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## [CE SBAC] Cape Elizabeth School Building Advisory Committee "Upcoming Recommendation"

1 message

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**Cape Elizabeth School Building Advisory Committee** <cesbac@capeelizabethsbac.com> Thu, May 9, 2024 at 8:52 AM  
Reply-To: jrowe1@maine.rr.com  
To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

From: Jim Rowe [jrowe1@maine.rr.com](mailto:jrowe1@maine.rr.com)  
Subject: Upcoming Recommendation

Message Body:  
Good morning,

First, I wish to thank the CESBAC for its diligence in addressing the momentous issue of school construction/renovation in our town. Your commitment is greatly appreciated.

Second, as you know, since my term on the Town Council expired several years ago (and on the School Board before that), I have largely stayed out of the political limelight (with the exception of publicly endorsing candidacies of personal friends from time to time). While I have certainly been entitled to express my opinions on issues like this one, I have chosen to adopt a position that "I had my chance to directly influence policy; I'm no longer in that position; and I'll step aside and leave it for others to carry on."

I did submit your survey.

With that said, I'd like to let you know where I stand personally. The recent town real estate revaluation has left me staring down the barrels of a 43% increase in property taxes (less the homestead exemption) for our modest Cape Cod-style home. This is before whatever impact the school construction/renovation project will have. Changes we have made to our property since the previous valuation have been primarily "maintenance" (new roof, new siding, etc.) and also the addition of a heat pump and automatic backup generator. We have not moved our home to the shorefront. We have made no increases to footprint, etc. The increase in value is almost exclusively market-driven.

I will not be melodramatic and tell you that if the combination of revaluation-driven and school-driven property taxes takes effect that I will be forced to move from Cape Elizabeth. I do have the resources to pay my taxes- wherever they land. But for the first time ever...EVER!!!, I am asking myself "does it make sense for me to stay here?" Is the increased elitism in our community claiming me as a victim? My real issue is that, while I accept that we have the duty to regain the upper hand with our school building stewardship, we also have to realize that the school system operates- not in a bubble- but in a context of overall affordability. I am (and have always been) concerned for those for whom property taxes are problematic...those who will be forced from their homes. In an era where "affordable housing" is a catch phrase, I wonder how serious we really are about that. Do we hope that building a few new "limited income" housing units will get us off the hook? Or are we genuinely worried about what tax increases of the magnitude being proposed will have?

I encourage you to support the less expensive of the two plans that have risen to the fore for your recommendation.

Thank you again for your work on this important issue.

With respect,

Jim Rowe

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This is a notification that a contact form was submitted on your website (Cape Elizabeth School Building Advisory Committee <https://www.capeelizabetsbac.com>).

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