

Clifton Revenue Survey Results

March 2008

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Survey Questions

Survey Format

All registered voters of the Town of Clifton were asked to rank and provide whether they favor or against the following revenue generating ideas.

1. REAL ESTATE TAX: Taxed levied on all real estate in town. The estimate was based on \$0.05 for every \$100.00 of 2006 assessed property value. (For example. the average home value is \$1 million which amounts to \$500 a year or about \$42/month).
2. MEALS TAX: Meals tax would be added to all food prepared in town. Proposed at 2%.
3. OCCUPANCY TAX: Proposed 2% room tax for occupancy at bed and breakfast and/or hotel
4. CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP: Develop a corporate sponsorship program (allow signs and possibly naming rights)
5. USE FEE: Implement a "Use Fee" between 5 -15% of gross revenues or \$25 flat fee business permit for all events.
6. MARKET FACILITIES: Actively market Town facilities for rental (Community Hall and Children's Park)
7. ADDITIONAL EVENTS: Create 1 or 2 additional town fundraising events.
8. OLD TOWN HALL SALE: Do you strongly favor the sale of the Town Hall collect a yearly interest on the principal?
9. OLD TOWN HALL RENOVATION: Do you favor a plan to use Town Funds to renovate the Old Town Hall (cost \$500,000 - \$750,000) build an addition to complement the original structure and allocate space for low impact offices in order to generate rental income?
10. Other (please write in)

Survey Format

Survey Instructions

Participants were asked to give their opinion on each option by checking the appropriate box. Then they were asked to rank their choices from 1 (Best) to 9 (Worst) in the first column on the left and degree of favor in the last column on the right. They were also allowed to provide additional comments at the bottom or on the back of this form. They could also leave blank if they had no opinion.

Surveys sent: 176

Surveys returned on time and used in tally: 75 (43% response rate)

Surveys that did not meet standards: 3*

*Surveys that were received beyond the deadline or not in supplied envelope were not included in this tally.

Numbers on the envelope were not attributed to any individuals but were used as a control mechanism to ensure accurate results. Envelopes were opened and survey tallied by entire committee.

1. REAL ESTATE TAX

Survey Description

Taxed levied on all real estate in town. The estimate was based on \$0.05 for every \$100.00 of 2006 assessed property value. (For example, the average home value is \$1 million which amounts to \$500 a year or about \$42/month).

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 74

Rank of Question

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	9
Average Response (1 to 5)	3.82
Medium Response (1to 5)	5
Number of Votes	74
Number Left Blank	1

Perception of Question

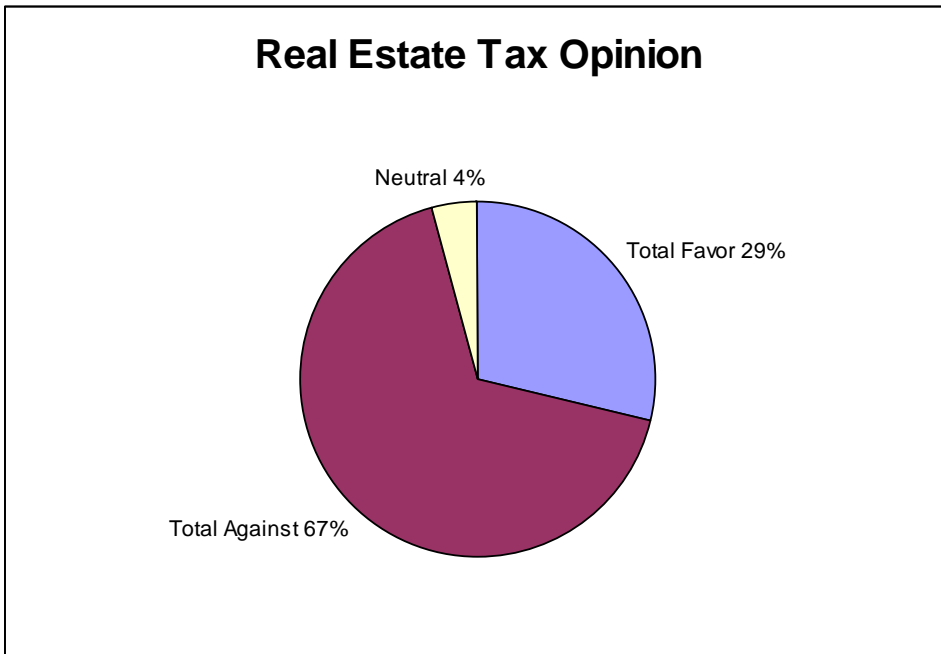
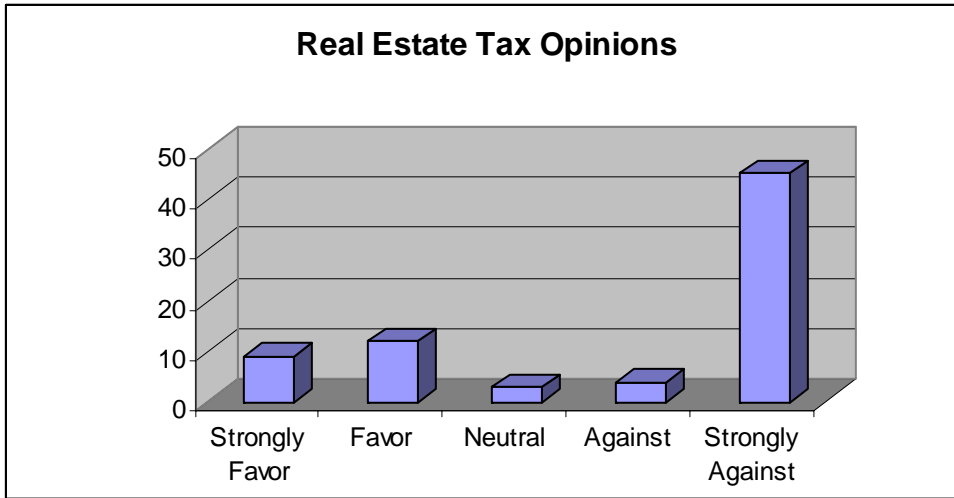
Strongly Favor	9	12.16%
Favor	12	16.22%
Neutral	3	4.05%
Against	4	5.41%
Strongly Against	45	60.81%
Favor (SF and F)	21	28.38%
Against (SA and A)	49	66.22%

