



## Finally, it's decision time in Macedon

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### Business News

Macedon, N.Y. — The future of the village of Macedon now rests in the hands of the voters.

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If a majority pulls the “yes” lever Tuesday, the village, incorporated in 1876, will cease to exist Dec. 31, 2009.

And that’s exactly what One Macedon member Mark McEwen hopes will happen.

“At one time, villages had a purpose, and it was the center of commerce for the area,” said McEwen, a member of the grass-roots coalition in favor of the village’s dissolution. “Unfortunately, in today’s society, that’s not true anymore. The center of the community has moved to the town. It’s clear everything has moved out of the village. We need to grow as a community. We need to look at Macedon as a singular community that can benefit in all the great economic opportunities that are coming to our area.”

On the other hand, Mayor James Hoteling hopes the people’s answer to the proposition is “no” and the village will continue.

“A lot of people take the village for granted,” he said. “I don’t think the majority of people even realize it.”

He cautions that once the village is dissolved, it can’t be brought back — ever.

“You can’t say, ‘Oops, I made a mistake, let’s change it,’” Hoteling said. “The state doesn’t allow it. Once it is gone, it is gone.”

Village officials were initially asked to put the question of dissolution to vote in 2002. An informal study was formulated and used as part of a survey in which two-thirds of respondents opted to keep the village intact. Some, believing the information was skewed, tried again. One Macedon presented the Village Board over a year ago with a petition containing 412 signatures, nearly half the number of registered voters, asking it to put the question of dissolution into the hands of the people. Last April, the Dissolution Committee, representing a cross section of village and town residents, trustees and a member of One Macedon, began developing a study that showed a \$204 annual savings if the village dissolved.

The committee said the \$204 is based on a home assessed at \$100,000. Included with the study was an “asset distribution plan” put together by trustees, as well as a cover letter written by Hoteling that questions the estimated savings. McEwen was angered by the letter.

“Aaron (Cook, a member of the Dissolution Committee) did a good job crunching those numbers — there was a lot of give and take,” McEwen said. “The cover letter should just have said, ‘Here it is’ and let the people make their own choice.”

The 15-page dissolution study makes recommendations based on if the village were no longer an entity. But Hoteling said money isn’t everything, and people should “think about the larger picture.” He said he is concerned residents will miss what the study doesn’t include — the “personal touch” they get by having the village in place.

#### Breaking down the study

Village administration: If the village dissolves, the elected positions of mayor and four trustees would be eliminated. All administrative work would be taken over by the town government.

- Police: No effect.
- Courts: Town officials believe the Village Court workload could be absorbed by their current staff.
- Water: The Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority said it would likely take over the village’s service, as it already handles the town’s.
- Sewer: All functions would be transferred to the town. The town disputes a claim made by Mayor Jim Hoteling in the letter sent out with the study that rates will increase from \$249 per year to \$400.

- Planning and Zoning boards: Functions absorbed by town.
- Parks: Absorbed by town.
- Cemetery: Can be maintained by either a private association or the town.
- Village employees: The village requests that town hire former employees when possible. Town officials made no commitment, indicating the only place where additional workers would be needed is in the highway department. Four additional hires would be required to run the sewer and highway departments.
- Lighting: District formed. The town indicated a projected levy of 34 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation.
- Sidewalks: District formed. The town estimates a projected levy of 12 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation.
- Fire Protection: Upon dissolution, the current village-owned department dissolves. Since a town can't own a department but must provide coverage, there are four options: The Macedon Volunteer Fire Department Benevolent Association can form an independent association, similar to Egypt; a fire company, like Palmyra (which is also a village-owned department); or a fire protection district, like Walworth; or contract the services out to other fire companies.
- Streets: Absorbed by town with the need for two additional workers.

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