

Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno, community organizations clash on Community Preservation Act on Nov. 8 ballot

SPRINGFIELD -- Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said Monday that he strongly opposes passage of the Community Preservation Act, on the Nov. 8 ballot, believing the tax surcharge poses an "unfair burden to our taxpayers."

The mayor's opposition was announced as advocates for the Community Preservation Act announced that the ballot question has been endorsed by five community groups.

If approved by voters, the Community Preservation Act will create a 1.5 percent surcharge on the property tax levy, but would exempt the first \$100,000 in property valuation. The surcharge would raise approximately \$1 million annually to support historic preservation and open space projects.

In a "[Letter to the Editor](#)," dated Oct. 17, Sarno said: "This is a non-justified and unwarranted tax put forth by our City Council. Just as we are "starting to turn the corner" in Springfield, to allow the City Council to tax our residents even more, when there's no regulatory mandate for it – "is just plain wrong" and sends a terrible message to our business community too."

Sarno said his administration "has been more than fair in properly funding historic preservation initiatives, when it makes good, sound fiscal, economic development and neighborhood sense."

"I'll be voting no on local ballot Question 5 and urge our residents to do so too – "no on #5," Sarno said.

Source: MassLive.com

I write to commend and agree with Attorney Paul Peter Nicolai's letter, stating that the [Community Preservation Act would be an unfair burden to our taxpayers](#), Oct. 14, page C4. My administration has been more than fair in properly funding historic preservation initiatives, when it makes good, sound fiscal, economic development and neighborhood sense.

I stand firmly against this City Council tax initiative. This is a non-justified and unwarranted tax put forth by our City Council. Just as we are "starting to turn the corner" in Springfield, to allow the City Council to tax our residents even more, when there's no regulatory mandate for it – "is just plain wrong". It also sends a terrible message to our business community. I'll be voting no on local [ballot Question 5](#) and urge our residents to do so too – "no on #5."

Domenic J. Sarno, Mayor, City of Springfield

Fans of a [Springfield Community Preservation](#) Act tax say all kinds of great things will happen in your neighborhood if you pass this new tax. They talk about parks, affordable housing and all kinds of other projects. None of that is the point.

There are only two reasons for this tax. First, give the City Council a pot of cash to create a new center of influence for itself. Second, show it has that power by getting money to fix the bell tower next to City Hall. City Council President Fenton publicly said as much when he created the committee that recommended putting the question on the ballot back in May. Fixing the bell tower could easily be done without creating a new tax if the mayor thought it was important enough. Back in 2014 when a major fundraising campaign was launched to fix the bell tower, he was told it would not happen unless city taxpayers kicked in at least 50% of the money.

To date, the mayor has rightly refused to send Springfield's poor citizens yet another bill for what is a low priority compared to our other needs. So now the City Council wants a slush fund outside the Mayor's control. That is not the way to deal with setting priorities.

It took 16 years for the community preservation act to make it to the Springfield ballot. The only reason it is here is to give the City Council a pot of cash to spread around for pet projects like the bell tower. That's the only real purpose \$1.5 Million a year in a city the size of Springfield could serve.

Increasing taxes on the poorest people in the state to create a new center of political power is cruel.

Paul Peter Nicolai, Springfield