

D.C. Council committee endorses pair of property tax relief measures

By BRADY HOLT
Current Staff Writer

A D.C. Council committee recently approved two property tax relief bills, one targeted at low- and moderate-income seniors and the other designed to cushion against soaring assessments.

The Committee on Finance and Revenue unanimously backed the two measures at a Dec. 16 markup session with minimal discussion, sending them to the full council for review in the new year.

The Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Relief Act of 2013 would provide a full property tax exemption for residents with a household income of \$60,000 or less who are at least 75 years old and who have lived in the District for at least 15 consecutive years.

This measure was introduced by at-large Council member Anita Bonds, who had proposed a 25-year residency requirement. The committee amended the bill based on feedback from at-large member David Catania. "Our older residents on limited fixed incomes, regardless of their length of residency, are fac-

ing challenges paying their property taxes," Catania said at the markup session.

Many seniors already have their property tax burdens halved — currently, those with household incomes of less than \$100,000. That cap will increase to \$125,000 in 2015, based on recently approved council legislation.

The other property tax bill adopted by the finance committee on Dec. 16 was the Residential Real Property Tax Relief Act of 2013. This bill, from Ward 2 Council member Jack Evans, would reduce the cap on annual increases to taxable property value assess-

ments from 10 percent to 5 percent.

The District has long used such a policy to protect longtime homeowners from the tax burdens of soaring property values, and the council has steadily reduced the annual limit over the years. But Evans has said that even 10 percent per year is too steep. "Nobody gets a 10 percent pay increase each year," Evans said when the bill was introduced.

This measure would also eliminate a requirement that, despite the cap on increases, a property must be taxed on at least 40 percent of its assessed value.

At New Year's, area businesses ready to help with resolutions

By KAT LUCERO
Current Staff Writer

With the arrival of a new year, Washingtonians are contemplating new things to try or new ways to improve their well-being. For many people, a new year means a fresh start for self-improvement. And numerous local businesses and organizations are helping people achieve their goals for the new year.

Fitness

Among the most common resolutions for the new year is the goal to lead a healthier lifestyle. That usually entails hitting the gym or fitness center or joining one, so attendance usually spikes around this time of year.

Personal trainer Josef Brandenburg is familiar with this annual trend. For 15 years, he has helped people pursue improved health. He says people resolve to exercise more because being healthy impacts everything else in their lives.

"Everything requires energy and health," says Brandenburg, owner of The Body You Want, a Georgetown gym. "If you don't have energy, it doesn't matter how much time you have. You can't really do anything else like spending time with your

family, doing well at work or doing any type of charity."

To help his clients to succeed at their goals, he offers individual training sessions with fitness coaches. For new members, he offers a 30-day personal training package that costs \$89. It includes a health assessment and unlimited use of the facility.

For more information on The Body You Want, call 202-315-1457 or visit thebodyyouwant.com.

Meditation

In addition to becoming physically healthy, many are looking for peace and a stable state of mind for the new year.

At the Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, at 1787 Columbia Road in Adams Morgan, there's usually an uptick in attendance at meditation sessions in January.

"Traditionally, we do see classes' attendance increase quite a bit around this time," says education coordinator Chris Jamison, who has been volunteering at the center for eight years.

One of the main offerings, at various satellite locations, are introductory classes to meditation.

"We always try to pick a topic that we think resonates people in the

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The week ahead

Wednesday, Jan. 8

Five D.C. Council committees will hold a joint public hearing on the Sustainable DC Omnibus Act. The hearing will begin at 11 a.m. in Room 500 of the John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.

■ DC Solar United Neighborhoods will hold an informational meeting on plans to coordinate a solar bulk purchases for homes in Ward 3. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Cleveland Park Library, 3310 Connecticut Ave. NW.

Thursday, Jan. 9

The D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board will meet at 9 a.m. in Room 220 South, One Judiciary Square, 441 4th St. NW.

■ The National Capital Planning Commission will hold its monthly meeting, which will include review of final site and building plans for the Old Post Office Building redevelopment and an informational presentation on the D.C. Streetcar System Plan. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. in the commission's offices at Suite 500, 401 9th St. NW.

■ The Mayor's Agent for Historic Preservation will hold a public hearing on an after-the-fact application for roof replacement at 2422 Tracy Place in the Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District. The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m. in Suite E650, 1100 4th St. SW.

■ The Georgetown Business Association and the Citizens Association of Georgetown will host a mayoral debate. The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Dumbarton House, 2715 Q St. NW. Reservations are requested; call 202-337-2288.

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