Additional Comments

- Taxes are already so high that retiring residents find it difficult to remain in their Clifton homes. Imposing additional taxes will make it impossible for some as well as impacting the draw to town has for new residents.
- I feel very strongly against the real estate tax since the county has already drastically increased the taxes in the last couple of years.
- I also am against a real estate tax. We already overpay the county for the services received. Clifton ought to get a share of the county taxes. When people pay a tax, they expect to see an increase in services. Also, once a tax is established, they tend to get raised.
- RAISING TAXES ON THE BUSINESSES THAT ARE ALREADY STRUGGLING IS NOT THE SOLUTION. You need more businesses in the town, not less. You have to look to the future, not just tomorrow or the next day! Actually, if you think that raising taxes is the solution, I think you area short sighted. AND raising taxes ONLY on specific businesses is not only shortsighted; its being lazy and not using your brain! However, IF YOU SHORT SIGHTED AND LAZY, then you should raise TAXES ON EVERYONE - RESIDENTS AND ALL BUSINESSES, but you better make sure that everyone that should be paying taxes is paying!!! Otherwise, you are discriminating.
- No more taxes!!!

- I am strongly opposed to an additional real estate tax. Fairfax County property taxes are already oppressive and a huge financial burden on residents, especially those who have retired and/or who are living on fixed incomes.

Charts



2. MEALS TAX

Survey Description

Meals tax would be added to all food prepared in town. Proposed at 2%.

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 73

Rank of Question

1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	2
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.40
Medium Response (1to 5)	2
Number of Votes	73
Number Left Blank	2

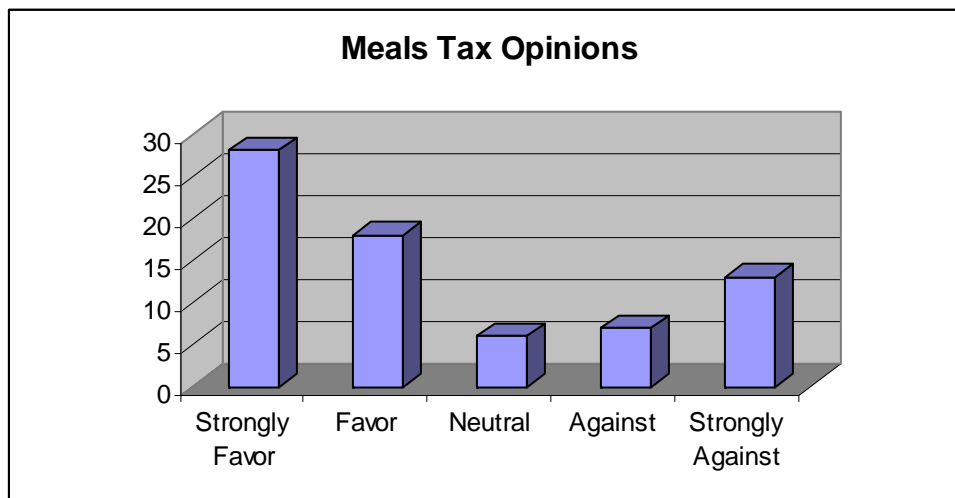
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	28	38.36%
Favor	18	24.66%
Neutral	6	8.22%
Against	7	9.59%
Strongly Against	13	17.81%
Favor (SF and F)	46	63.01%
Against (SA and A)	20	27.40%

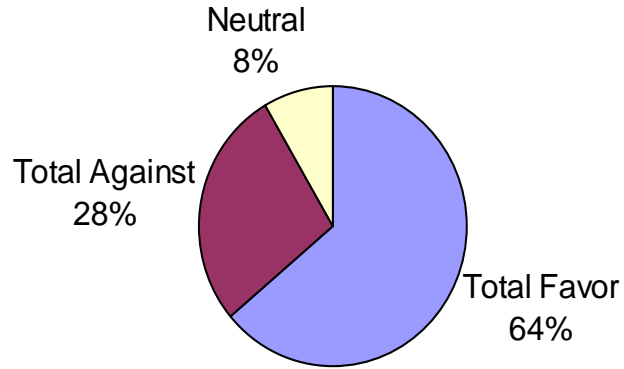
Additional Comments

- Every other municipality in the State of Virginia who can have a meals tax, has one. This is a no brainer! We should have had the meals tax long ago. Ditto for the occupancy tax.

Charts



Total Meals Tax Opinion



3. OCCUPANCY TAX

Survey Description

Proposed 2% room tax for occupancy at bed and breakfast and/or hotel

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 72

Rank of Question

1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	4
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.71
Medium Response (1to 5)	2
Number of Votes	72
Number Left Blank	3

