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NORTHGATE HIGH SCHOOL
TAX COMMISSION MEETING

April 22, 2021

7:07 p.m.

(Held Via Zoom)

Reported by:
Cavaliere Court Reporting
Jeanne Manko
Court Reporter
162 Cobblestone Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412.318.4079

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A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF NORTHGATE HIGH SCHOOL:

ANDREWS & PRICE, LLC
ANTHONY GIGLIO, ESQUIRE

1500 Ardmore Boulevard
Suite 506
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

ON BEHALF OF THE TAX COMMISSION:

CONNIE RANKIN, CHAIR

JODI CERMINARA, SECRETARY

CHRISTINE KING, SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

CAROLYN LAQUATRA

SABREENA MILLER

MOLLY BROWN

SAM SESTI

JUSTIN GREENAWALT

RON BEDISON

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. RANKIN: All members of the commission are here. I hope everybody is seeing their pictures or at least picked up their names. This is our time, basically, to listen to you. We've been talking to each other for the last two months so we want to hear what you think.

I am going to turn this over to our Solicitor, Mr. Giglio, who is just going to explain exactly how this commission was put together and for what purpose.

MR. GIGLIO: Thank you, Ms. Rankin. Good evening, everybody. My name is Anthony Giglio. I go by Tony. I am a solicitor for the Board of Directors for the Northgate School District, and I was asked to provide legal support for the district's local tax study commission as indicated in the taxpayer relief act known as Act 1.

Tonight is the public hearing that is required under Section 6926.331E of Act 1 for a public hearing to hear from the public

1 relative to the tax study commission and its
2 study.

3 This commission was appointed by
4 the Board of School Directors in February of
5 this year. Under Act 1 it is to make a study
6 of the local taxes in the district. As
7 Ms. Rankin has indicated, the meetings have
8 been going on since March, to study the
9 different taxes in the school district with
10 one major issue, that it is asked by the
11 school board to either make a recommendation
12 or not make a recommendation. And that is
13 with respect to recommending that the school
14 board either approve or -- either recommend or
15 not recommend that the school board approve a
16 resolution authorizing a referendum question
17 for voters at the 2021 municipal election on
18 whether to increase the homestead exclusion,
19 which an increase in the homestead exclusion
20 would reduce property taxes with a
21 corresponding increase in earned income tax to
22 fund that property tax reduction from that
23 increase in the homestead exclusion. And
24 that's why it's known as the taxpayer relief
25 act, but it's relief with respect to property

1 taxes.

2 And with that short, brief
3 statement, that is the crux of the issue that
4 is before the commission. They've been
5 studying the property tax and/or income tax
6 and ramifications of any change in the
7 homestead. And tonight is the night that they
8 wish to hear from the public and are required
9 to hear from the public under Act 1 with
10 respect to making that recommendation to the
11 school board. And that recommendation needs
12 to be done within 90 days of the time that the
13 commission was appointed in February, so that
14 recommendation is due in May. And with that I
15 will turn it back over to Madam Chair.

16 MS. RANKIN: Thank you, sir.
17 Okay. We are ready to hear your comments. We
18 just have a couple rules so that everything
19 goes smoothly. And if you've been to school
20 board meetings, you are quite familiar with
21 these rules.

22 You do need to state your name and
23 your address when you start to speak. Please
24 spell your last name or sometimes people have
25 different spellings on their first names.

1 Spell your names for court reporter. We do
2 have a court reporter here who is transcribing
3 all of the comments that are made.

4 We're limiting speakers to three
5 minutes. You can only speak once during the
6 meeting. And we are to listen to you. The
7 commission will not engage with you or debate
8 with you.

9 We want to hear your opinions.
10 This is your time. So, everybody, I know
11 you-all will be polite and state your beliefs.
12 And we'll get started. I'm just going with
13 the hands I see. And there aren't too many of
14 them.

15 So, first up is Jane Braunlich.

16 (WHEREUPON, A DISCUSSION WAS HELD
17 OFF THE RECORD.)

