

THE COLORADO SINGLE TAX ASSOCIATION

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October 25, 1982

MINUTES, MEETING OF OCTOBER 24

The Colorado Single Tax Association convened at 2 p.m. Sunday, October 24, 1982, at 10 Via Piedras in Manitou Springs, Colorado.

Since the last meeting probably occurred before World War I, no minutes of that time were available for approval; nor has it been possible to find any previous members, many of whom were prominent in Colorado and Colorado Springs.

Members present all joined and in most cases were born after the last meeting. They were: Robert E. Case, Ann Wiley, Polly King Ruhtenberg and Patricia Jean Shearer of Colorado Springs; James L. and Marian C. Busey of Manitou Springs; and Anne Hoyt of Monument, Colorado. Carl W. McGuire of Boulder could not come because he lives 100 miles away, and in addition is presently in Brazil. Robert Clancy of New York could not come because he didn't know the meeting was to be held.

Jim Busey explained history of single tax movement in Colorado, adoption of the idea in Pueblo during 1913-1915, and single tax campaigns in Denver and Colorado Springs prior to 1930. He outlined adoptions now in effect in Pennsylvania, New Zealand, Australia and western Canada, and campaigns afoot in California, Utah, Nebraska, Missouri, Michigan, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire-- and to extend the plan to other cities of Pennsylvania, where the graded tax is in effect in Pittsburgh, Scranton, McKeesport, Harrisburg and New Castle. He also tried to tell about contemporary personages and literature in the movement, but was cut off by members who wanted to get on to current business.

Whether or not in formal parliamentary style, the following motions were apparently made, seconded and approved:

That the name of the organization be changed to Colorado Incentive Tax Association, with the acronym ITA.

That, since none of the officers appearing on the above letterhead can be found, and must have moved out of the state or be deceased, new officers be selected; and that therefore Jim Busey serve a general secretary and all other members present plus Carl W. McGuire and Robert Clancy, serve as first secretaries. Robert Clancy, chairman of the Council of Georgist Organizations in New York, is the only non-Colorado member.

That there be no dues, that members undertake whatever financial costs they can afford, and that ITA not be incorporated.

That the general secretary cause letterheads to be printed, to incorporate the above information, and to be distributed to the first secretaries for their use.

That, the Colorado Constitution on the subject of taxation being what it is, the ultimate strategy must be to achieve an amendment to same, either to permit local option for tax variations or to remove taxes from improvements throughout Colorado; and to accomplish this either by the petition-election route or via the Colorado General Assembly. Previous experiences with the GA being what they have been, most members took a dim view of this procedure; but the motion leaves the question open.

That this time, in contrast to the initiative campaign of 1976, proponents of this shift in taxation take plenty of time to build up public support for their idea.

That the secretaries all try to get new members, from supporters in TEPC or from among individuals already disposed to this point of view

That a simple, two-page summary of our proposal be prepared by the general secretary, for approval and proof-reading by all the first secretaries, to be distributed with permission by insertion in such newspapers of free circulation as The Press, the Cheyenne Edition Colorado Leader, and several others to be contacted with the help of the first secretaries including especially Polly Ruhtenberg; and that the general secretary accomplish this if financially possible.

That all members promote extensive propaganda by radio talk shows, newspaper letters and announcements, meetings with civic leaders and groups, approaches to builders and realtors anxious to reduce or eliminate taxes on improvements, contacts with friends, council members, commissioners, legislators, assessors and other people related to problems of taxation; and that later, there be public gatherings with speakers from Colorado and elsewhere.

That the general secretary try to find sources of funds in the Georgist movement to pay air fares for outside speakers from Pennsylvania and elsewhere.


In addition to the above business, there was discussion about the best ways to educate people in Colorado Springs and the state; about the fact that the opposition against a shift of taxes from improvements to land values, while small, can become very well organized, and occasionally vicious; for illustration that in Pueblo during 1914-1915, the property-tax shift then adopted was destroyed by an assessor in league with speculators; and that the pro-El Paso County sales tax campaign includes only a tiny group of organizers, but with \$25,000 for their publicity blitz.

Members discussed various glaring tax inequities in Colorado Springs, including minimal assessment on lands adjacent to Powers Boulevard, which should encourage support for our proposal.

Meeting adjourned, or more or less dissolved by evaporation, at about 4:00 p.m.

No time was set for next meeting, but there will be one, to receive reports from general secretary and first secretaries about progress thus far accomplished to accomplish the above.

Respectfully submitted for later approval,


General Secretary

October 25, 1982

MANITOU SPRINGS - ~~Manitou Springs~~ Sunday, October 24, at a meeting held in Manitou Springs, the old Colorado Single Tax Association which thrived during the first three decades of this century, was brought back to life. The seven persons present agreed to be members and immediately proceeded to change the name to Colorado Incentive Tax Association (ITA).

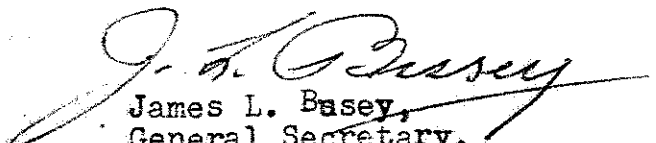
The Colorado Single Tax Association based its thinking on the views of Henry George, author of a nineteenth-century bestseller, Progress and Poverty. George would have eliminated all taxes except a levy on land according to its value, but the newly named Colorado Incentive Tax Association only proposes to work for the elimination of improvement taxes from the present Colorado property tax system.

This plan is now permitted by local ~~option~~ in Pennsylvania, where five cities--Pittsburgh, Scranton, Harrisburg, McKeesport and New Castle--now tax buildings and other improvements at rates lower than those imposed on bare land or location values. According to Colorado proponents of this scheme, over two thirds of local communities in Australia and New Zealand have eliminated taxes from improvements altogether, and this is thought to have a beneficial effect on building and improvement as well as reduce land speculation and urban sprawl.

In 1976, ITA members, then under auspices of the Taxpayers of El Paso County, Inc., attempted to petition for placing such an amendment in the Colorado Constitution, but claim they only got about 12,000 signatures because they began their campaign only five weeks before the deadline for turning in signatures.

Charter members of ITA are Robert E. Case, Polly K. Ruhtenberg, Patricia Shearer and Ann Wiley of Colorado Springs; Anne Hoyt of Monument; and James L. and Marian C. Busey of Manitou Springs. Additional members are Professor Carl W. McGuire of the Department of Economics, University of Colorado, Boulder; and Robert Clancy, Chairman, Council of Georgist Organizations, New York.

Members appointed James L. Busey, professor ~~and~~ emeritus of political science, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, to be general secretary; and decided that all other present members should serve as first secretaries.


James L. Busey,
General Secretary,
ITA