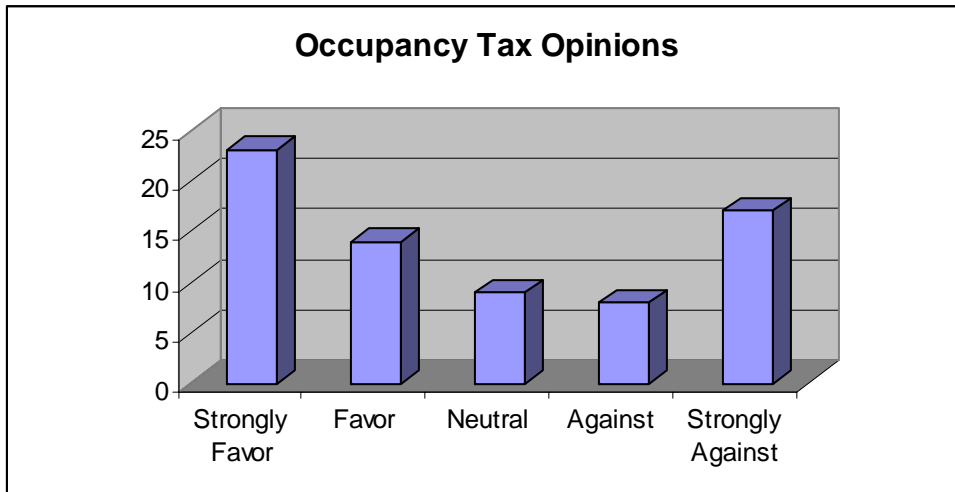
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	23	31.94%
Favor	14	19.44%
Neutral	9	12.50%
Against	8	11.11%
Strongly Against	17	23.61%
Favor (SF and F)	37	51.39%
Against (SA and A)	25	34.72%

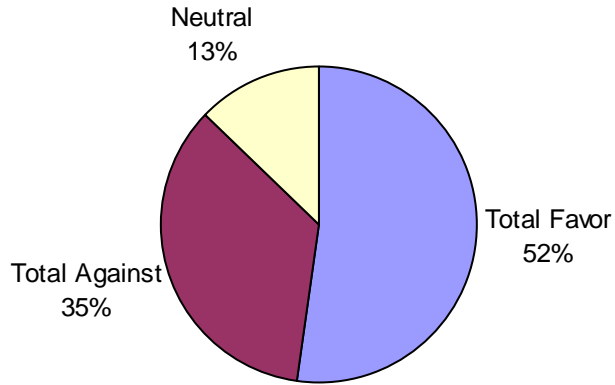
Additional Comments

- Occupancy Tax - Why bother for \$200.
- Including the B&B Tax on this survey was ridiculous. \$200 in revenue solves nothing - it is embarrassing that one citizen was targeted in the survey.

Charts



Occupancy Tax Opinion



4. CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Survey Description

Develop a corporate sponsorship program (allow signs and possibly naming rights).

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 72

Rank of Question

1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	7
Average Response (1 to 5)	3.14
Medium Response (1to 5)	3
Number of Votes	72
Number Left Blank	3

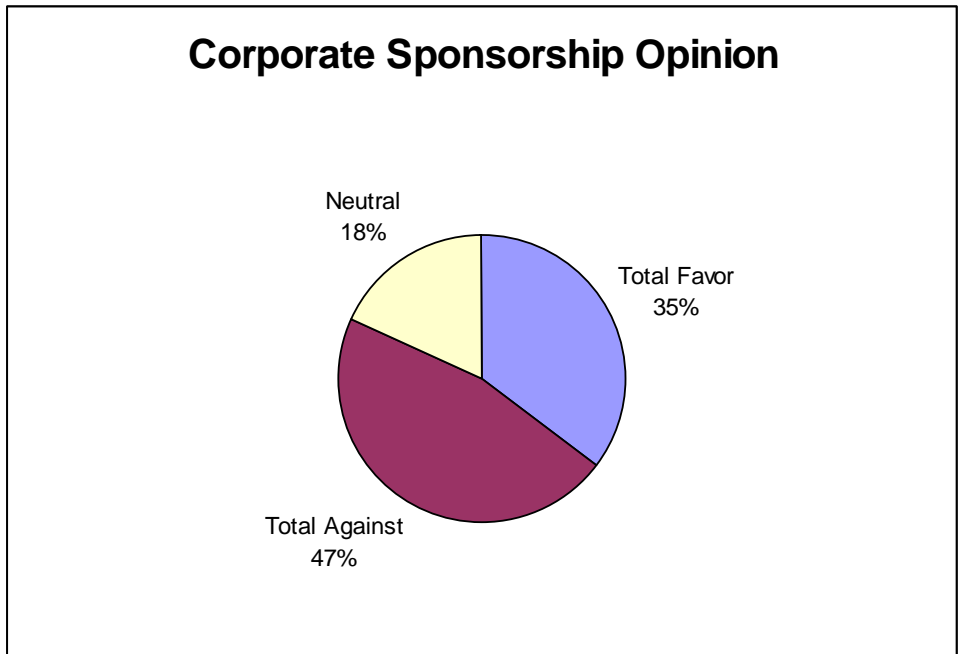
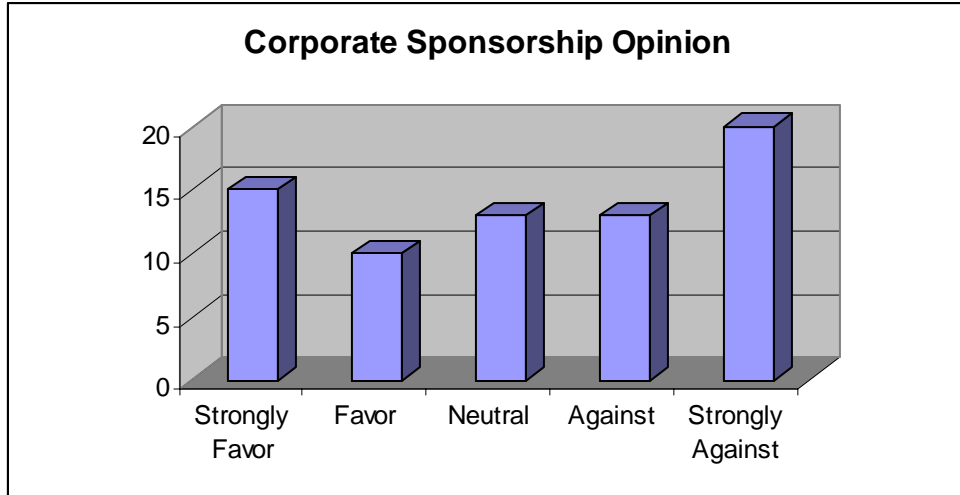
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	15	20.83%
Favor	10	13.89%
Neutral	13	18.06%
Against	13	18.06%
Strongly Against	20	27.78%
Favor (SF and F)	25	34.72%
Against (SA and A)	33	45.83%

Additional Comments

- I really don't like the idea of selling the town with corporate sponsorships. We're not a ballpark and I don't want to see ads in a historic town. It would ruin the charm.
- No MCI Centers etc in Clifton!! We need to honor our town's history and cultural values.
- I don't mind seeing corporate sponsorships signage during events like Clifton Day or the car show but I don't want to live with signage year round.

