



November 26, 2014

Dear City Council Members:

In August of this year, the City Council voted unanimously to approve a contract with Appraisal Systems, Inc to perform a "rolling re-valuation" of our property values. The revaluation that was conducted in 2014 was the first revaluation conducted by our City in 25 years. During the 25 years in which no revaluation was conducted, our tax burden was not distributed fairly among our residents. Not conducting a revaluation for so long also resulted in extremely burdensome single year tax increases for many of our taxpayers, as 25 years of adjustments were caught up in one year.

The Administration and the City Council determined that we could not allow this situation to occur again. The rolling revaluation was the approach selected to achieve that goal. However, at the recent community meeting, along with feedback my office has been receiving directly from residents, many members of the community expressed strong reservations about the impact that the rolling revaluation might have on their taxes going forward.

In order to address those concerns, I propose adopting an alternative approach that will accomplish the goal of ensuring that future revaluations occur at reasonable and regular intervals while allowing taxpayers more time to adjust.

At the next City Council Meeting on December 3rd, the Administration will propose legislation requiring that a full revaluation be conducted every 6 years. The legislation will permit any Hoboken taxpayer to ask a Court to order that the revaluation be performed if the City does not do so on its own. I hope that this approach, which achieves our goals while accommodating residents' concerns, will have your support. I also ask that this legislation be reviewed by the Finance committee as well.

In addition, while we step back and take this course, the City is also reviewing other cities' tax assistance programs across the country that could help to ensure that all residents have different options to remain in Hoboken. It is very important that we maintain the fabric of our City, and we want to enable residents to be able to stay in Hoboken for the long term. Once we determine a program that might work for Hoboken we will work towards introducing a proposal to our State legislators and advocate for new State legislation.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

As you may know, during the revaluation process we expanded our outreach and had several meetings to make sure that our seniors are aware of the State's Senior tax freeze program. The community meetings were conducted by Sharon Curran, our Tax Collector. She is always available to meet with residents who want to learn more about this program (new PTR-1/Senior Tax Freeze applications will be taken in February and are available for download at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation).

Some Council members have stated that they intend to introduce a resolution rescinding the contract with Appraisal Systems. Please be advised that the contract has already been executed by both the City and Appraisal systems. As a result, the authorization to enter into it can no longer be rescinded by the City Council. In light of the 9-0 vote to approve the contract in August, I would however, welcome a resolution supporting my decision to move in the alternative direction reflected in my proposed legislation, which would require termination of the contract with Appraisal Systems.

Wishing you and your family a happy holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Zimmer", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Dawn Zimmer

Cc: Quentin Wiest, Sal Bonaccorsi