

PROPERTY TAX EQUITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes, July 10, 2003

Members Present: Tara Reed, Steven Wishner, Michael DuCros, Beth Farrell, Paul Pakos, Bill Sheehan, John Nikula, Morton Brond, Karen Darmer, Susan Iuliano, Dave Levington, Arletta Cioffari, Marilyn Goodrich, Ivan Lubash, Ralph Tyler, Mark Collins, Basil Pallone, Bill Maloney, Claire Schlosser

Ex-Officio Members Present: Selectmen Larry O'Brien and Kirsten Roopenian

Meeting came to order at 7:30 p.m. by Town Manager Maureen Valente

Draft minutes of PTERC's 7.01.03 meeting were distributed, to be approved by vote at the 7.14.03 meeting.

Town Manager Valente introduced the meetings featured speakers: State Senator Pam Resor, Staff Person to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Taxation Tony DeGregorio, and State Rep. Susan Pope (who arrived after the meeting began). Ms. Valente expressed this meeting was for the education of PTERC members, and not an open forum for public participation. It was covered live on Ch. 8 and would be televised later.

Sen. Resor opened with a general comment. She expressed the many years that Senior Tax Relief has been sought in Massachusetts, and discussed the current Circuit Breaker the state offers. She believed more Home Rule Petitions, such as HB 3909 would push the Senior Tax issue along. Ms. Resor stated that after a hearing re: HB 3909, the Committee would decide either to pass it, not to pass it, or to put it into study.

Mr. Degregorio stressed his position not as an elected official, but as a staff person, who could only offer technical information about the legislative process. He stated there are different categories of bills. Those that freeze seniors from any overrides, and those that increase eligibility criteria, such as assets, income, net worth, etc.

But no matter what the proposal, all must have a means test attached.

Rep. Pope stated that Chairperson Casey will have a hearing on just HB 3909 alone, and written testimony will be accepted into record as well as oral testimony. Ms. Pope stressed that Committee on Taxation will want to know how many seniors have taken advantage of existing senior tax relief programs.

Direction of Meeting turned toward Question and Answer between the guests and the PTERC members. Topics discussed included:

HB 3909 -- its constitutionality, the necessity of a means test, local legislators' stances (Pope would not support because of lack of means test; Resor would not support because of means test, constitutional questions, and its impact on community -- replacing funds, the precedent it could set throughout the state), ways to retain seniors residing in Sudbury

New ideas and criteria for relief programs -- credit through affordable housing, tax relief within residential tax rate, graduated property taxes, matching Circuit Breaker (similar to Wayland), alternatives to property tax, programs used in other towns (Sherborn, Winchester, Lincoln, Wayland, Northborough) and states, appropriate relief for Sudbury compared to other communities.

After speakers left, Interim Co-Chairs Tara Reed and David Levington discussed PTERC matters. Ms. Reed expressed that subcommittees had been recommended by the interim Steering Committee, based on the selectmen's tasks and would be filled at Monday's meeting. A draft meeting schedule had been created, meeting every 2 weeks, on Tuesday evenings.

Co-Chair Reed also asked for any question to Tony DeGregorio be prepared and given to her at Monday's meeting.

Co-Chair Levington discussed the recommended leadership structure put forth by the interim Steering Committee. The permanent Steering Committee would include two co-chairs (one senior, one non-senior), a chairperson from each of the subcommittees, and a Recording Secretary. This Committee would be formed no later than the July 29th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

The next full meeting of PTERC is scheduled for July 14, 2003 in the Lower Town Hall.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Beth Farrell.