

Tax Study Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Defined purpose of the commission

- Based on Act 1 of taxpayer relief act
 - Time frame to complete study is 90 days from appointment date of 2/16/2021
 - Nomination and Voting to appoint Chairperson and Secretary
 - Chairperson will be Connie Rankin
 - Secretary will be Jodi Cerminara
-

Introduction of Appointed Commission Members

- Christine King: School board member, homeowner in Bellevue, interested in fact finding, has already prepared information for next meeting
- Connie Rankin: Editor of The Citizen, homeowner in Bellevue
- Carolyn Laquatra: Recently retired business owner in Bellevue, homeowner in Bellevue
- Justin Greenawalt: Architectural historian and real estate agent, homeowner in Bellevue, concerned about potential homeowners bypassing Bellevue because of taxes
- Molly Brown Pennington: Homeowner in Bellevue, two children attend Northgate, focused on social justice and equity in this process
- Jodi Cerminara: Homeowner in Bellevue, three children attend Northgate, Bellevue councilperson
- Ron Bedison: Homeowner in Avalon, two children at Northgate
- Sabreena Miller: 4 years renting in Bellevue, small business owner, two children not yet school age, concerned about high tax rates dissuading homeowners from investing in Bellevue
- Sam Sesti: Special education teacher, 2014 alumni of Northgate, homeowner in Avalon
- It is noted that of the 9 members, only 1 rents their home and only 2 are residents of Avalon.

Powerpoint Presentation

Key points:

- Strict deadlines for the commission to prepare recommendations
- Explanation of the homestead exemption, what would happen if it was raised
- EIT vs. PIT and their limitations. Notable in later meeting discussion that neither of these is favorable to renters and both are considered volatile.
- Commission charge is to study and analyze district tax policy and collection methods to develop a non-binding recommendation to the school board on how to proceed with future collections.
- Chris Ursu will email powerpoint presentation for all to review

Discussion and Setting of Future Meetings

- Public Hearing for commission is set for April 22
- Meetings set for Thursdays at 7:00 pm through May 6
- Presentation of recommendation to school board by May 10
- It was determined to allow public comment during a portion of each meeting
- Advertisement of meetings in The Citizen and on district website/social media
- Minutes will be available for public to view
- Discussion of how to involve the community (specifically renters) in this process and to ensure transparency.

Additional Discussion and Information

- Current EIT rate is 0.5%
- Current real estate tax rate is 25.5 mils
- \$93,000 is the median value of homestead properties
- Christine King asked: Can a portion of EIT/PIT be exempt, as a progressive tax rate? Solicitor states that taxes have to be levied equally so this is not an option.
- Sabreena Miller noted that 65% of residents in Bellevue are renters.
- Molly Brown interested in data on long term effects of more homeowners vs. renters, how does it add to gentrification of the community.

- Concern about makeup of commission:
 - Jodi Cerminara questioned having a member of school board on commission, solicitor stated that is acceptable to have one member, as stated in the statute for forming the commission.
 - Sabreena Miller was concerned about the lack of more renters as a part of the commission; solicitor stated that the school board voted on the members so no changes can be made at this time.

Public Comments

- There were no public comments.