

FAIR TAX

Issues raised at the workshop on January 14th.

Redistribution of Taxes - The fact that if taxes are lowered for condominiums the differential must be found somewhere else resulting in a redistribution of the tax burden.

Rural/Urban/Suburban - A large area of HRM is rural in nature. It is difficult to find a solution that will work in the urban and suburban area that will not penalize the rural areas.

What is the status of the Taxation Committee Report? Council decided not to pursue the recommendations in the report and it is now shelved.

Need to know costs - As we pursue the issue of fair taxation it will become necessary to understand the cost implications, at least in the broad sense.

Depoliticise the process - The thought that, initially at least, we should put politics aside when searching for recommendations and solutions. Politics will play a part later but not now.

Condos are apartments - Although the ownership is different condominiums are no different than apartments in terms of the services required and therefore should not pay higher taxes.

If a condo is rented why not assess it as an apartment?

Assessments on superintendents suites - Some superintendents suites are part of the common elements and some are separate units owned by the corporation. In the latter case they are assessed and taxed separately with the tax bill going to the condo corporation.

Tax rate for condos - Should there be a separate and distinct tax rate for condominiums? Currently there are two rates, namely commercial and residential plus some area rates for specific services.

Will there be a need to change the assessment act?

How can the transition be handled? Assuming our deliberations result in fair taxation for condos there will be a transitional period as the tax burden shifts. How best to handle this transitional period.

Strategic not tactical - We need to think strategically at this stage with specific tactical plans emerging later after the strategic plan has been developed.

Creative in the broad sense - Our initial thinking needs to be unrestrained and creative. Later some ideas may be deemed to be impractical but that should not enter into early thinking.

Who is the audience? - Do we need to encourage condo owners to rise up? Who are the decision makers that we need to reach?

Can HRM set a separate rate for condos? One of the speakers advised that this would require an amendment to the HRM Charter which would require support from the Provincial Government and the Legislature.

Alternate HRM income sources - Are there alternate sources of income that should be made available to HRM (and all municipal governments) such as a portion of the income tax (done in some other provinces).

Progressive Level of Taxation - Not certain what was meant by this.

Equitable and efficient - The taxation system must be equitable and efficient to be fair.