

What about a Grandfather Clause to hold property taxes down?

“When you sell your home think of the money you’ll make,’ retorted the county planner to a homeowner’s question at a Rotary meeting. “But I don’t want to sell my home, I want to live here all my life.” was the reply.

Unfortunately this homeowner and other people like Norm Ralston, the pioneer that I wrote about last week, who have built their homes years ago, are finding that they can no longer keep up with the rise in taxes. As the price of land and a new home now exceeds a five to one ratio: a 100,000 price tag for land demands a \$500,000 home. This valuation makes all the homes in the area more valuable and inevitably taxes rise.

Sometimes the only solution and one that many have had to do is to sell their home and move to places like the Western Slope where taxes and homes are lower priced. Somehow it doesn’t seem fair. They made the area a desirable place to live; the people who volunteered in the community groups and in the schools can no longer afford to live here.

Our real estate boom is similar to the situation faced by Californians in the late 70’s and early 80’s. In response to this problem, Proposition 13 was passed. This established a grandfather clause that guaranteed if you bought your home before Proposition 13 was passed, taxes couldn’t be raised until the home was sold again.

At an Evergreen Rotary meeting in which Representative Tony Grampsas was the featured speaker, he was asked what was being done to relieve the taxes of long time residents. He admitted there was a serious problem but also was not aware of any relief. When asked about the idea of implementing a Grandfather Clause here, he said it had never been previously proposed to the legislature.

Perhaps it’s time to bring this idea to our representatives. With a Grandfather Clause, the value of houses in terms of taxes would stay the same until they were sold. Then it would rise to match those in the surrounding area.

Let’s develop some new ideas to allow the people who built our Evergreen area into the pleasant place it is today to be able to enjoy the results of their labor. If you have some of these same concerns, contact Representative Grampsas and ask him to enact new legislation to provide tax relief for homes purchased or built prior to a specified time such as 1980.

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