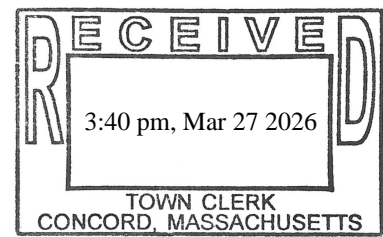


Tax Relief Evaluation Task Force

March 19, 2026

Approved March 26, 2026



Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Tax Relief Evaluation Task Force convened in person and via Zoom at 8:30 AM.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Salinger (Co-chair) called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. TF members present in person: Mr. Feeley, Ms. Gurall White, and Mr. Piper. Ms. O’Neil was present on Zoom. Ms. Rovelli (Select Board liaison) was present in person.

The minutes of the March 12 meeting were approved unanimously by members present.

Chair’s Report

Ms. Salinger reported the following points of interest from the Chairs’ Breakfast:

- The ADU workshop hosted last Saturday by the Concord Housing Foundation and League of Women Voters was well attended and well received.
- The Middle School Building Committee reported that the \$7 million supplemental appropriation for the new building is not needed and is expected to be de-obligated.
- The two 40B projects in town are both expected to pull building permits this summer. When completed, these will provide 438 new rental units, 25% of which will be affordable.
- The town will create a new Housing Production Plan next year.
- The master planning contract for MCI is now being issued.
- The Land Use Working Group will present at the League of Women Voters’ First Friday event at the Concord Public Library in May.

Discussion of Draft Report

- Ms. Salinger pointed out that the revised draft (v.3) she distributed to the Task Force now includes an Executive Summary, a redraft of Chapter 5, and new data on the share of rentals out of total housing units for the ten RTE communities in the Greater Boston area. This draft also appends the qualitative interview guide.
- The analysis of rental units still includes the Concord Housing Authority (CHA) (140 units) and estimates the average unit value at \$750,000. CHA pays a PILOT, and the average unit value is much less. These statements will be removed from the analysis and text.
- Mr. Feeley noted that the analysis of impacts on elders shows that they own 60% of the homes in Concord. This is a result of the projecting data from the survey to the town and the fact that the survey respondents skew older. It seems unlikely that 60% of homeowners in Concord are elderly. Clarifying language should be included.
- We will add a bullet to the Executive Summary showing that there has been no significant change in tax relief requests (senior means-tested exemption, Hugh Cargill Trust) since the advent of the RTE.
- Ms. O’Neil pointed out that there are several numeric inconsistencies on pp. 41-46 that need to be resolved.
- We need to be careful and consistent in the use of “average” and “median” home values, and in referring to “value” (assessed) vs. “market “price.”

- Mr. Piper will offer further materials that show how the RTE fails to benefit a larger number of stressed households when renters are considered in the analysis.

Report Enhancements

Ms. Gurall White presented data from Concord and other high-income western suburbs showing that the trends seen in house sales in Concord are similar to those observed in these other jurisdictions. Currently, it is homes in the \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million range that sell over the asking price, while the highest priced homes sell for slightly less than the asking price. The RTE seems to have no effect on these trends. A data table and short summary will be added to the real estate analysis in the report.

Triggered by comments from Mr. Gillis (see Public Comment section), the Task Force discussed extensively whether the report should make a specific recommendation about continuing or ending the RTE. Mr. Feeley said he felt it important to show that the Task Force unanimously supports the analysis as shown in this draft of the report. He is reluctant to make a flat recommendation to continue or discontinue the RTE, since different constituencies will be affected differently, and this seems a decision better made by the elected members of the Concord Select Board. Ms. Salinger felt that the draft report specifically responds to the Select Board charge asking for recommendations, as it identifies actions that the Select Board could take to repeal or improve the RTE, or tax relief programs that could be substituted or added. Mr. Piper is of the opinion that the negative impact on renters and the amount of relief given to owners who are not housing cost-stressed (*inefficiency*) incline him to think we should recommend NOT continuing the RTE. Ms. Gurall White and Ms. O’Neil are of similar mind. Mr. Feeley felt that he could support such a recommendation only if it is unequivocal that a substitute property tax relief program for housing cost-stressed elders is in place before the RTE is ended. Mr. Feeley agreed to draft a paragraph that can be considered for such a “recommendation.”

Next Steps

Mr. Piper has no problem with the current Executive Summary structure, but advocated for an even shorter version in addition. Others felt that we should force readers to at least read the current 10pp. rather than relying on an oversimplified summary. The Select Board presentation offers an opportunity for an even more concise presentation. Mr. Piper will take a first cut at the presentation slides before next week.

In keeping with the acknowledged need for improved public communication identified by the Task Force, Ms. Rovelli suggested we might want to organize a “First Friday” forum with the League of Women Voters. Perhaps this could be extended beyond the Task Force report to a broader discussion of affordable housing and how elders and other housing cost-stressed households might be able to live or remain in Concord.

Public Comment

Mr. Gillis asked if the Task Force had received his latest two emails. One outlines a Resident Taxpayer Assistance Fund, established by the Town of Eastham under Massachusetts law in July 2024, that enables the town to provide property tax relief to eligible taxpayers under the age of 60. He also provided a copy of the November 2017 Concord Board of Assessors’ Tax Classification Hearing presentation to the Select Board that recommended against adoption of the RTE. Ms. Salinger had only just received these, and has now sent them on to the Task Force members.

Mr. Gillis also read part of the Select Board charge which he feels requires the Task Force to make a recommendation for or against continuing the RTE.

Next Meetings

March 26 8:30 AM

April 2 8:30 AM

April 13 (evening) Select Board presentation of Task Force's report

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM.