



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Grosse Ile 2020 Write-in Clerk Candidate Mark Lane Denounces Clerk Ute O'Connor's Ruling to Take Away Civil Rights of Mark Mills and His Family Members to Vote on Island

Clerk O'Connor Disregards 100 Years of Michigan Case Law Decisions on Residency

Grosse Ile, Michigan - During the Township Board Meeting on the night of September 14, Grosse Ile Township Clerk O'Connor gave a report on recent activities which included her first public comments about her decision to issue a ruling that stripped Grosse Ile resident Mark Mills, his wife and son of their rights to vote on the Island in the General Election in November because she claims they are no longer residents of the community. Her decision also prohibits Mr. Mills from running for public office on Grosse Ile.

Clerk O'Connor's ruling was made in response to a challenge to Mr. Mills' residency filed with the Township by a neighbor who has a history of poor relations with him. The neighbor was convicted of criminally trespassing on Mr. Mills' property in 2019, and is believed to have conducted a community-wide smear campaign when Mr. Mills ran for Township Trustee in the 2020 Primary Election. It is believed that these dirty political tactics caused Mr. Mills to narrowly lose his election by a mere 115 votes. Five of Mr. Mills' fellow Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates were victorious in the election.

Grosse Ile 2020 Write-in Clerk Candidate Mark Lane strongly condemned Clerk O'Connor's punishment of Mr. Mills and his family members. Mr. Lane said:

"I am appalled by Clerk O'Connor's unjustifiable decision that effectively validated the political smear campaign orchestrated against Mr. Mills by his neighbor. This ruling by Clerk O'Connor illustrates why her long tenure in office does not mean her judgement is best for Grosse Ile.

The Michigan Supreme Court has issued an opinion that holds it has been a matter of settled law in this state for over 100 years that a citizen's permanent domicile is determined by where he or she has maintained a permanent address and intends to return to live even if temporarily living outside of

the community. Clerk O'Connor is apparently basing her ruling on the use of a Macomb County Circuit Court opinion that is not binding on the Wayne County Circuit Court which has jurisdiction over Grosse Ile, and addresses a residency dispute that had a substantially different set of facts. She is not applying the appropriate legal precedent to the matter of Mr. Mills and his family.

Clearly, Mr. Mills and his family never changed their permanent address at their West River Rd. house, and they obviously plan to live in their house as soon as renovations are finished.

Clerk O'Connor is essentially penalizing Mr. Mills and his family for investing in their home and increasing the tax base on Grosse Ile. Her ruling is particularly reckless as it places the Township at risk of losing costly litigation for violating the civil rights of Mr. Mills and his family members.

Islanders need to understand that Clerk O'Connor's disenfranchisement of Mr. Mills and his family members has established a dangerous precedent that can be used against any Grosse Ile resident who temporarily lives outside of the community for work, major home renovation or any number of other legitimate purposes.

I can assure Islanders that if you elect me as Township Clerk, I will follow the correct rule of law, and place the highest priority on protecting the right to vote which is guaranteed to citizens under the Constitutions of Michigan and the United States."

Mr. Mills and his family have been legal permanent residents of Grosse Ile since 2015 although they are temporarily living in the Wyandotte house of his mother-in-law to enable a major renovation of their house on West River Rd. He is on Grosse Ile every day, and is overseeing the contractors working on the structure while performing some of the work himself.

Mr. Mills met all the legal requirements to be a candidate for Grosse Ile Township Board and vote on the Island. He has had a twenty-five year career in law enforcement, and currently holds the rank of Sergeant in the Westland Police Department. Mr. Mills was a first-time candidate for public office when he ran for Township Trustee in the 2020 Primary Election.

During the 2020 Primary Election, Mr. Mills issued a press release on July 7th through the Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates Team that explained why he and his family members are temporarily living in Wyandotte while he comprehensively renovates his home on West River Rd. Mr. Mills stated:

"My wife and I decided to do a major renovation of our house on West River Road that we purchased in December of 2018.

We briefly lived in the house, but felt it was too uncomfortable to stay there given the great amount of dust, noise and utility systems disruption involved in a rebuild this comprehensive. If we had no other choice, we would live in the West River Road house now, but my mother-in-law is fantastic, and she insisted on having us temporarily stay with her.

My wife and I are making a very significant financial investment to create what we consider to be our 'dream house' on West River Road in which we will live as soon as the work is done. It is taking a large portion of our life savings to bring this 108 year old house up to current building codes while dramatically improving its appearance. We are doing the right thing in helping to build up Grosse Ile's tax base."

Clerk O'Connor's decision shocked and dismayed many Islanders. Grosse Ile resident Kevin Flavin criticized her ruling during the Public Comment Period of the Township Board Meeting. Mr. Flavin said:

"I'm not an attorney, but I researched this issue, and found out that a person in Michigan does not lose his or her permanent address by temporarily living at another location as long as there is clear intent to return home.