Charts



5. USE FEE

Survey Description

Implement a "Use Fee" between 5 -15% of gross revenues or \$25 flat fee business permit for all events.

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 72

Rank of Question

1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	3
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.56
Medium Response (1to 5)	2
Number of Votes	71
Number Left Blank	4

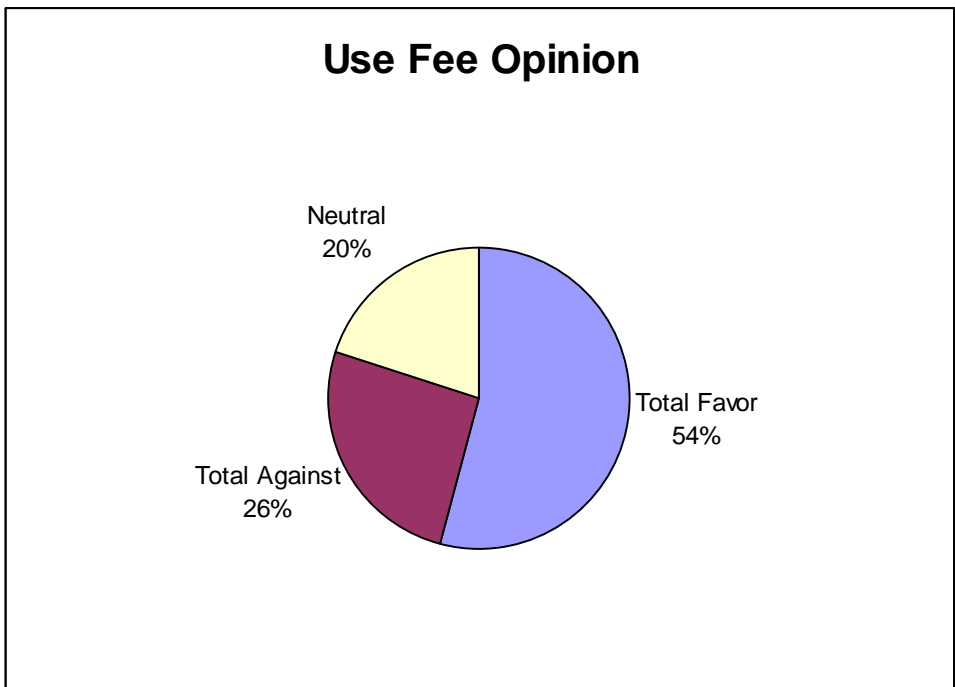
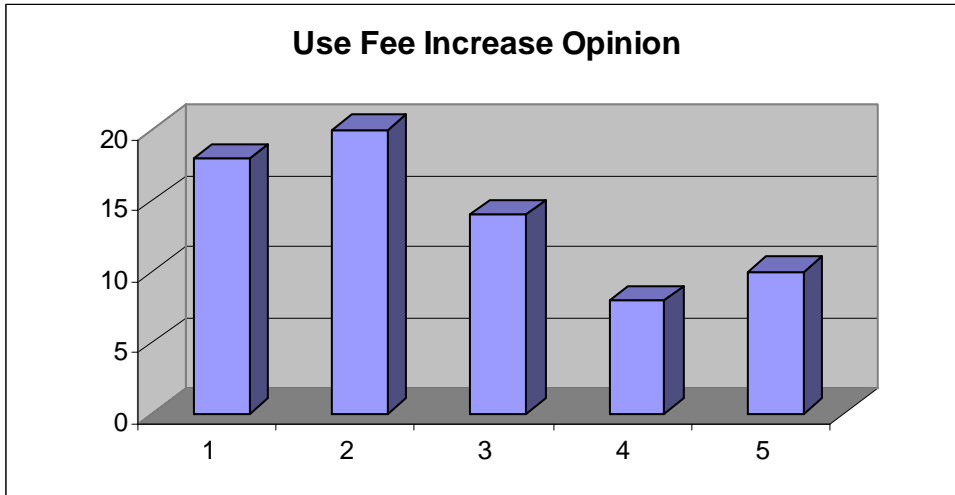
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	18	25.35%
Favor	20	28.17%
Neutral	14	19.72%
Against	8	11.27%
Strongly Against	10	14.08%
Favor (SF and F)	38	53.52%
Against (SA and A)	18	25.35%

Additional Comments

- Community Hall is not supposed to make money - Only break even after expenses and maintenance accounted for Children's Park should be for Towns enjoyment - All others welcome but it should not be used for making money.
- If the community hall keeps losing money - people not paying for actual time the hall was used, or not paying in advance - then you are really subsidizing those business that use the town hall. Then the town should pay subsidies to all the other businesses. Make it work or GIVE IT BACK!!!
- No more events. No use fee for current events.