18 MS. RANKIN: Okay.

19 Mrs. Braunlich.

20 MS. BRAUNLICH: Jane Braunlich,
21 B-r-a-u-n-l-i-c-h. I'm at 27 East Roseridge,
22 Bellevue, PA. I think the commission should
23 recommend to the school board to place this on
24 the ballot for November and the tax payers and
25 the voters should decide on this particular

1 issue. I think it's too big of an issue to
2 leave up to just 9 people and the voters
3 should decide. Thank you.

4 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. Next is
5 Val.

6 MR. PENNINGTON: Sure. Thank you.
7 I just wanted to get myself on the screen
8 there for a moment. Hi. My name is Val
9 Pennington. I'm a Bellevue resident at 101
10 Lincoln Avenue. I do want to disclose that my
11 partner is a member of this commission but the
12 thoughts I'm about to express are my own.

13 I think coming to most of these
14 proceedings and/or viewing the recordings
15 after the fact, I believe it's our civic duty
16 to be as informed as possible on these
17 matters.

18 The first important thing I think
19 everyone should know is that the tax relief
20 act requires a net neutral profit to the
21 school district, which means that the school
22 district, by law, is not able to benefit
23 financially from this.

24 Who does benefit? Essentially, a
25 minority of homeowners whose data shows

1 already have a median wealth advantage over
2 the people that this harms the most, wage
3 earners that rent rather than own.

4 Second, this initiative also
5 doesn't offer the possibility to correct any
6 discrepancy in lost funding to the school that
7 might result due to the tax shift from
8 property taxes to EIT.

9 This means that if the school opts
10 to go forward with this tax shift, they have
11 to get the calculation just right so as not to
12 endanger the school's finances, which would
13 cause jeopardy to the district's very
14 existence.

15 Doesn't it appear feasible to get
16 that calculation exactly right, as the income
17 of residents is not nearly as stable and
18 predictable as property values, which is why
19 property values are used in the first place.

20 If, say, people move from the
21 district, perhaps in response to the
22 additional income tax or any other reason, or
23 income drops due to other factors, such as a
24 global pandemic, the result and shortfall
25 would be catastrophic to the district.

1 Again, this volatility in
2 calculation cannot be corrected once it's
3 implemented. It may be possible that this
4 defunding of the schools may be an intended
5 consequence not disclosed by those that may
6 intend it.

7 Third, the fact that 95 percent of
8 owner-occupied households in the district are
9 white along with the resulting five percent
10 being nonwhite, coupled with the fact that the
11 median household incomes of those nonwhite
12 families is over \$8,000 less per.

13 That means that implementing this
14 would proportionally shift and harm local
15 residents of color who are already less
16 privileged financially. This places a shift,
17 like this squarely in the calm of systemic
18 racist.

19 I formally and passionately
20 emplore the elected board of the Northgate
21 School District to astoundingly reject the
22 notion of putting forward not only a
23 financially reckless but also one which is
24 morally vacuous, intellectually dishonest and,
25 quite frankly, mean and racist. Thank you.

1 THE COURT: Thanks, Val. Next is
2 Linda. Linda, you need to unmute.

3 MS. WOSHNER: Sorry about that.
4 Okay this is Linda, with an "I". The last
5 name is Woshner, W-o-s-h-n-e-r, at 137 South
6 Euclid Avenue. Okay. First of all, I believe
7 we should reject this. The state right now is
8 looking at increasing its personal income tax
9 to do some funding for schools. I think that
10 should be looked at first.

11 I was amazed that the commission
12 was not given or provided with the information
13 to make a decision. The commission had to
14 research much of it.

15 This year is a low voter turnout
16 election. My opinion is that most of the
17 voters will be homeowners because they are
18 going to benefit from this and less from the
19 tenants, which is the majority of our
20 population. And then how are we going to
21 communicate this to the tenants?

22 The tenants are taking up a
23 disproportionate amount of this change and
24 they're the ones that are going to be hurt the
25 most. They are paying property taxes through

1 their rent, and then they're going to have the
2 earned income tax on top of that.

3 The tenants can easily go
4 somewhere. So I believe this will reduce the
5 number of tenants and then it's going to
6 reduce the expected revenue.