I talked to offices of the Clerk in several Downriver communities and asked them if I could register to vote there by temporarily living with a relative. They all told me that was not possible unless I transferred my permanent address.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that a citizen does not have to own a house to vote in Michigan.

The Michigan Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union issued a legal opinion that even the homeless can vote in this state.

I got to know Mr. Mills during his recent campaign for Township Board. I was very impressed with his distinguished career in law enforcement, family values and vision for Grosse Ile.

The fact that Mr. Mills and his wife are investing most of their life savings in renovating their house speaks volumes about their commitment to live on Grosse Ile for decades to come.

I think that Clerk O'Connor's decision to strip Mr. Mills of his right to seek public office on Grosse Ile is grossly unfair.

Even worse, Clerk O'Connor's disenfranchisement of Mr. Mills and his family members is totally unconscionable.

Moreover, as a taxpayer, I am very concerned that Clerk O'Connor's decision is depriving Mr. Mills and his family members of their civil rights in a manner that could subject the Township to the risk of losing costly litigation."

Mr. Lane, who narrowly finished second in his run for Township Clerk during the Township Board 2020 Primary Election, announced last week that he is running a write-in campaign in the General Election on November 3rd. In the Primary Election, Mr. Lane and another challenger split 59% of the votes cast by Islanders for the Township Clerk position. The 20 year incumbent Clerk O'Connor only received 41% of the votes cast.

During his write-in campaign kickoff remarks, Mr. Lane presented a **Ten Point Plan** for improving the performance of the Township Clerk's Office through positive change. The proposal focused on measures to enhance Township communications capabilities, records management, election process, transparency and ethics. Mr. Lane's remarks were streamed to the public by Facebook Live and YouTube:

<https://www.facebook.com/mlane11/videos/10222861557822742>

<https://youtu.be/RbUvAFWftU>

The top three actions are: (1) reestablishing the Township Communications Commission, (2) restoring the Township Communications Director position as a full-time job and (3) implementing a Township e-newsletter as well as news and feature streaming broadcasts on social media and GI-TV to keep Islanders more informed in a timely manner about the actions, decisions and programs of Township government. This point also includes a commitment to broadcast live on GI-TV or web streaming platforms all of the public meetings of Township Commissions and Committees.

About the Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates Team

During April of 2020, seven Island residents filed applications to run in the 2020 Republican Primary Election in August as a slate of candidates named Grosse Ile 2020 for all elected positions that comprise the Grosse Ile Township Board. The following Islanders were members of the Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates Team with the positions sought: Jim Budny, Supervisor; David Nadeau, Treasurer; Mark Lane, Clerk; Joe Porcarelli, Trustee; Mike Jurecki, Trustee; Mark Mills, Trustee; and Jamison Yager, Trustee.

As a result of winning the 2020 Primary Election on August 4, Mr. Budny, Mr. Nadeau, Mr. Porcarelli, Mr. Jurecki and Mr. Yager have advanced to the General Election on November 3. On September 9, Mr. Lane announced a write-in campaign for the Township Clerk position, and rejoined the successful Grosse Ile 2020 candidates seeking to win seats on the Township Board during the General Election.

The mission of the Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates Team is to provide the citizens of Grosse Ile with honest, respectful and responsive local government that delivers outstanding services and enacts sound policies which support excellent quality of life in the most cost-effective manner. These candidates developed the Grosse Ile 2020 Campaign Platform to resolve problems with the operations of the current Township Board and increase the fiscal responsibility of Township government while creating new opportunities to improve the quality of life in the community. To learn more about the Grosse Ile 2020 Candidates Team, view their web site at www.grosseile2020.com.

About Mark Lane

Mr. Lane is a six year resident who works as a Senior Communications Executive for Mort Crim Communications, Inc. in Detroit. He is married and has two children attending the Grosse Ile Township Schools. Mr. Lane is a member of the Catholic Church, and has been active in coaching youth sports on the Island.

Mr. Lane is an award-winning communications and marketing specialist with over 20 years of experience generating and creating engagement opportunities. He is a results-driven expert in building relationships plus leading and developing marketing. Mr. Lane is highly skilled in running communication teams as well as creating and implementing digital strategies. He is an enthusiastic and innovative problem-solver with proven ability to consistently enhance methods and generate innovative solutions.

In recognition of his professional accomplishments, Mr. Lane has been awarded two Emmy Awards for Local Programming Sports & Entertainment and received other prestigious recognition. He is a graduate of the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, Radio & Television Broadcasting and the Detroit College of Business.

Mr. Lane became a first-time candidate for public office when he ran for the Republican Nomination for Township Clerk in the 2020 Township Board Primary Election. On September 9, he announced a write-in campaign for the Township Clerk position running as an Independent Republican, and rejoined the successful Grosse Ile 2020 candidates seeking to win seats on the Township Board during the General Election on November 3rd.

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