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Phil Carroll, Vice Chair
Neil Chaudhary
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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Draft Minutes of the Legislative Ordinance Committee Meeting – revised 2/21/14 for spelling error

The Ordinance Committee met on Wednesday, February 19th, 2014 in the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Lane, Newtown. Committee Chairman Ryan Knapp called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: Ms Jacob, Mr. Chaudhary, Mr.Carroll, and Mr. Knapp

Also in attendance: Several members of the public, one member of the press

Absent: Mr. Girgasky, Ms. Romano

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Steve Rosenblatt - 50 Watkins drive, Sandy Hook - Had recommendations to be considered regarding senior tax relief and submitted documents to that effect on behalf of The League of Senior Voters. Document to be included as an attachment.

New Business

Mr. Knapp opened the discussion on the first agenda item: The review and modification of Senior Tax Relief as referred to the Ordinance Committee by the Legislative Council during the regular meeting of January 30th, 2014.

Discussion on current ordinance 45-A tax credit, including the discussion from the last meeting with Finance board chair John Kortze to possibly raise the total amount by 10% (150,000.) Also to raise the income tier and add a means and asset test. Mr. Knapp reviewed the main points of the BOF recommendations and possible options.

All members present expressed support of pursuing this action and working to bring something to the council.

Ms. Jacobs suggested we work through the process and to get more information. Other towns allow adjustments in their tax credit ordinance so this ordinance should be worded in a flexible way.

Mr. Knapp suggested looking at ordinances from other towns and questioned if there should be limits regarding value of property

Ms. Jacob questioned the use of sworn statements or affidavits.

Ms. Jacob asked we get clarification from legal in regards to a tax freeze as requested in public comment.

Mr. Chaudhary discussed statute 208-2, also had questions on present wording and how many (citizens) would be eligible.

Mr. Chaudhary referenced one ordinance from the information Mr. Knapp requested from CCM that had an option regarding eligibility of individuals with spouses in nursing homes and suggested exploring language to that effect.

Mr. Knapp asked Mr. Chaudhary to talk to the tax collector and invite her to come to the ordinance committee to explain how this tax relief works.

Mr. Chaudhary suggested waiting until after the Legislative Council meeting to hear what First selectman Llodra was going to propose regarding any new proposals on tax relief.

Mr. Knapp shifted the discussion to the asset test and affidavit process.

Mr. Chaudhary referenced Fairfield and other towns that specify what is or isn't included in an asset test.

Ms. Jacobs suggested we wait to talk to legal about any income exemptions until we have more information and more questions.

Mr. Knapp proposed a tentative date for the next meeting of March 5th provided the Tax Collector could be present.

(for the sake of those in attendance, an opportunity for public comment was added to the agenda.)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Tony Onorato, 16 Watkins Dr - spoke of Tax exemption for seniors in other states. Georgia's state law exempting seniors and New York's STAR program were both cited.

Mr. Rudy Magnan, 60 Watkins Dr - spoke of tax relief equity seniors vs low income. Understands the difficult decisions ahead including the tough questions of who deserves relief.

Ms. Sharon Cohen, 52 Watkins Dr - spoke against the Georgia type senior tax exemption, expressed support for seniors supporting the school system and the children therein.

Old Business

Mr. Knapp opened the discussion on the agenda item: An amendment enabling the municipal option of Public Act No. 13-224, providing a tax exemption for One Hundred Percent Disabled Veterans as referred to the Ordinance Committee by the Legislative Council during the regular meeting of January 8th, 2014.

Mr. Knapp spoke of talking to Mr. Brian Wexler about the proposed 13-224 exemption of 100% for disabled vets. It was explained that the regulation is not finished at the state level and will contact the Legislative Council when it is finished

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Mr. Chaudhary motioned to adjourn at 7:25pm. Mr. Carroll seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan W. Knapp
Ordinance Committee Chairman