7 How many schools have this
8 particular, whatever it's going to be, .6, .7
9 percent. I think -- and I didn't attend all
10 the meetings, but I would like to know that.
11 Okay. Now, another problem, is Avalon would
12 be that .6, .7, but Bellevue would be .11, .12
13 percent.

14 It's going to be a
15 disproportionate amount. So most of it is
16 going to be on the Bellevue taxpayers. And
17 our school system has a spending problem. And
18 I don't want to feed that spending problem,
19 because, okay, this is going to be revenue
20 neutral.

21 However, where are they going to
22 get their additional income from? They're
23 just going to raise the property tax because
24 they're not going to be able to raise the
25 earned income tax.

1 So what happens when they need
2 more money? Yes, it's just not going to stop.
3 This is just not going to help it, and they
4 have a high cost per student and I do not
5 believe they have the services that would be
6 commensurate with that high cost. And they're
7 not even busing our kids.

8 So I think, before we start on any
9 of this, they should be looking at how they
10 can reduce their costs because they are out of
11 control, in my mind.

12 So I'm for rejecting this. It is
13 going to hurt the renters the most and they
14 are the majority of our population and I think
15 this is -- okay. That's about it. Okay.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. RANKIN: Thank you, Linda.
18 Alisa Mehlo.

19 MS. MEHLO: Hi. Alisa Mehlo,
20 that's A-l-i-s-a, Mehlo, M-e-h-l-o, and I'm at
21 114 Cedar Avenue. I am for not recommending
22 this for the same reasons that were stated in
23 the last two of why. You know, it's harmful,
24 it's unstable, school funding, it's not fair
25 to the renters, it pushes renters out.

1 It could be to gentrification in
2 that way. But then with the, you know,
3 unstable funding for the school, it could be
4 detrimental.

5 I know that tax reform is really
6 needed and, you know, I wish we had an answer,
7 but this is not the answer. You know, I know
8 that there is a lawsuit going on with the
9 state, so I am hoping they can get it
10 together. But the burden is on us. There is
11 no easy answer for us.

12 There needs to be a lot of changes
13 that are out of our control. And, you know, I
14 want to say that -- I listened to meetings
15 this past summer and heard this school
16 district commit to being more equitable. But
17 now there's been so much time entertaining the
18 idea of a tax change that would not be
19 equitable. And, frankly, it's a slap in the
20 face to everyone who supports equity in our
21 district and to the most vulnerable in our
22 community. Thank you.

23 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Alisa. If
24 you've spoken, could you take your hands down?
25 At some point here I'm going to get confused.

1 Amelia Thompson is next.

2 MS. THOMPSON: So my name is
3 actually Erin Thompson. I'm stuck on my
4 daughter's name. E-r-i-n, T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n. I
5 live at 317 Glaser Avenue. I am completely
6 against recommending this proposal.

7 I've read all of the wonderful
8 resources on the website today. I just feel
9 like the majority of households will be
10 experiencing a tax increase. And we live in a
11 world today where we cannot ask that of our
12 population, especially ones that have
13 experienced such ups and downs with income in
14 the past year. My own family has experienced
15 that as well.

16 This also really disproportionately
17 affects black households and elderly. And
18 it's just not fair to put that burden on those
19 populations, especially, as Alisa stated, our
20 school direct has spent so much time talking
21 about equity, and this just seems like a slap
22 in the face for those of us that have worked
23 very hard in finding equitable things within
24 the school district for them to even entertain
25 the option of this.

1 I also agree this is going to
2 press people out. They are going to go
3 somewhere else and then how are you going to
4 fund the school district if you just have
5 vacant homes sitting there. That's all I have
6 to say.

7 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. Laura
8 Pollanen, you're up next.

9 MS. POLLANEN: Hi. Thank you. My
10 name is Laura, L-a-u-r-a, Pollanen,
11 P-o-l-l-a-n-e-n. I live at 132 Lincoln
12 Avenue. I also would like to urge the
13 commission to not recommend that this tax
14 shift goes to referendum.

15 As many other speakers have said,
16 this is not an equitable policy. It shifts
17 the burden of taxes disproportionately to black
18 households, to renting households, and to
19 seniors. It is also an unstable source of
20 income for our school district. And we should
21 absolutely be prioritizing a steadily, regular
22 source of funding for our schools so that the
23 children in all of Northgate have every
24 opportunity they can get to get a good
25 education.

