

Petition to Change the Form of Government in Toms River, New Jersey (11/26/24)

We, the undersigned citizens of Toms River, New Jersey, hereby submit this petition to request that an election be held upon the following question, which is submitted pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A 40:69A-19:

“Shall the Council-Manager form of government of the Optional Municipal Charter Law, providing for seven (7) council members to be elected at large for staggered terms at partisan elections held in November, with the mayor elected by the council from among its own members, be adopted by the Township of Toms River?”

Rationale for Change:

This proposed change aims to improve governance efficiency, enhance accountability, **remove the power of the mayor**, removal individual agendas and strengthen the decision-making process in Toms River. By adopting the Council-Mayor form of government, we believe that a clearer separation of powers and more equitable representation will be achieved, benefiting all residents of Toms River.

What does this mean?

1. Council Composition:

- The governing body shall consist of seven (7) members elected at large by the citizens of Toms River.
- The election will be partisan, with a primary election held in June and a general election in November.
- **NO INDEPENDENTLY ELECTED MAYOR – NO STRONG MAYOR**
- **NO WARD SYSTEM – ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECTED AT-LARGE**
- Plan would include, *but will be set after election*, Council term of 4-years, with initial elections electing four (4) members for 4-year term and three (3) for 2-year term. Thereafter all terms are four (4) years.

2. Duties of the Council:

- The council shall be limited to legislative duties and must act collectively as a body.
- The mayor shall be selected from among the council members for a term of two (2) years at the organization meeting held on January 1 (*to be determined by Municipal Code Update*).

3. Administrative Structure:

- The council shall have the authority to appoint:
 - A municipal manager, who will act as the chief executive officer.
 - A municipal clerk.
 - A tax assessor.
- The council will also define the method of selection for:
 - Municipal attorney.
 - Zoning Board of Adjustment.
 - Personnel Board.
 - Advisory boards and commissions.

4. Role of the Municipal Manager:

- The municipal manager must meet specific criteria as established by *Municipal Code Update*
- The municipal manager shall serve as the chief executive and is responsible for appointing all subordinate personnel unless otherwise specified.
- The manager may delegate appointive powers to department heads.
- The municipal budget shall be prepared by the manager and submitted to the council for revision and approval.
- The manager is required to attend all council meetings and may participate in discussions but shall not have a vote.
- The manager will serve at the pleasure of the council and may be removed by majority vote, following prescribed procedures.

Need signatures of 10% of registered voters from November 5, 2024 in Toms River Township – 7,286

CAN WE COUNT ON YOU?