Adoption of Home Rule



- Voters elect government study commission
  - Study current government and **recommend** any changes if any.
- Any recommendations are drafted and presented to voters.
- Home Rule is only adopted through a majority vote by the citizens.

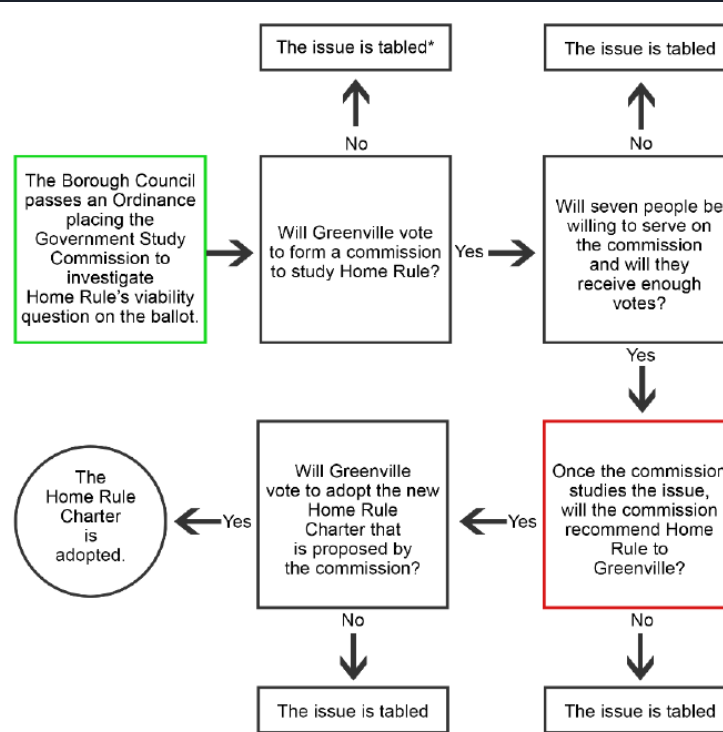
# Adoption of Home Rule - Citizen Involvement



“The final decision on adopting or rejecting the proposed charter is in the hands of the local voters. Once adopted, home rule charters can be amended or repealed by action of the voters.”



# Adoption of Home Rule Flowchart



\*"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

# Role of Government



- **Study**
  - To thoroughly review the structure and operation of the existing form of government
- **Deliberation**
  - Has duty to compare local government to with other forms available under law.
  - Decides whether municipality government could be strengthened or made more responsible.
  - Decides the best government for their own community.
- **Drafting**
  - Recommend a system of government designed to serve its citizens more efficiently and responsible than the existing system.
  - Should respond to citizens needs with the flexibility and economy.

# Grant of Powers



- General grant of power will be proposed to voters
- Power is limited by :
  - Constitution of United States
  - Constitution of Pennsylvania
  - General Assembly
  - Charter of Home Rule
- Peters Township charter example:

“Peters Township may exercise any power and perform any function of government not denied by the Constitution of the United States, by the Constitution of Pennsylvania, by this charter, or by the General Assembly at any time.”

# Fiscal Procedures



- Fiscal Year
  - January 1st under municipal codes
  - Home rule commissions can change date
- Borrowing
  - Debt limits established under/by:
    - Article IX, Section 10 of Pennsylvania Constitution
    - The Local Government Unit Debt Act
- Pensions
  - Devise own pension system
  - Rights of retired, vested and current employees preserved
  - Subject to Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act

# Taxation



- Assessment
  - Only assessment office can set taxation standard
- Tax Collection
  - Allowed to:
    - Set date for tax notices
  - Restricted from:
    - Collecting claims, liens and selling properties for unpaid taxes
- Tax Rates
  - Restricted from:
    - Setting penalty rates/delinquent taxes above prescribed rates
    - Fix non-residents' tax rate
  - 10% statutory cap on interest
    - Claims for taxes, water, lighting & sewer rates

# Citizen Participation/Rights

**PARTICIPATION  
MATTERS!**



- Citizens rights:
  - Initiatives, referendum & recall
  - Electing governing body
  - To speak during open meetings
  - Access to public documents
  - Tort claims
  - Administrative hearings & appeals
- Public hearings before:
  - Adoption of ordinances
  - Publication of annual reports
  - Establishment of citizen advisory, review or study committees.

# Community Development



- General Assembly 1975 authorized funds for community development programs
- Community development programs used to/for:
  - Eliminate slums, blight & health threatening conditions
  - Safety & public welfare
  - Conserve & expand housing
  - Deconcentration of low income housing
  - Rationalize land use
  - Revitalize neighborhood to attract higher income persons
  - Restore & preserve historical, architectural or aesthetic valued properties



# Public Meetings



- Sunshine Law
  - Meetings must be held in a public place available to the public.
- Normally meetings are weekly or biweekly
- Deals with:
  - Speakers
  - Policy debates
  - Interviews
  - Reviews of drafts
  - Special reports
  - Public presentations





# References

<http://www.bristoltp.com/govtstudy/HomeRulePresentation.pdf>

<http://www.greenvilleborough.com/uploads/Home%20Rule%20in%20PA.pdf>

<http://www.greenvilleborough.com/uploads/Home%20Rule%20Statement.pdf>