Charts



6. ACTIVELY MARKET TOWN FACILITIES

Survey Description

Actively market Town facilities for rental (Community Hall and Children's Park)

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 72

Rank of Question

Scale 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against)

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	5
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.90
Medium Response (1to 5)	3
Number of Votes	72
Number Left Blank	3

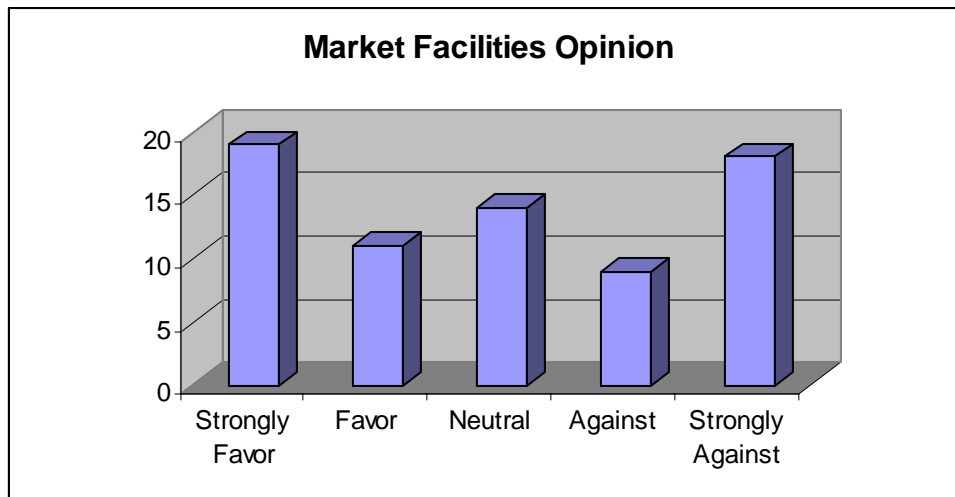
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	19	26.39%
Favor	11	15.28%
Neutral	14	19.44%
Against	9	12.50%
Strongly Against	18	25.00%
Favor (SF and F)	30	41.67%
Against (SA and A)	27	37.50%

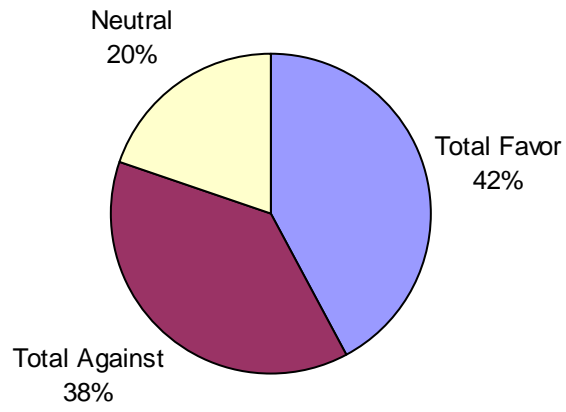
Additional Comments

- Market Facilities: Why can't we do this without a survey?

Charts



Market Facilities Opinion



7. ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Survey Description

Create 1 or 2 additional town fundraising events.

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 72

Rank of Question

Scale 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against)

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	6
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.96
Medium Response (1to 5)	3
Number of Votes	72
Number Left Blank	3

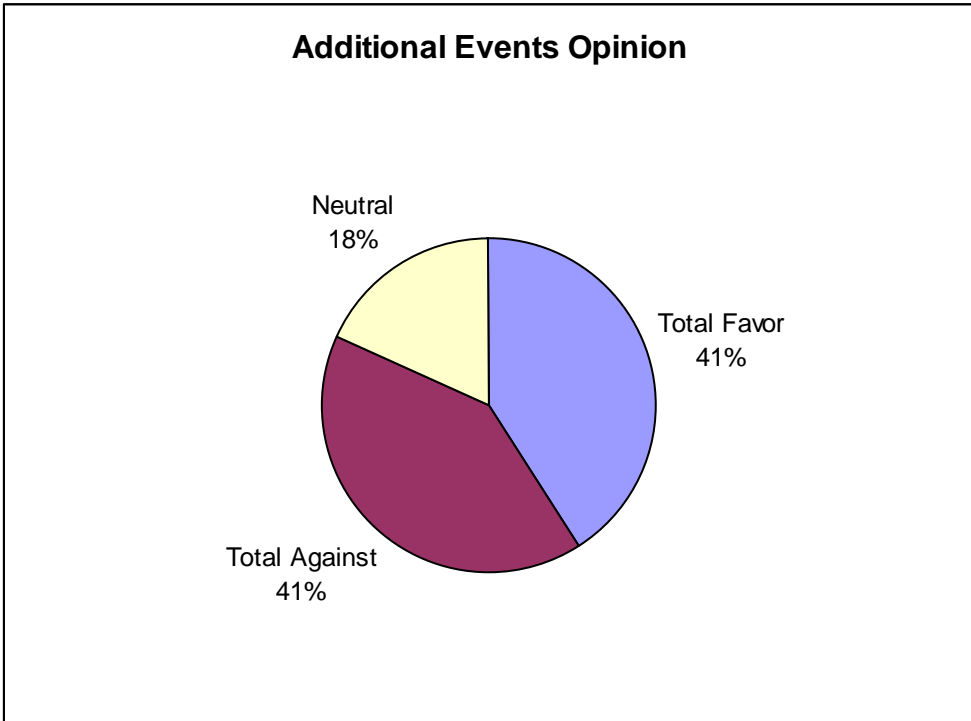
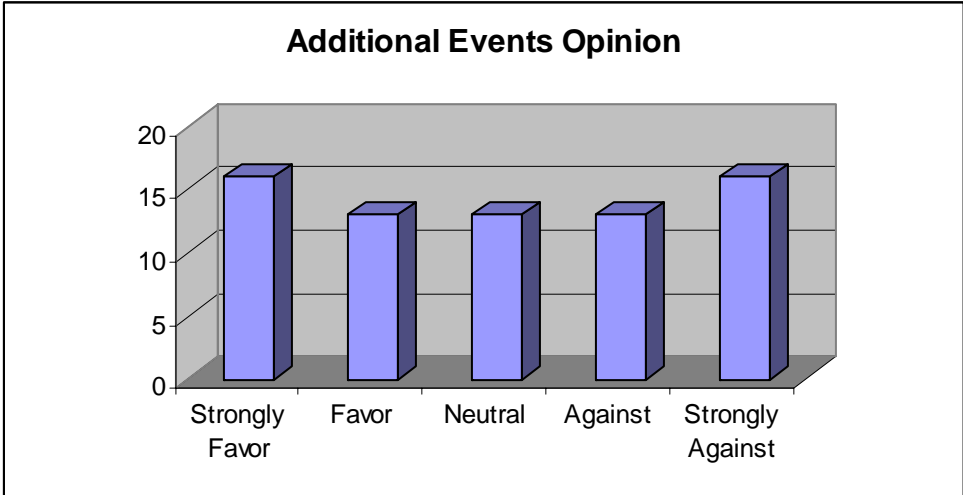
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	16	22.22%
Favor	13	18.06%
Neutral	13	18.06%
Against	13	18.06%
Strongly Against	16	22.22%
Favor (SF and F)	29	40.28%
Against (SA and A)	29	40.28%

