

## Proposed Village of Crystal Lake What Happens Next?

The Montcalm Alliance – Montcalm County’s economic and community development organization – has been asked to provide objective information to Crystal residents regarding the proposed establishment of the Village of Crystal Lake. This is the second of several regular Information Bulletins that will be provided to the public.

1. *Current Status of Proposed Establishment of Village of Crystal Lake* – the Michigan State Boundary Commission approved the boundaries for the proposed Village of Crystal Lake at its May 18, 2006 meeting and the Director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth issued a signed order on June 19, 2006 concurring with the Boundary Commission decision (for a map of boundaries of proposed Village go to [www.villageofcrystal lake.org](http://www.villageofcrystal lake.org)).
2. *What Does the Signed Order by the Director Mean?* – it means that on the November 7, 2006 general election ballot, the registered voters whose address is within the boundaries of the proposed Village will have the opportunity to voice their opinion.

Two options for the November 7, 2006 vote exist. They are:

- A. If sufficient, valid, signatures are submitted as a result of a petition effort for a referendum by August 2, 2006 then the question on the ballot will be:

*Shall proceedings continue that propose to incorporate certain territory in Crystal Township as the Village of Crystal Lake?*

Yes [  ]      No [  ]

Note: A “Yes” vote permits incorporation proceedings to continue.

- B. If no referendum, then the ballot language will be:

*For Village Incorporation*                      Yes [  ]

*For Village Incorporation*                      No [  ]

Note: A “Yes” vote permits incorporation proceedings to continue.

A “No” vote terminates incorporation proceedings.

- 3. *What is the Difference Between the Two Options?*** In the first option (referendum), registered voters residing in the area approved for incorporation as the Village of Crystal Lake only have the choice of voting “yes” or “no” but they do so without any knowledge or understanding of what the proposed Village would actually look like or what its powers would or would not be.

In the second option, the registered voters would also be asked to vote “yes” or “no” and at the same time, select a 5 member “Charter Commission”. If the vote is “yes” to continue with the incorporation process, then this Charter Commission, made up of 5 elected members who live within the proposed boundaries of the Village, has the responsibility of drafting a Charter for the proposed Village of Crystal Lake. This draft Charter would, for the first-time, define the specific powers of the Village and what it could and could not do. Once drafted, this draft Charter is required by law to go back to the voters for their approval . It is, another opportunity to vote “yes” or “no” for the establishment of the Village of Crystal Lake but this time with the specifics of the powers of the Village defined. If approved, then the Village incorporation would proceed. If turned down by the voters, then the incorporation process would stop. In this option, whether the vote is ‘yes’ or ‘no’, voters would be voting on what the Village would actually be, not on some unknown.

- 4. *Why a Referendum, then?*** – Good question. It provides an opportunity for those opposed to a Village to vote “no”. However, the difficulty is that until a draft charter is developed, voters have no idea what they are voting for or against. It is the draft charter which defines what the proposed Village’s functions are in terms of what it can or cannot do, such as, its taxing limitations, the services it would provide and whether or not it would be beneficial or not to the residents living within its boundaries.
- 5. *Doesn’t the Lack of a Referendum Eliminate the Opportunity for Voters to Say “No” to the Village’s Establishment?*** – The answer is ABSOLUTELY NOT! The voters will elect those who will draft the proposed Charter and then they vote on that Charter – either “yes” or “no”. If the voters don’t like what the proposed Village offers, they’ll vote “no”; if they think what is offered by the proposed Charter is positive, they’ll vote “yes”. Either way, they’ll be able to vote based on real information, not assumptions. It only makes sense to know what you are voting for or against before you vote.
- 6. *When Would a Vote Occur and Who Votes?*** – Whether it is a referendum vote or a vote for the members of the Charter Commission, the vote will occur on November 7, 2006. Those eligible to vote are the registered voters living within the proposed boundaries of the Village of Crystal Lake. They do not include unregistered voters living within the boundaries or registered voters of Crystal Township living outside of the proposed village boundaries. The decision to create a Village is made by those who are directly impacted by the decision – that is, those who would be living in the new Village of Crystal Lake.

**7. *What are the potential powers of the Village of Crystal Lake?* – by state law it is mandatory that every village charter shall provide for the following:**

- **The election and compensation for the Village board. A village election shall be non partisan.**
- **Identification of administrative boards considered necessary.**
- **The levying and collection of village taxes including millage limitation.**
- **An annual appropriation of money for municipal purposes.**
- **The public peace and health, and for the safety of persons and property.**
- **Written minutes of the proceedings of the Village board.**
- **All proposed ordinances published before they become operative.**
- **All business of the Village board will be conducted at a public meeting.**
- **Adopting, continuing, amending or repealing village ordinances.**
- **A system of accounting that conforms to a uniform system required by law.**

**It is permissible but not mandatory for a village to provide in its charter for 1 or more of the following:**

- **The regulation of a trade, occupation or amusement within the village's boundaries.**
- **The establishment of ordinances to protect the safety, health and well being of Village residents and their property.**
- **The punishment of a person who violates an ordinance of the village. The penalty shall not exceed \$500 or imprisonment for 90 days or both.**
- **The establishment of a department(s) considered necessary for the general welfare of the village.**
- **The use of village streets.**
- **The assessment of the cost, or a portion of the cost, of a public improvement to special district.**
- **The purchase of private property for public use.**
- **A plan of streets and alleys within the village limits.**
- **The use, control, and regulation of a stream, water, or watercourse within the village boundaries.**
- **The enforcement of police, sanitary, or other ordinances that are not in conflict with state law.**

**It is the above identified issues, as well as any others deemed appropriate, which would be addressed by a Charter Commission, and presented to the voters for their 'yes' or 'no' vote.**

8. ***What are Some of the Pros and Cons of establishing the Village of Crystal Lake?*** Information Bulletin #3 will present information regarding some of the possible benefits from becoming a Village. It will also address some of the legitimate concerns that have been raised.

**All of the Information Bulletins are posted on the [www.villageofcrystallake.org](http://www.villageofcrystallake.org) website. They are also available at several business locations in Crystal for those who do not have ready access to a computer.**

If you have any comments, questions or specific concerns you would like to have addressed in future Information Bulletins, please contact Franz Mogdis, PO Box 805, Stanton MI 48888 or call 989 831-5261 or e-mail [fmogdis@maisd.com](mailto:fmogdis@maisd.com).

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