



November 5, 2016

Good Morning. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of the Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association, an association that represents more than 100 businesses on the peninsula.

Let me begin by commending and thanking you for the hard work that all of you have put into tax reform, specifically Bill number 52. I am sure I am not the only one speaking here today who realizes just how much elbow grease has to go into researching and writing law amendments that will affect how commercial taxes will be collected in our city for years to come.

You have listened to our concerns and shown a clear understanding that the commercial taxation in this city absolutely has to change if our commercial main streets and targeted growth areas are to survive and thrive.

The Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association would like to go on record to support **item number a)** *(a) set different commercial tax rates for commercial property located in areas of the Municipality designated by Council, based on the assessment of commercial property under the Assessment Act; We also support **Item number c** (c) set additional tiered or escalating commercial tax rates based on the factors set out in clauses (a) and (b) that are in excess of the rates set in clauses (a) and (b); and finally, we support **item number d** set additional or different commercial tax rates using any combination of clauses (a) to (c).*

We are asking for one amendment to item number b) to have it change from "*set different commercial tax rates for commercial property located in areas of the Municipality designated by Council, based on the length or proportion of frontage of a property on a street, including a private road;*" to *2(b) set different commercial tax rates for commercial property located in areas of the Municipality designated by Council, **based on the square footage of a property, or square footage of building or any combination thereof.***

We are asking for item number b to be amended because we strongly believe that applying square footage of property and/or square footage of the building will be a stronger, less random and more equitable way to collect taxes than just using frontage.

Frontage would be an arbitrary way to tax properties. It would be far better to use the actual square foot area of the building lot, perhaps also taking into account the size of the building. A good example of the tax inequalities is the parking lot for the Athens Restaurant located at 6273 Quinpool Road. This lot with no building on it, is assessed at \$59.99 psf. The Walmart at 220 Chain Lake Drive is assessed at \$30.69 psf with a building on the lot. If the 130,000 sq ft building is valued at \$100 psf then the Walmart land, without the building, is assessed at \$7.30 psf, leaving the locally owned restaurant parking lot assessed approximately 8 times higher than the multi-nationally owned retail store. The cost of providing municipal services is lower on Quinpool road as well.

As such, we strongly believe that the use of frontage as a tax tool will not have much merit, but square footage taxation would be extremely useful. The square footage taxation could support the regional economic plan, encouraging commercial development in efficient growth areas and commercial main streets, rather than encouraging the retail use of industrial parks which are more expensive to service.

In conclusion the Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association strongly supports Bill Number 52, with the one amendment that I just outlined.

We hope that this legislation can be adopted quickly, so that the Business Improvement District Leaders, and the city can get to work on modelling the quickest way forward towards a fairer distribution of the tax burden in Halifax. It is imperative that this happens now. For the Economic Growth of our city, Tax Reform Is All of our Businesses.

Thank you for your time.

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