

My opinion regarding a possible Charter Amendment to add a Civilian Assessment Review Board:

Such a board would have a tendency to politicize the process and there already is a process in place provided by the state. The New Hampshire Assessment Review Board would have the final statutory authority so even if a locally appointed assessment board had reduced a property's tax assessment, the State Assessment Review Board could reverse that decision. Hence, an applicant would need to wait until the entire gamut of the review process had been completed before relief could be expected, if any relief at all were, in fact to be available.

Presently, the City of Dover has only five such cases pending with the New Hampshire State Board of Assessment Review, so there is no significant backlog of cases. Apparently, the City of Keene has such a board and it routinely approves their professional assessor's valuations.

Further, the Assessor's Office in Dover often receives information on assessments that have been incorrect because of existing versus presumed characteristics of properties, and upon notification and verification, those cases are presently, and will continue to be, handled by the Tax Assessor's office right here in Dover.

Having a Charter Commission consisting of qualified individuals deliberate on such an issue is one thing, however to submit this to a general election and the kind of campaign rhetoric, and possible misconceptions is an inappropriate solution to a problem that doesn't now exist.

That said, I'd add comment that the statute that governs the process by which assessments occur in the State of New Hampshire are highly subjective and flawed. However, our assessing problems need to be addressed in the procedures stipulated by the State of New Hampshire. Until those rules change the process will continue to be subjective and prone to inequity. A Civilian Assessment Board in this or any other City won't solve that problem.

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