1 I want to thank the commission for
2 putting so much work into this and doing so
3 much research, because you have laid it all
4 out so very clearly.

5 It is very easy to understand
6 because of the work you have done and because
7 of the hours you've put in. And it's because
8 it is so clear and because of all the work
9 that you've done that I think it is very, very
10 obvious that this is an unfair inequitable
11 policy that would lead to less funding for the
12 school, people leaving the Northgate School
13 District due to the tax shift and only benefit
14 a small percentage of the population that live
15 here.

16 So, again, I urge the Commission
17 to not recommend that this goes to referendum.
18 Thank you.

19 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Laura. Next
20 I have R. Venczel.

21 MR. VENCZEL: My name is Robert,
22 R-o-b-e-r-t, Venczel, V-e-n-c-z-e-l. I live
23 at 556 Dawson Avenue in Bellevue. My wife and
24 I would also like to echo what's been said so
25 far before this, about how this funding

1 program seems clearly inequitable across to
2 affecting renters who are disproportionately
3 already affected by many of the hardships in
4 our economy.

5 I can't see a reason for how this
6 could benefit a school district that's already
7 struggling for funding when it's required to
8 be a zero net benefit. It seems like the only
9 possible thing that can happen is a loss of
10 funds from this, and disproportionately hurting
11 our citizens of Bellevue.

12 So I would also urge the
13 Commission to recommend that this does not go
14 to referendum and I hope that's what we see
15 happen here. Thank you.

16 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. Hope.

17 MS. ARNOLD: Hi. My name is Hope
18 Arnold, standard spelling. I live at 714
19 Meade Avenue in Bellevue. I just want to say
20 that I reject this plan on the basis that this
21 will hurt significantly more residents in our
22 community than it will benefit.

23 As a homeowner, it is important to
24 me to live in a diverse community, and this
25 will negatively affect our minority population

1 as well as seniors. And by doing this, I just
2 really think it would hurt the entire
3 community. It is a beautiful community to
4 live in. It's vibrant and the diversity is
5 fantastic and I think this will greatly
6 diminish that. So I reject this plan. Thank
7 you.

8 THE COURT: Thank you. Jennie
9 Denton, I think you are up next.

10 MS. DENTON: Hi. My name is
11 Jennie Denton, J-e-n-n-i-e, D-e-n-t-o-n, and I
12 live at 205 North Balph Avenue. I wanted to
13 say, while I applaud efforts to alleviate the
14 property tax burden in our school district,
15 this proposal clearly shifts the burden to the
16 more vulnerable residents while also creating
17 a more volatile and unpredictable funding for
18 the school. I hope that the Commission does
19 not recommend to move forward with this
20 proposal. Thank you.

21 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. Steve
22 Mello.

23 MR. MELLO: Hey there. Steve
24 Mello, 114 Cedar Avenue. I attended many of
25 the meetings throughout this whole commission.

1 I listened intently. (Inaudible) for 10
2 years. I've studied school funding as well as
3 the impacts that school funding and
4 performance have upon communities. I've done
5 that through seminars, college courses,
6 additional research and dozens of books.

7 Let me tell you, the fantastic
8 work that your Commission did convinced me
9 that this is not something that should go to
10 vote.

11 You should definitely, you know,
12 recommend it down. The reason for that, I
13 think, is pretty clear. It's been made
14 abundantly clear. But let's consider, we are
15 not just damaging Northgate School, we are
16 damaging Bellevue and Avalon as a whole.

17 This policy is going to force our
18 neighbors to move. Many of them will be
19 renters. Many of those will be people of
20 color and the elderly and these are things
21 that strengthen our community. They make it a
22 wonderful place to live.

23 Additionally, as some folks said
24 about the funding being unstable. I don't
25 want my kids' future to be based on shifting

1 sand.

2 Additionally, the other issues we
3 all have seen, the only people that are going
4 to benefit here are a small fraction of
5 homeowners who are very wealthy.

