

September 28, 2017

To: Gary Kleiman
Elise Woodward
Co-Chairs, CLRPC

From: Concord Tax Fairness Committee

The Tax Fairness Committee is concerned that the Long Range Plan Committee draft does not address the effect of the property tax on the character of the Town, including the issue of economic diversity, and on ways of easing the tax burden on homeowners of modest means. The 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan stated as an objective “Adopt tax policies that align the tax burden more closely with income than with property values”.

The Tax Fairness Committee is concerned that the property tax in its current form does not take into account Concord homeowners’ ability to pay. Our Committee in its original form proposed a Local Option Local Income Tax (LOLIT) which was approved by the 2012 Town Meeting but was not permitted by the state legislature.

Unable to pursue the LOLIT, the Tax Fairness Committee proposed a means tested senior property tax exemption which was approved by the state legislature, and passed by the 2017 Town Meeting as well as by voters at the 2017 Town election. The Board of Assessors is currently preparing for the implementation of this new exemption in 2018.

The Tax Fairness Committee will continue considering ways to preserve economic diversity in our Town. We have been charged by the Select Board “to provide a mechanism for thoughtful and public examination of the issues surrounding local taxation, including the fair allocation of property tax burdens, potential alternatives to the property tax, and the loss of economic diversity resulting from reliance on the residential property tax in the Town of Concord”.

We believe that the issue of the effect of the property tax on the character of the Town, on the economic diversity of its population, and specifically on Concord homeowners of modest means should be included in the Long Range Plan.