Additional Comments

- Town residents who do not participate in fundraising events should be taxed (exception - Senior Citizens and/or residents with health issues or disabilities).
- Clifton is a community rooted in volunteerism. Some residents need to be reminded that we live in a "Hands-On" community."
- If we add any more events which impact our quality of life which also requires citizen participation may result in a mass exodus. We are wearing out our human resources.
- MORE events would bring people into town and help all of the businesses, which would help the town with revenue.
- Additional events: The same volunteers that run the current events will be the only people to run additional events - too much to ask!
- No more events. No use fee for current events.
- Volunteers are already spread to thin.
- Maybe additional projects rather than events. Similar to the Brigadoon Book etc. Because again, where's the manpower? What about parking and traffic etc?
- Additional Events: I hate volunteering.

Charts



8. OLD TOWN HALL SALE

Participant Instructions

Do you strongly favor the sale of the Town Hall collect a yearly interest on the principal?

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 74

Rank of Question

Scale 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against)

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	1
Average Response (1 to 5)	2.05
Medium Response (1to 5)	1
Number of Votes	74
Number Left Blank	1

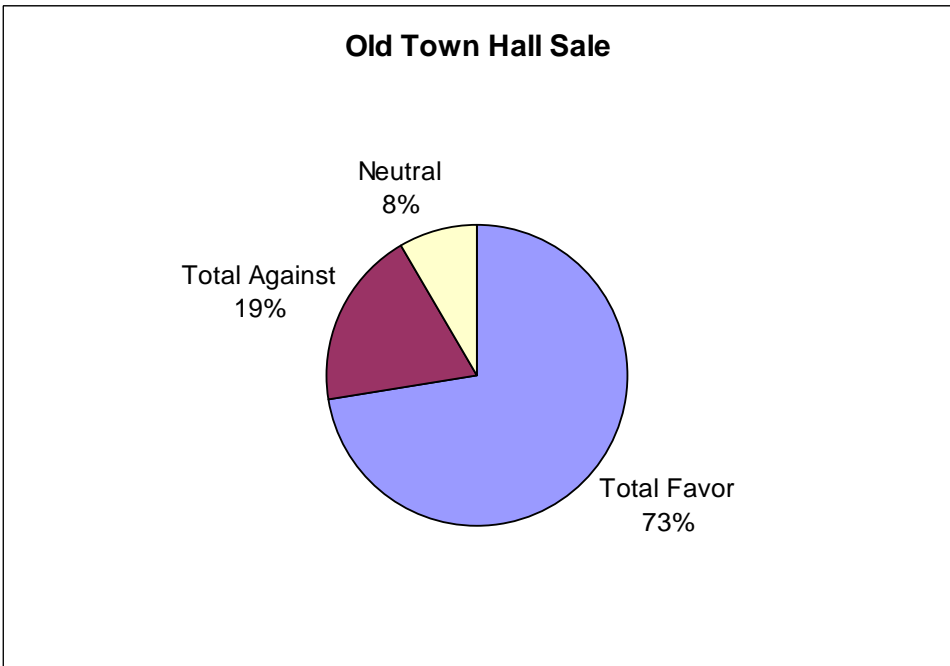
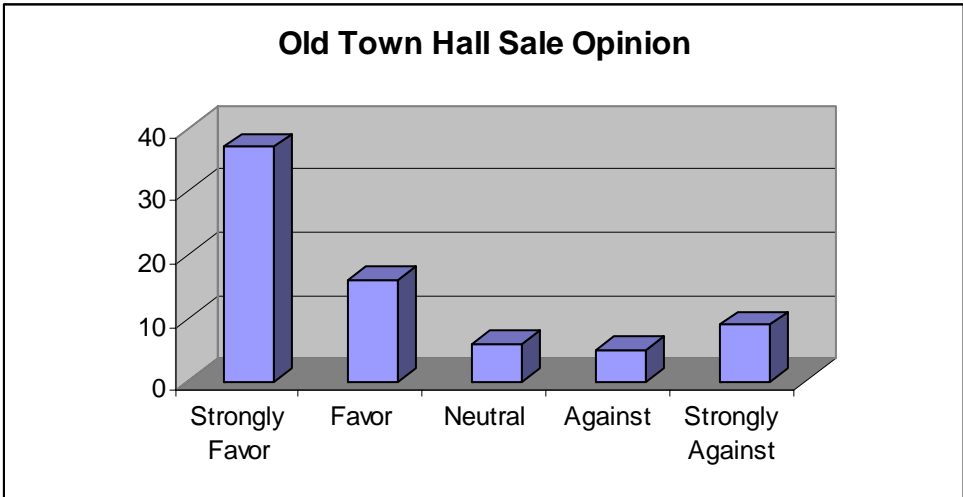
Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	37	50.00%
Favor	16	21.62%
Neutral	6	8.11%
Against	5	6.76%
Strongly Against	9	12.16%
Favor (SF and F)	53	71.62%
Against (SA and A)	14	18.92%

Additional Comments

- The Old Town Hall should be sold to Royce Jarrendt as proposed. If this had been done a few years ago, we could give the community hall that sucks money back to the county and have a new improved town hall for our meetings. IT IS DEFINITELY FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE!
- The old Town Hall is falling down!
- I like the open space and don't want the property to be paved over for commercial use. Isn't worth more than look? The town doesn't need more vacant office space.
- You have never taken care of this building. What makes me think you'll take care of it now?
- Old Town Hall Sale- Is that lot only worth \$100K. Do not want to see property paved over for commercial use.
- Sell Old Town Hall to Royce with long term Leave back for Town meeting rooms.
- Old Town Hall Sale: Strongly Favor. Keep use of hall.