6 You know, we're not talking about
7 income, we are talking about assets and
8 wealth. Those are the people who
9 traditionally, from what I have seen in
10 statistics, they send their kids to private
11 schools. So they are not even a part of
12 Northgate. They don't go here.

13 Meanwhile, this policy will not
14 touch them because they will find ways to
15 shelter their money. That's what people with
16 money do.

17 Additionally, as I've looked into
18 this legislation, I've compared similar
19 situations around the country. It became
20 really clear to me this is all about
21 accelerating gentrification as opposed to
22 integration, which is what we now have.

23 I do not want to see that continue
24 to happen where home prices are doubling,
25 they're tripling. They've gone up that much

1 since I moved here in 2012.

2 Finally, about putting things to
3 the voters. You know, it was like a mini
4 college course listening to you-all. Which
5 voter in our community has the time to take
6 away from their jobs, take away from their
7 families, to do all this research by
8 themselves. Even if they go to the website
9 where it's all been tied up with a bow.
10 Right? That's a lot to sit through. And I
11 respect voters too much to put that in their
12 laps.

13 Also, you know, think about
14 calculating how much it puts you at risk. I
15 saw some of the folks on the Commission were
16 doing that. Very well smart folks.
17 Meanwhile, it takes time to gather that. The
18 election is coming up. It's right around the
19 corner, practically.

20 So I think the answer there is you
21 do not recommend this, you don't put it on the
22 ballot, because if you do, what you are doing
23 is putting the future on the community on the
24 roulette table. I don't think that's a smart
25 move.

1 Lastly, if anyone is pushing
2 forward with this policy, I would invite folks
3 to make note of that because they're not doing
4 that for the sake of our children. That's all
5 I have to say.

6 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Steve. I am
7 not seeing any other raised hands.

8 MS. HAUZ: Hi, Connie. Connie,
9 this is Jodi Hanz. I raised my hand kind of
10 late.

11 MS. RANKIN: Go ahead, Jodi.

12 MS. HAUZ: Jodi Hanz, 72 North
13 Euclid Avenue. I just want to say that I'm
14 also against this proposal. I want to point
15 out that one of the problems that I have seen
16 moving here in the last 10 years is that new
17 homeowners are disproportionately shouldering
18 the burden of the taxes because the purchase
19 price of the home becomes the assessed amount.
20 So I think this sort of just continues along
21 that line and will discourage people from
22 ultimately investing in moving here.

23 So I just wanted to add that. I
24 think that that's something. I would rather
25 see the homes all be reassessed and have it

1 reassessed right to everyone than to accept a
2 proposal like this. Thank you.

3 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. I do have
4 a Morrison RU.

5 MS. RUDY: Hi. I don't know why,
6 but that's my daughter's name. I live at 194
7 Summit Avenue. And I vehemently disagree with
8 this for all the reasons stated.

9 One thing that wasn't brought up
10 was that many people that own property in our
11 area don't live in our area. So for them to
12 benefit -- our school board's not benefitting,
13 none of the citizens are benefitting. I find
14 that to be a problem and I agree with
15 everything that everyone before me had stated.

16 MS. RANKIN: Okay. Who do we have
17 next? Todd Williams.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Hello. Thank
19 you. Can you hear me okay?

20 MS. RANKIN: We can hear you.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Great. Thank you.
22 Todd Williams. I live at 460 Dawson Avenue.
23 I would like to echo a few of the things that
24 have been said before. My sentiments are the
25 same. I'm against this proposal and I'm

1 against, particularly, placing it on the
2 ballot for a referendum. As Mr. Mello pointed
3 out, this Commission was tasked with
4 determining whether or not this is a good idea
5 and they've put a lot of effort into doing the
6 work required to find out the effects of what
7 such a shift in the tax burden would be.

8 To then take all of that research
9 and all of that, you know, hours of meetings
10 and conversations and expertise on the very
11 subject that's being addressed and say, well,
12 throw that out the window and let's just see
13 what John down the street thinks about this,
14 especially if John down the street has a, you
15 know, large home and thinks he's going to save
16 some money on his property taxes, well, he's
17 going to vote with his own self-interest with
18 no understanding or, perhaps, without even
19 carrying about what the implications of the
20 tax shift will be on the community as a whole.

