

POTTER PARK ZOO AND POTTER PARK MILLAGE QUESTION

Ballot Language

INGHAM COUNTY POTTER PARK ZOO AND POTTER PARK MILLAGE QUESTION

For the sole purpose of providing funding for the continued operation of the Potter Park Zoo and Potter Park, including funding for operations, maintenance, and improvements, shall the Constitutional limitation upon the total amount of taxes which may be assessed in one (1) year upon all property within the County of Ingham, Michigan, be increased by up to 0.46 mill, \$0.46 per thousand dollars of state taxable valuation, for a period of three (3) years (2006-2008) inclusive and by up to 0.41 mill, \$0.41 per thousand dollars of state taxable valuation, for a period of two (2) years (2009-2010) inclusive? If approved and levied in full, this millage will raise in the first calendar year of the levy an estimated additional \$3,233,430.00 for operations, maintenance, and improvements for Potter Park Zoo and Potter Park, and is contingent upon a lease and operational agreement being approved by the City of Lansing and County of Ingham.

Background

On April 11, 2006, City of Lansing Mayor Bernero submitted a written request to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners for long-term funding of the operational and capital needs of the Potter Park Zoo, specifically requesting that the Board of Commissioners authorize a special property tax millage be placed on the November 2006 ballot to support the operation of the Potter Park Zoo. In response to the Mayor's request, the County Board formed a City/County Zoo Task Force to explore options and discuss issues pertaining to County operation of the Zoo. After holding numerous meetings and exploring various legal options, the Task Force recommended that Ingham County enter into a long-term agreement with the City of Lansing for the lease of the Potter Park Zoo, and the transfer of responsibility for operation and maintenance to Ingham County. The County and the City have both passed resolutions of intent to enter into an agreement, conditional upon the passage of a special millage request in the November general election. The proposed millage would generate approximately \$3.2 million for the operation and maintenance of Potter Park and Potter Park Zoo.

What the Millage Will Do

Passage of the millage and the successful negotiation of a lease would result in the County assuming responsibility for operation and maintenance of both Potter Park and Potter Park Zoo. The proposed millage would provide an increase in the level of service provided by the Zoo beyond what the City of Lansing can currently support through its budget. The increased level of service will include capital funding and maintenance projects necessary to keep Potter Park Zoo accredited and fully functional, an essential element for the Zoo. Even though Potter Park Zoo is a regional attraction, no governmental unit outside Ingham County has offered any additional financial support.

Impact on the Taxpayer:

For the owner of a \$150,000 home with a taxable value of \$75,000, this millage would add \$34.50 to the owner's annual taxes.