

# Proposal for a Two Tiered tax System for Wilbraham for the Coming Tax Year

Presented by Concerned Citizens of Wilbraham  
November 10, 2004

The spreadsheet entitled Commercial Real Estate Tax Comparison 2003 vs. 2004 that resides on our website Under the heading INFORMATION, was presented to the combined Selectmen's/Assessors Office Tax Classification Hearing on November 1, 2004. Our information was provided to illustrate the apparent differences in property taxes comparing Residential property and Commercial property. Print it out and look it over.

By way of explanation, for quite some time many of us have felt that the two-tiered tax system was unfair to the businesses of our community. That is to say one rate for residential and another for commercial or business.

Last winter one of our members selected about 15 Boston Road businesses to see if there was a difference between our residential property tax increase of 10½ % and the commercial property tax increase. The results were disturbing.

At that time we decided to do a spreadsheet to look at ALL Wilbraham commercial properties, 2003 vs. 2004. We were astonished to discover that the total taxes of all commercial properties actually went down by 5.2 % - this is a 15.7 % differential.

Our feeling is that a single tax rate for both residential and commercial is clearly inequitable and that all members of our community should share the property tax burden equally.

The computer was quickly able to determine that if residential tax rate were to be \$16.40 per thousand and the commercial tax rate were to be \$19.00 per thousand, both would have had a 10 ½ % increase. Fair is fair. That \$19.00 rate is illustrated in the last two columns on the right of the spreadsheets.

We asked the Board of Selectmen to consider and adopt a two-tier system that would treat everyone in our community fairly. Businesses might complain but how could reasonably they make a defense for special treatment?

As near as we can remember our detailed and complicated presentation was considered for a total of about 10 minutes. Perhaps this meeting should have more properly been called the Selectmen's tax rate announcement meeting.