

In response to Nick Proctor's press release, I offer the following:

Mr. Proctor provided six paragraphs full of weak justifications and defenses of his attempts to raise taxes in the City of Howell. The fact is, he tried on two occasions to get Howell City voters to approve a tax increase – even saying property values may decrease if it doesn't pass (which, of course, did NOT happen). All six of those paragraphs can easily be disputed by the copy of his and Steve Manor's letter to voters, asking for the increase, attached.

His repeated statement that "no taxes were raised" is only true because of the FAILURE of both his attempts to raise them.

Mr. Proctor also chided my voting to turn down \$1.5 million in federal funds. Having been an attorney for more than 45 years, I was able to both read AND understand the 100-page "poison pill" contract attached to those funds. As an attorney, I fully understood every single string attached, as well as all the "gotchas" contained in that document. I shared my concerns with my fellow commissioners, and we wisely voted it down. The fact that he would have, by his own assertion, signed it – despite admitting to not liking the provisions – then tried to use "creative ways" to spend it, should raise HUGE red flags for every single voter in the City of Howell and Marion Township.

Mr. Proctor additionally chided my support for an increase of \$13 per week for county commissioners after 11 years of zero increase. I supported this because raises had already been given to all county employees, the county had a balanced budget, and Livingston County has a AAA bonding rate (the highest available). And we were able to afford these things despite having the lowest tax rate in Michigan.

This is what happens when you run your government in a fiscally responsible manner.

In contrast, Mr. Proctor ran the City of Howell as Mayor with an A MINUS bond rate, had to cut employees, and attempted to raise taxes on two different occasions.

There absolutely is a clear difference in candidates: Tax Raiser vs Tax Cutter.

"Pick Drick" as your Tax Cutter.

See Jay Drick for County Commission on Facebook for more information.

Sincerely,

Jay R. Drick

Dear Fellow Howell Senior Citizen,

You have already or will soon receive your BALLOT for the November election. On that ballot is a City Millage Proposal called the Headlee Override Proposal. The City of Howell is asking for approval to levy 4.5 more mills on all real property in the city.

Your likely natural inclination will be to vote no on **any** tax increase, so we hope you give us a few minutes to share why we are voting YES, and why we think you should, too.

Our fear is that you may have been misled by a few into thinking that this financial crisis is one of the city's own making. We have served you a combined 23+ years on the Howell City Council, and can assure you that the city's financial situation is, indeed, dire, and a failure to fix it will have significant negative consequences on all the city's residents — and particularly on us seniors.

The city can't maintain its current level of services AND resume repairing our streets and infrastructure without more revenue. You may wonder why we have a revenue problem. Three factors have starved the City of revenue.

- The recession of 2008-09 caused property values to plummet.
- Our State Constitution (Headlee Amendment & Proposal A) prohibits the recovery of the taxable value revenue lost during the recession.
- The State Legislature has essentially eliminated State Statutory Revenue Sharing, costing the City over \$5 million dollars over the last 10 years.

The City has 13% less revenue in 2018-19 than it had in 2008-09.

What has the City done to survive to this point?

- Reduced staff by 25%.
- Employees accepted wage scale freezes for 7 years.
- Employees pay a higher percentage of fringe benefit costs.
- **Eliminated from proposed budgets up to \$1 million dollars a year in road/street/infrastructure investments, plus other cost saving measures.**

What does this mean for us seniors? While some will accuse the City Council of making threats, you need to know that the financial numbers don't lie. Major cuts will need to be made should this Headlee issue not be approved.

If the voters pass the Headlee Override Proposal, the bulk of the additional funds will be used for infrastructure – primarily streets – and a smaller portion to balance the General Fund to maintain our current level of everyday public services.

The City is about \$18,000,000 behind in repairing and replacing streets in the City and there is a plan in place for fixing them. The proposed millage is for 5 years and

the goal is to complete about half the projects in that 5-year time span. If the City does well with the plan, the citizens will likely be asked to renew the millage for another 5 years to complete the plan.

Be assured, though, that without this extra millage money the City cannot fix the streets that are wearing out. Eventually, those streets will have to be entirely rebuilt at many times the cost of fixing/maintaining them now. If we try to fix the streets with our current revenue stream, we will have to make extremely deep cuts to our citizens' services, and that **is not** a desirable option. The City is a service organization. To make serious financial cuts your service providers (employees) would have to be reduced in number. Fewer employees will mean fewer and slower services.


You can plainly see that a failure to address the revenue problem will have a negative impact on life in Howell. That, in turn, will negatively impact the value of your property, lowering the attractiveness of the City as a place to live and lowering the potential sale price of your property.

Like you, the two of us are seniors living on a fixed income. We're fortunate to have enough flexibility in our budgets to be able to accommodate the addition of a few hundred dollars a year in new taxes. Realizing that not all of you have that flexibility, please be aware that if your financial situation precludes paying this extra tax, an appeal process to the City Board of Review is available. A tax waiver may be available due to your real and serious financial limitations. You can call the City Treasurer or Assessor to inquire about this option.

For the rest of us, we ask for your support and YES vote on the ballot proposal. The failure to maintain our infrastructure and/or maintain our services could very well result in a loss of property value. The resulting loss of property value will far outweigh the cost of the additional tax. Again, I ask that you vote YES on the Headlee Override Proposal.

For more information please:

- Attend the City's Public Information Session October 2
- Go online to cityofhowell.org/Headlee
- Visit keephowellstrong.com

Sincerely,


Nick Proctor, Mayor



Steve Manor, Mayor Pro Tem