

LOCAL OPTION LOCAL INCOME TAX COMMITTEE



seated from left: John Mannheim, Nancy Cronin, Paul Horwitz, Reinier Beeuwkes. standing from left: Donato Bracco, Jonathan Keyes, Chair; Patrick Sinnott, Walter Birge

During the year the Committee examined the long range plans of many greater Boston area towns to see if there was any action proposed to deal with the problem of high residential real estate taxes. While most town plans recognized the problem, none (with the possible exception of Harvard) proposed any response. We had hoped to identify other citizen groups wrestling with this problem but we came up empty-handed.

At the request of the Board of Selectmen, our State Representative, Cory Atkins, filed our local option local income tax bill which would allow cities and towns in the Commonwealth the option of replacing a portion of their property tax with a local income tax. This Committee had drafted the legislation on behalf of the Selectmen as a result of the 2010 Town Meeting vote. The bill, H 3375, will be “heard” by the Joint Committee on Revenue on March 8. The Selectmen have asked Governor Patrick to speak on its behalf.

Because it is not clear that the proposed bill is constitutional, the Selectmen asked Cory Atkins to request Jay Kaufman, Chair of Joint Committee on Revenue, to seek an advisory opinion from the State Supreme Judicial Court. In a letter to Ms. Atkins dated December 19, Mr. Kaufman explained why he was unable to do so.

Anticipating the possibility that our bill will not pass, the Committee has prepared a Warrant Article for the 2012 Town Meeting which would ask the Selectmen to request our State Representatives to file a “home rule” petition specifically for Concord. This legislation would have the same intent as H 3375 but might have

a better chance of passing; if it passes, it would keep the option open for further study by the Town, and possible deliberation on its merits at a future Town Meeting.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS



from left: Mary Sheppard & Jim Sommer Associates; William Bruce MacAlpine, William Jaros, Chair; David Karr, James Phelps, Barron Lambert

The Board of Assessors began 2011 by processing 158 abatement applications, completing all but five of them before the end of the Fiscal Year. The Board granted abatements in whole or in part for 49% of the applications.

The remainder of the year was devoted to the Fiscal Year 2012 triennial re-certification and revaluation program. Property valuations for FY12 tax purposes (the tax year beginning July 1, 2011) are based on a valuation date of January 1, 2011. Market value as of this valuation date is derived from the analysis of calendar year 2010 sales.

The Board of Assessors revalues all properties in the Town accordance with the State law requirement that property valuations must be at 100% of market value each year. The values are certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) every three years, through on-site and intensive examination of the procedures and methodology being employed by the local Board of Assessors. In the intervening years, the local valuation process is the same, but State oversight consists of review and approval of required statistical analysis. DOR has certified Concord’s FY12 assessed values and found the procedures and methodology being employed by the Concord Board of Assessors to be in compliance with current DOR regulations and guidelines.