

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6495
Fax (412) 350-6499*



Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 8, 2007

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Special Committee on Property Assessments

Rich Fitzgerald, Chair; Committee of the Whole

REVISED

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 5:10 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn*

Recognized attendees: Mark Tranquilli, District Attorney's Office; Tim Logue, Secretary, Allegheny County Chiefs of Police Association; Jim Malloy, President, Fraternal Order of Police

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, and Jared Barker

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Vince Gastgeb, and Chair Rich Fitzgerald
Absent: Jim Burn, Brenda Frazier, Chuck Martoni, Jan Rea, and William Robinson
Non-Member: Dave Fawcett

III. Agenda Items

Ordinance

3478-07 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending § 5-207.07 (F) of the Administrative Code to redefine the duties of the Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review by eliminating the ability to access property assessment data by owner name; and amending Ordinance No. 58-03-OR to render it consistent with the amended Administrative Code.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Flynn provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would remove the ability to search the County real estate website by the name of the property owner. He said that the reason for the change is consistency with other jurisdictions, which do not often permit searches by owner name. Other parties, however, have raised safety concerns, and asserted that the County's real estate website has been used as a means of locating individuals targeted for harassment.*

He said that the lot and block number and property address search capabilities of the website would not be altered by 3478-07. He said that property owner's name would still appear on the record, once it is located by either of these two search methods.

Mr. Flynn said that this was not just a police issue, he said that other county workers would also be protected, such a Human Services caseworkers, Correctional Officers at the jail, Public Defenders, Shuman Center child care workers, Assistant District Attorneys, and Sheriffs.

Mr. Finnerty and Mr. Macey spoke in favor of the bill.

Mr. Tranquilli, Mr. Logue, and Mr. Malloy spoke in favor of the bill and asked the committee to give an affirmative recommendation.

Action:

Released from the Committee

3504-07

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Article 210 of Division 1, entitled "Assessment Standards and Practices," in order to establish a County policy for periodically reviewing the status of all properties qualifying for exemption from property taxation under the Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act.

Sponsors: John DeFazio, Jim Burn, Brenda Frazier, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey and William Russell Robinson

Summary:

Mr. DeFazio provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would require the County to conduct periodic reviews of property tax exemptions granted to charitable institutions under the Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act. He said that the review contemplated by the bill would be required at least once every three years for each property receiving the charitable institution exemption, and would be made by the Chief Assessment Officer of the County. The CAO would be required to determine whether each property or portion thereof continues to qualify for the exemption, and to forward copies of the determination to the property owner and other taxing bodies in which the property is located. These determinations would be subject to the normal assessment appeal procedures.

Mr. Gastgeb asked Mr. Barker what constituted exempt status. Mr. Barker said that there was a laundry list of qualifications. Mr. Flynn said that he would work with Mr. Barker and pick out some properties and examine their status.

Mr. Gastgeb encouraged this to be done quickly. He also suggested that Council hire an outside entity to examine this in conjunction with the administration. Mr. DeFazio said that he thought that the administration could handle this without outside assistance.

Action:

Released from the Committee

V. Adjournment

Summary:

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM