

Senior Citizen Tax Relief Committee  
Durham, CT

Meeting Minutes  
November 27, 2006

---

The Senior Citizen Tax Relief Committee met at the Durham Public Library at 7:30pm on Monday, November 27, 2006.

Committee members present were: Charles Bogen, Ron Capozzi, Liz Conroy, Martin French, Lainy Melvin, and Charles Mik.

Members absent were: Howard Kelley and Rosemarie Naples and Carolyn Wallach.

Also present: Dan Lehet and Betty Wakeman-Long.

---

Ron Capozzi called the meeting to order at 7:35pm. The agenda and minutes were approved unanimously.

**Committee Reports** Charlie Bogen reported that he was working on matching a list of individuals by name and assessment (from the grand list) to a list of citizens over sixty-five to try to come up with a total we can use to quantify the effects of tax relief proposals.

Senator Ed Meyer Senator Meyer attended our meeting to both provide the committee with background information about property tax relief at the state level and to hear our concerns at the local level.

He discussed the recommendation of a 2003 state commission that special education costs be funded by the state thereby relieving the property tax burden by reducing local education budgets. This recommendation was never implemented. Another study commission has been appointed and is due to report its results in January of 2007. The buzz is that they will recommend increasing school aid through the income tax.

Senator Meyer then discussed three property tax issues:

There currently exists a property tax credit (max. \$350) that is available to households with income under \$100,000 (decreasing credit about this level.)

A proposal by Gov. Rell to eliminate property taxes on cars was voted down by the legislature. This will likely come up again.

A property tax freeze was approved at the state level to be implemented by towns as they choose. It is available if one spouse is over 70 and the other at least 60 and is

restricted to those with incomes of \$33,000 or less. Senator Meyer suggested that these parameters could be adjusted.

Discussion followed regarding the budget surplus at the state level some of which was allocated to fund the teacher retirement plan that had defaulted. General discussion included plans used by other towns.

Senator Meyer then requested several things of us:

When we arrive at a specific proposal(s) would we forward it to Senator Meyer and Representative Kalinowski and ask them to introduce it at the state level.

Be willing to come to Hartford to personally lobby representatives (particularly members of the Finance Committee) in late February or early March (mid-session.)

React to the report by the study commission.

Consider a local income tax to replace property taxes.

Use the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities as a resource.

Calculate what local income tax rate would be required to knock property taxes in half and to zero.

**Public Comment** Betty Wakeman-Long presented a proposal to allow legal “in-law” apartments. She feels this would increase property tax values and provide lower income housing in the form of apartments after they were no longer needed by “in-laws.” She also noted that the state of Vermont is paying family caregivers to help families trying to care for the elderly at home instead of in nursing homes. It is actually less expensive for the state to compensate family members than to support elders in nursing homes and provides seniors with a much higher quality of life.

**Additional Business** Ron asked Senator Meyer to request from the CT DRS statistical data for the town of Durham by age and income bracket. He will email a specific proposal to Ed.

Meeting adjourned at about 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Conroy  
Secretary

