

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SCARSDALE
STATEMENT CONCERNING
PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO ADOPT THE HOMESTEAD TAX OPTION
BY THE SCARSDALE TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dated: February 9, 2016

This statement sets forth the League of Women Voters of Scarsdale's (hereinafter, the "League") position regarding the adoption of the provisions of Section 1903 of the Real Property Tax Law, commonly referred to as "the Homestead Tax Option". **At this time, the League does not support adoption of the Homestead Tax Option by the Town Board of Trustees.**

The League first considered this issue in connection with the 2014 Scarsdale property revaluation. On February 27, 2014, the League held an information meeting, open to the public, where the Homestead Tax Option, its purpose and estimated effect on our community were discussed by panelists John Wolham, Regional Director of the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services within the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, and Nanette Albanese, Scarsdale Town/Village Assessor. A consensus meeting of the League's members followed. At the conclusion of the meeting the League prepared and submitted a statement to the Town Board of Trustees stating its opposition to the adoption of the Homestead Tax Option at the Trustees meeting on March 4, 2014. (Click here for a copy of the [March 4, 2014 League statement.](#))

In connection with the current property revaluation project, the Town again has asked for community input on whether the Homestead Tax Option should be adopted. The League reconvened its subcommittee that worked on the 2014 information session and consensus meeting. The members of this subcommittee again met with John Wolham and Nanette Albanese to review the relevant portion of the law, its applicability and the effect of its application on our community as a whole and on the specific units that would be impacted if the Homestead Tax Option was adopted, namely the condominiums at One Christie Place.

The League confirmed that the true purpose of the Homestead Tax Option is the same as it was in 2014: to allow communities to prevent a shift in the tax burden from commercial properties to residential properties at the time of revaluation and, therefore, to insulate residential property owners as a group from bearing a larger share of the tax burden after revaluation. Adoption of the Homestead Tax Option at the time revaluation is not mandated, but rather a choice for the local governing body.

As was the case in 2014, the Town Board is not considering adopting the Homestead Tax Option in connection with the 2016 revaluation for its intended purpose of preventing a shift in the tax burden from commercial properties to residential properties, since that shift under present circumstances would be negligible. Rather, just as in 2014, the focus of whether to adopt the Homestead Tax Option is on the classification of condominiums, built as condominiums and the method of valuing such units for tax assessment purposes. And again, as in 2014, the only existing properties in Scarsdale that fall into this classification are the 42 residential units at One Christie Place. Adoption of the Homestead Tax Option would change the method of valuation for these specific types of condominiums from the income approach (the method required by law to be used

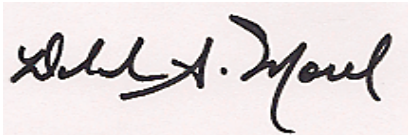
for all cooperatives and condominiums) to the market value approach (the method used for single-family homes, and based on fair market value or the resale price).

Based upon the data provided to the Town Board of Trustees at their meeting on February 1, 2016, the estimated effect of adopting the Homestead Tax Option and changing the valuation methodology for the One Christie Place condos would be a tax increase for One Christie Place residents of approximately 100% per residence. It bears pointing out that the taxes of the One Christie Place residents were already almost doubled after the 2014 revaluation, using the legally prescribed income approach. It also should be mentioned that the original public/private partnership between the developer and the Village continues to provide much needed short-term and long-term parking, a police station and public restrooms at the One Christie Place site. If the Homestead Tax Option is not adopted, the Town estimates that the tax burden on the remaining approximately 5,700 single-family homeowners would be, on average, about \$99.00 per property. This is even lower than the \$150 average tax increase per single-family home estimated in 2014. The League believes that the harm to the One Christie Place residential condo owners from adoption of the Homestead Tax Option would not be justified by the potential benefits to single-family homeowners at this time.

In addition, the League reiterates its long-standing position of advocating for an increased supply of housing that provides residential alternatives for long-term Scarsdalianians and we believe that adoption of the Homestead Tax Option under the present circumstances would counteract that aim.

The League appreciates the opportunity to comment on this issue and we thank Ms. Albanese and Mr. Wolham for the help they have provided our Committee on this topic.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light pink background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Deb Morel".

Deb Morel
President

Committee on Homestead Tax Option
Linda Doucette-Ashman
Anne Lyons
Debra Miller