21 I myself -- we are recent
22 residents of Bellevue but we pay income taxes
23 here, we pay real estate taxes here. We own
24 our home. Whatever way, it's not gonna -- if
25 the net end result is the same for us, it

1 doesn't matter.

2 To be frank, I think, as a
3 community, we should be trying to figure out
4 how to provide more money to our school
5 district and more money to our students. And
6 as also was pointed out, property values in
7 this community, like many communities, I'm
8 sure, are significantly underassessed,
9 significantly.

10 So the property owners are already
11 getting a tax break on what they actually
12 should be paying because they are already
13 paying a fraction -- taxes on a fraction of
14 what their property is actually valued at.

15 Beyond that, as was just pointed
16 out, how do you account for -- you just can't.
17 If there are people that don't even live in
18 this community, own property here, perhaps
19 even business owners who don't live in this
20 community, own property here, you know, people
21 with rental units, now they're going to get a
22 break on their property taxes. They're not
23 paying income taxes here in the first place,
24 they're getting the benefit and the only
25 people that suffer are the people who don't

1 own property but do live in our community,
2 people who rent, people who, perhaps, are
3 living paycheck to paycheck, or even if they
4 have money and they're renters, why should
5 they bear more of the burden of the school
6 district simply because they don't own
7 physical property.

8 It enhances gentrification, and
9 all the things that have been said before, I
10 echo. But even more so, it seems to be
11 another system to siphon money from the
12 pockets of people who have little into the
13 pockets of people who have more, and I think
14 that that's not good for our community, that's
15 not what we stand for, it's not good for our
16 school district and I don't think that putting
17 this up to a public's opinion is worthwhile
18 when so much effort was put into making that
19 determination. Thank you.

20 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Todd. Since
21 there have been two speakers who have
22 mentioned that property owners who don't live
23 here would benefit from this, I just want to
24 make it very clear that the homestead
25 exclusion applies only to homeowners who

1 occupy their homes and it is their primary
2 residence. It doesn't apply to any commercial
3 property or to anyone -- anyone who owns a
4 property that is not residing in it as their
5 primary residence.

6 MS. BROWN: Connie, I'm sorry to
7 interrupt. I'm so sorry. I thought
8 commissioners were not supposed to respond at
9 all.

10 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Molly. I
11 just want to correct what apparently was a
12 misunderstanding. Just so everybody knows.
13 It's not out-of-town people who benefit. Now
14 we have Jeremy Olson.

15 MR. OLSON: Hi, Connie. Can you
16 hear me?

17 MS. RANKIN: I can.

18 MR. OLSON: Yeah, my name is
19 Jeremy Olson, O-l-s-o-n. I live at 66 South
20 Euclid Avenue here in Bellevue. First, thank
21 you to the Commission for your efforts in
22 researching this topic. This is a really
23 important topic. I would urge the Commission
24 to not recommend putting this proposal on the
25 ballot. From my understanding, this measure

1 will disproportionately hurt our renting
2 community and our black neighbors.

3 We are coming out of a global
4 pandemic and we are trying to figure out what
5 the new norm looks like and this just seems
6 like a very inappropriate time for us to even
7 be considering shifting an additional tax
8 burden onto our vulnerable residents.

9 So, again, I also -- I agree with
10 everything that's been said so far. I'm glad
11 to see that there's been an overwhelming
12 support to not include this on the ballot.
13 And just in closing, again, I recommend
14 against including this referendum on the
15 ballot. Thank you.

16 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Jeremy. We
17 have -- PA is next.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Hi, everybody. I
19 am Paulie Anne Williams. And that's a crazy
20 name. It's P-a-u-l-i-e A-n-n-e, Williams, the
21 traditional way. I live at 460 Dawson Avenue
22 in Bellevue. And I also urge the committee
23 not to push this to a referendum that would be
24 on the ballot.

25 I agree with the previous

1 commenters who spoke about the massive amount
2 of research and work that you-all put into
3 figuring this out and figuring out how it
4 would affect our community.

5 I don't think that it makes sense
6 to then just pass that over to the public to
7 make the final decision without necessarily
8 them having all of the backup knowledge to
9 make that important decision. Thanks, guys.