Charts



9. OLD TOWN HALL RENOVATION

Participant Instructions

Do you favor a plan to use Town Funds to renovate the Old Town Hall (cost \$500,000 - \$750,000) build an addition to complement the original structure and allocate space for low impact offices in order to generate rental income?

Voting Results

Number of ballot items: 1

Total number of voters (N): 74

Rank of Question

Scale 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Favor 2 = Favor 3=Neutral, 4=Against, 5=Strongly Against)

Overall Question Rank (1 to 9)	8
Average Response (1 to 5)	3.61
Medium Response (1to 5)	4
Number of Votes	70
Number Left Blank	5

Perception of Question

Strongly Favor	17	24.29%
Favor	1	1.43%
Neutral	9	12.86%
Against	17	24.29%
Strongly Against	26	37.14%
Favor (SF and F)	18	25.71%
Against (SA and A)	43	61.43%

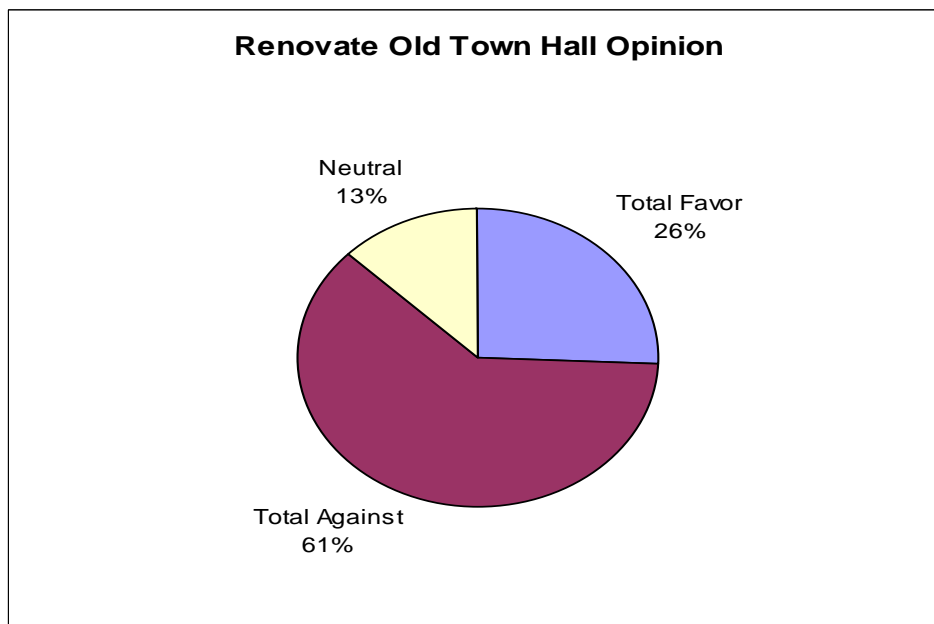
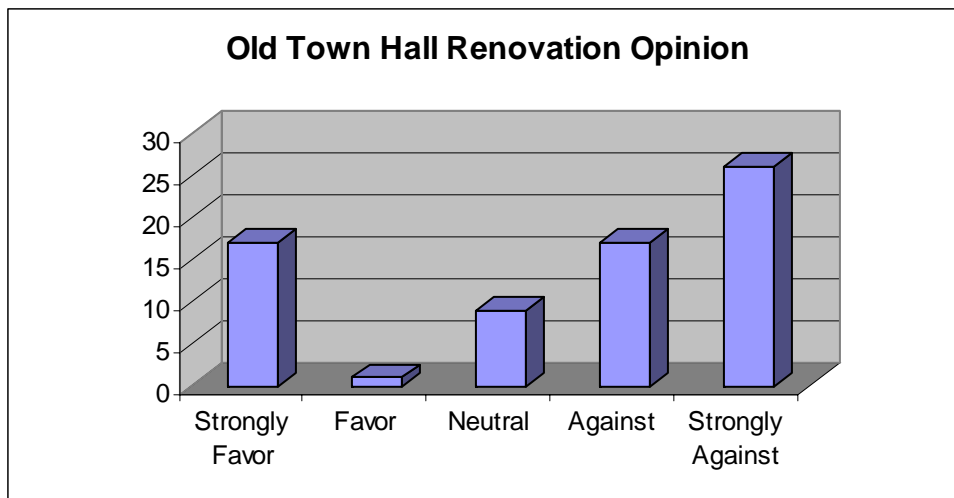
Additional Comments

