MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9,  2010, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present
Chairman Timothy Slocum; Vice Chairman David Schrumm; Councilors Justin Adinolfi, Michael Ecke, Andrew Falvey, Anne Giddings, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Timothy White.
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Dwight Johnson, Town Attorney; Fire Chief Casner and Police Chief Cruess.

PUBLIC HEARING SUBJECT MATTER:
CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ELDERLY TAX FREEZE ORDINANCE SECTION 17-15 (c)

1. ROLL CALL
The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

Prior to the start of the public hearing, Chairman Slocum recognized the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scout and Girl Scout Programs in America.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts presented the Colors.

Chairman Slocum read the proclamation in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Scouting Programs in America, and presented the proclamation to Scout Leader Chuck Caron. Wednesday, February 10, 2010 was cited as Scouting Recognition Day in Cheshire, CT.

Mr. Caron thanked the Council and the Town of Cheshire for its recognition of the Scouting Program in Cheshire. He read a statement highlighting his career in the Boy Scouts, and said that Scouting has had a positive impact on him and all Scouts. In the program boys and girls learn how to succeed and become people of character and future leaders of America.

2. Explanation of Hearing Procedure and Agenda.
Chairman Slocum explained the procedures for a public hearing of the Cheshire Town Council.

3. Reading of the Legal Notice.
The Clerk of the Council read the legal notice.

4. Presentation on hearing subject.
Ms. Giddings informed the Council that the Ordinance Review Committee considered this amendment to the ordinance and unanimously approved it for another year. The reason for the sunset clause is to have future consideration
on changes to the criteria for the elderly tax freeze program. She said that the program benefits the elderly, and having elderly residents benefits Cheshire as they use fewer Town services.

5. Questions at the discretion of the chair.
Emanuel Pelletier, 1281 Peck Lane, a resident since 1950, said he understood that at age 65 he would have a tax freeze, and he asked why there is no property tax freeze now. He commented on the Town selling tax liens and making money, his need to use up all his investments, having to take a reverse mortgage, and using all his funds to pay his taxes. He has visited Town Hall and spoken to staff about how he could pay his taxes. Mr. Pelletier said he was told he could pay $1,000 and then have a lien on his home for the rest of his taxes due. Mr. Pelletier said he and the other seniors have paid their dues by living in Town for so long. He has tried to get his electric bills lowered, and commented on 74 people leaving Town last year. It was stated by Mr. Pelletier that he will have to sell his house.

Derf Kleist, 251 Lancaster Way, stated his support of the tax freeze for the elderly, noting the program is for those over 70 years old and within income guidelines which are low.

Ellen Carson, 34 Peck Lane, stated that the elderly citizens appreciate the tax freeze program, and noted that 2/3rds of the seniors are widows or widowers with high medical insurance costs with no cost of living increase in social security this year. Ms. Carson thanked the former Town Council which implemented the tax relief programs and the people of Cheshire who help support the programs. Ms. Carson commented on the Town of Cheshire being good to its elderly citizens.

Cindy Kleist, 251 Lancaster Way, stated support for the tax freeze program and tax credits program for the seniors. She commented on the health care program putting a price on people’s age when seniors should be honored and appreciated. Ms. Kleist said all people should be helped and Cheshire is looked up to as a community which has tax relief programs for the elderly.

6. Proponents and Opponents statements alternately expressed.

7. Rebuttal at the discretion of the chair.

8. ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Slocum closed the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.
Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk