



October 6, 2013

Dear Fellow East Siders:

Last Tuesday, the administration reported on the overnight parking program to the Ways and Means Committee. The administration had expected around 10,000 vehicle owners to enroll in the program, but the total to date has been less than 2,000. The administration believes that information about the program is still circulating, and that the numbers will increase over time. Also, the administration announced it will be allowing a new permit at a higher price (\$200) for college students who do not register their vehicles in Providence. The current program offers \$100 passes, but limits them to people who register their cars in Providence (and pay motor vehicle tax here.) These students are permitted under State law to retain an out-of-state vehicle registration; therefore, the new program allows them to obtain an overnight parking permit without re-registering their cars. Committee members were not supportive of the program. Members of the public can communicate their views on the program to the administration directly.

Last Thursday, the City Council established a special commission to study tax revaluations. The first meeting will take place this **Tuesday, October 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the third floor of City Hall**. The Commission is charged with reviewing the revaluation standards and procedures that currently apply in Rhode Island and Providence, and to recommend possible reforms to State law and internal procedures. I asked the City Council to form this commission after this year's revaluation, which resulted in tax increases in some neighborhoods of up to 15%, even though the City's overall tax increase was less than 6%. At Tuesday's meeting, the Commission will review the dramatic swings in valuation over the last three cycles (2007, 2010 and 2013), which demonstrate how different neighborhoods faced disproportionate increases, where the results of one revaluation sometimes going in the opposite direction of the previous ones. Over the next three months, the Commission will complete its review and prepare a report, which I hope will contain proposed reforms to State law and internal procedures to mitigate the possible dislocations of future revaluations.

On **Wednesday, October 9 at 5:45 p.m.**, the Education Committee will meet to address three agenda items. First, it will review ordinance revisions to support the School Department's principal compensation program and A-Venture Academy which opened this year for students in need of additional emotional support. Second, the School Department also will describe its new interscholastic soccer program for middle school students, which it plans to open this year. As previously reported, last Spring the Education Committee urged the School Department to introduce middle school sports as a priority program. The School Department was unable to redirect budgetary funds for a full-scale sports program, but it agreed to undertake private fund raising for a soccer program. Third, the School Department will describe changes to its strategic plan. For the past year, I have advocated for a change that would explicitly recognize a responsibility to advance every child's knowledge in every major subject at least one grade level during the course of the school year. The new requirement would clarify the School Department's responsibility to provide advanced instruction for children who begin the school year with skills that exceed their current grade level. Such a change to the strategic plan would provide additional support for advanced academic programs throughout the public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samuel D. Zurier'.