

October 4, 2007

Dear Editor,

The decision by the Town of Brookhaven to place a 2% Transfer tax on the sale of homes in the township on the ballot this November 6, 2007 has caused somewhat of a maelstrom between environmentalists, realty professionals and residents of the town. The Brookhaven Citizens Against Unfair Taxes, Inc. and I, as a resident of Brookhaven, have been and will continue to be vehemently opposed to any form of real estate transfer taxes proposed by any level of government. A transfer tax, regardless of its intended use is a harmful and regressive tax that makes buying and selling a home more costly and deprives many residents of the benefits of home ownership.

Elected officials in the Town of Brookhaven have been joined by organized environmentalists and are trying to convince voters that this proposed tax is in reality a "Community Preservation Fund." The Brookhaven Citizens Against Unfair Taxes, Inc. is not opposed to the establishment of a Community Preservation Fund, nor are we opposed to preserving open space within the township. We are, however, opposed to unnecessary barriers that impede home ownership within the town for our hard working families, young homebuyers and our senior citizens who are often struggling to maintain their homes and independence.

This tax proposal provides no exemptions for senior citizens or middle-income taxpayers in the Town of Brookhaven who have paid their real estate taxes each year and then must pay thousands of dollars more when selling their home. The Town's scheme to refer to this tax as a "Community Preservation Fund" is also without merit and has not been clearly elaborated on to voters. There have been no definitive plans reported or any community input sought relative to identified open space that would be preserved as a result of transferring tax revenues to a "Community Preservation Fund." A tax disguised as a "Community Preservation Fund" or for any other erroneous purpose is simply a tax.

The proposed transfer tax also allows for a percentage of the revenues being used to support administrative salaries to manage the tax program. Ironically, at a time when both County Executives are talking about reducing and/or consolidating government expenses and bureaucracy, the Town of Brookhaven is proposing to increase spending by imposing a new tax that will undoubtedly need to be managed by additional personnel. There are also too many variables such as the Town being able to borrow on these revenues for a period of 20 years commencing immediately without certain parameters being defined. Raising taxes and then borrowing from the taxes received is simply the equivalent to more government spending.

Long Islanders already pay some of the highest property taxes in the nation, and an additional transfer tax will just add to the price of owning a home and result in more Long Islanders, especially within the Town of Brookhaven, leaving our communities.

I strongly encourage the taxpayers of Brookhaven to become knowledgeable regarding what this fund truly is and to take action and protect your investment from excessive taxes.

Don't let Brookhaven elected officials misguide you with empty promises and assurances. Taxing the equity in a person's home is a very damaging idea.

On November 6th, stop the transfer tax and vote NO on Proposition #3.

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