

TRANSPARENCY MAY FINALLY BE COMING TO DUPAGE TOWNSHIP

Residents Want More Than Just “Consideration”

At DuPage Township’s 2010 and 2011 annual meetings, requests for greater government transparency were made to the Township Board. Those attending the meetings asked that greater information – including meeting agendas and minutes and Township financial statements – be posted on the Township website. Residents – whether they are Democrats, Republicans, Tea Party members or those with no party affiliation – need such information in order to be better informed regarding how their government spends their taxes and to more fully participate in their government. At both annual meetings, Bill Mayer, the Township Supervisor, informed the meeting attendees that “consideration” would be given to their requests.

To Get “Consideration,” You Need to Ask for It

The agenda handed out to those attending the April 26 Board meeting – the first regular meeting following the 2011 annual meeting – did not list transparency as an item for discussion. In addition, prior to the Public Comments and Questions portion of the meeting, the Board never mentioned how they were “considering” greater website transparency.

Only when several meeting attendees questioned the Board regarding transparency did Mayer discuss the matter. Mayer indicated that he and the Township’s website vendor would survey the websites of neighboring townships and within one month, propose to the Board changes to DuPage Township’s website.

What Transparency Should Include

Because most other township websites also lack transparency, a copy of Illinois Senate Bill 37 (The Local Government Transparency Act) – currently being considered by the General Assembly – was handed to Mayer. Senate Bill 37 (SB37) would require local governments post the following 14 categories of information for the current and past four years on their websites:

- Contact information for elected and appointed officials
- Notice of regular and special meetings
- Procedures for requesting information from the unit of local government
- Annual budget
- Ordinances under which the local government operates
- Procedures to apply for building permits and zoning variances
- Financial reports and audits
- Information concerning employee compensation
- Contracts with lobbying firms
- Taxes and fees imposed by the government unit
- Expenditures
- Rules governing the award of contracts
- Bids and contracts worth \$25,000 or more
- Campaign contributions made by a vendor

The Illinois Policy Institute, a bipartisan research organization, summarizes SB37 on its website: <http://www.illinoispolicy.org/uploads/files/localgovernmenttransparencyact2-28.pdf>

Because the Illinois Policy Institute audits government websites for transparency, we asked the Institute to identify three or four Chicago area government websites that have the greatest level of transparency. The identified websites will be shared with the DuPage Township Board for their review.

Insist that Your DuPage Township Board Provide Complete Transparency

DuPage Township residents should insist that their Township Board include all 14 categories of information that SB37, when passed, would require. Residents may email Supervisor Mayer at WMayer@DuPageTownship.com or phone him at (630) 759-1317.

We will keep DuPage Township residents informed regarding future Board transparency discussions.