10 MS. RANKIN: Thanks. Okay. Do we
11 have anybody else who doesn't have their hand
12 raised? I've got a TS.

13 MR. STOKES: Hi. My name is Tom
14 Stokes. The spelling is S-t-o-k-e-s. And my
15 address is 507 Highland Place in Bellevue. I
16 basically want to say I agree with the
17 majority of the people who have spoken during
18 the public comments.

19 I do not agree that this should be
20 put on public ballot or recommended by this
21 group. With how volatile this could be with
22 funding the school district and how it could
23 hurt the most vulnerable in our community,
24 this definitely should not be recommended.
25 Thank you.

1 MS. RANKIN: Thanks, Tom. Okay do
2 we have anybody else? I don't see any hands,
3 so if you can just speak out.

4 MS. EDWARDS: Hi, Connie.

5 MS. RANKIN: Hi.

6 MS. EDWARDS: I don't know how to
7 raise my hand on Zoom, so --

8 MS. RANKIN: That's okay. You go
9 right ahead.

10 MS. EDWARDS: My name is Roberta
11 Edwards. I live in Avalon, 830 Taylor Avenue,
12 and I just wanted to say I agree with everyone
13 else, that the burden of taxes should not go
14 to the renters. And I want to thank everyone
15 for all of your work. This has been an
16 amazing amount of research and time
17 commitment. And so thank you to everyone.

18 I don't think it should go to the
19 ballot unless you are prepared to put out a
20 massive public education for it so the people
21 can vote on the facts knowledge, not just what
22 they hear from Twitter or Facebook. So thank
23 you so much.

24 MS. RANKIN: Thank you. Anybody
25 else out there who would like to give us your

1 opinion?

2 (NO RESPONSE)

3 MS. RANKIN: I'll give you a
4 minute to unmute if you just want to tell us
5 who you are. Okay. Speak now or wait until
6 the school board holds a public hearing in
7 another month.

8 That's it for us, then. We really
9 appreciate the number of people who have come
10 out, whether to just hear what's been going on
11 or to comment and give us their views.

12 That's a really important part of
13 this and next week the Commission will be
14 meeting at our normal time on Thursday at 7
15 p.m. and hopefully we will arrive at a
16 conclusion at that time as to what our
17 recommendation is. We might dress that up a
18 little bit. We've got a couple weeks until we
19 present to the school board on May 10th. But
20 I hope we will at least be able to come up
21 with a recommendation next Thursday after
22 we've heard all of you. And to all of you who
23 recognized the incredible amount of work that
24 everybody has done on the Commission, thank
25 you just for recognizing it because it has

1 been an awful lot of work and people have put
2 an amazing amount of time and effort into it.
3 So, once again, anybody else have something to
4 say?

5 (NO RESPONSE)

6 MS. RANKIN: Okay. Tony, do we
7 need a motion to adjourn the hearing or close
8 the hearing?

9 MR. GIGLIO: I think it wouldn't
10 hurt to have a motion and a second.

11 MS. RANKIN: Okay. Would a member
12 of the Commission like to make a motion to
13 close this hearing?

14 MS. CERMINARA: Jodi Cerminara. I
15 will move to close the public hearing.

16 MS. RANKIN: Do we have a second
17 from the Commission?

18 MS. LAQUATRA: Carolyn Laquatra.

19 MR. GREENAWALT: Justin
20 Greenawalt, I will second.

21 MS. RANKIN: Everybody's seconding
22 that, Justin, Sabreena and Carolyn. All in
23 favor of closing the hearing?

24 MS. LAQUATRA: "Aye."

25 MR. GREENAWALT: "Aye."

1 MS. MILLER: "Aye."

2 MS. CERMINARA: "Ayes."

3 MS. RANKIN: Thank you, everybody.

4 We'll see you next week.

5 (WHEREUPON, AT 7:45 p.m., THE

6 RECORD WAS CLOSED.)

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

I hereby certify that the transcript of the proceedings and evidence contained herein are a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes taken by me at the time and place of the within cause; that the transcription was reduced to printing by me; and that this is a true and correct transcription of the same.

Jeanne Manko
Court Reporter

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