- The Town just does not have the resources (employees, time etc) to be an income producing landlord and property manager.
- If the objective of this survey is to find new sources of revenue that the town can use NOW, then the Old Town Hall Renovation should not be on this list and misstates the potential for "Revenue" after the 2nd year. The math simply does not work and is misleading. The renovation created debt that cannot possibly be paid off by the 2nd year. There is no accounting for maintenance, loan interest, utilities, etc and given that there is currently a glut of both rental and sale properties in this area, there is absolutely no guarantee after spending the money for renovation, that there would be any income.
- Old town hall renovation numbers are totally wrong. No revenue for at least 7 years! This creates debt not revenue.
- Town doesn't need more empty office/business space.
- With the Clifton House for sale again, plus the Fullerton remodel of the Ken Buckley house, I'm not sure there is a good market for more office space. Plus, we have a Community Hall that we have trouble renting out... However, the Town needs storage space (and this is our only buildable property) and a museum would be helpful as a destination on walking tours... In order, I would suggest the following, Jack up the old town Hall and excavate a basement for utilities. Repair Old Town Hall, walls, floor, roof etc and make a museum out of bottom floor; not too small. Install "green" HVAC system, geothermal, tankless hot water system and handicapped accessible

bathroom. Build a 40x40 board and batter, 2sty barn; use the downstairs for storage; the upstairs for town office/studio/loft. Building will need HVAC and bathrooms. Create green parking and use for "Paid" event parking. Only build addition with conference room and offices if you can sublet the community hall to a business that does not require a lot of on-site parking (e.g. post office) AND be prepared to hire a city manager which by the way will cost about \$120,000 a year.

- Not event remotely close to reality. Best case scenario \$30/sq ft. per year. Most likely scenario \$20-\$25. Regarding the Old Town Hall renovation, this should be pursued, but not by the town. It should be financed by a private entrepreneur willing and bale to accept the rish of the cost of renovations and expansion in the return for future rental income. It is too risky for the town to gamble its limited resources on this venture.
- Regarding the Old Town Hall renovation, this should be pursued, but not by the town. It should be financed by a private entrepreneur willing and bale to accept the risk of the cost of renovations and expansion in the return for future rental income. It is too risky for the town to gamble its limited resources on this venture.

Charts



QUESTION RANKING

The participants were asked to rank from 1 to 9 with 1 being most favored.

RANK	QUESTION
1	OLD TOWN HALL SALE
2	MEALS TAX
3	USE FEE
4	OCCUPANCY TAX
5	MARKET FACILITIES
6	ADDITONAL EVENTS
7	CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP
8	OLD TOWN HALL RENOVATION
9	REAL ESTATE TAX

OTHER SOURCES

Participants were also asked to make suggestions. Some participants provided a rank which were included here but not calculated into the previous 9 questions.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS	RANK
Bingo	
Bingo	1
Bingo	2
Bingo	
Bingo	
Bingo	
Collect Back Taxes	
Collect Back Taxes	
Disolve CBA	
Dog Licenses	
Hire a Town Manager	
HUD Program	
Make sure all BPOL is being fully collected	1
Town Official Annual Ass Kicking	
Unincorporate and become part of Fairfax County Again	1
Use fee should be higher	2
Winter Ice Rink at Flood Plain	

GENERAL COMMENTS

Participants were allowed to make additional comments on the back. The following are comments that did not fit into the previous categories.

Collection

- Zone all the properties on Main Street commercial and collect all the additional BPOL taxes. With the emphasis that the current commercial is placing on the business development, it is making life untenable for resident of Main St.
- We must make sure of full compliance with our present ordinance with respect to taxes and fees owed.
- Currently, income for the town is primarily from BPOL. Is EVERY business doing business in the town licensed? There are few that have not come to the Planning Commission for a use permit. The TC needs to know who is operating with a current license. Is EVERY business paying BPOL? How is this tracked if there are businesses that are not even licensed? THERE ARE NO CHECKS AND BALANCE SYSTEMS IN PLACE THAT I CAN SEE. The builders and contractors that come in to the town to "do business in the town" should be paying BPOL on their in-town projects to the town. That's the builders) of the Silva's pool, for example. What procedures are in place to capture any of this revenue? I SUSPECT NONE. Were any of the builders of Frog Hill or Clifton Heights ever requested to pay that BPOL? If there were, the town would be in better shape.

Budgets

- Would have helped to have an estimate of our annual target - How much \$\$ do we need?
- How much annual income do we need? It is difficult to answer this survey without that information.
- Live within budget

Control Spending

- Find ways to cut spending. Fairfax County is out of control in taxing

No New Taxes

- I strongly feel that expenses should be cut to match existing revenues. Fairfax County spending is out of control and Clifton cannot add to that. NO NEW TAXES!!!

Process Improvement

- Vote for one Town Official to have his ass kicked per year. Sell blocks or squares for a lottery who wins the chance to do it.
- The Town formed an industrial bond authority some time ago. What is going on with it?
- We need to hire a town manager who can investigate all the revenue options and manage the process.
- This town needs fiscally responsible people running it - not shortsighted people.
- Just an aside---how can this survey be anonymous if the envelopes are NUMBERED!!! It would be better, if you weren't so obvious about it!!
- Why didn't the finance committee generate this? We need a well-qualified functioning finance committee.

Insurance/Liability

- There is a need for diligent action to limit town liability and examine these areas of exposure. For example, are all insurance requirements fully complied with at all times and for all events to ensure

coverage will not be denied in the event of a claim? Is the town bearing the insurance liability for rental of the town meeting hall or is this the responsibility of the users of the hall.

General Comments

- The town of Clifton enjoys a unique opportunity for advertising owing to the huge number of cars (perhaps 2000) passing through Clifton during the work week. The town could capitalize on this by greatly expanding the use of advertising banners just as we do now to advertise town events. Although some might argue that banners are obtrusive, town residents are now used to them, and may be tolerant of additional advertising for the financial benefit of the town and perhaps increased charity funding. Many businesses in Fairfax County may be interested in purchasing banner advertising such as George Mason University, the Dulles Convention Center, Fair Oaks Mall, Car Dealerships, job fairs, restaurants, etc. The cars passing through Clifton can only see the banner when traveling south. Therefore, the town could further increase its advertising revenue by considering an additional sign (or banner) to capitalize on the cars traveling north. I am not suggesting an obtrusive billboard, but rather something of a size, shape and appearance acceptable to town residents, but readable to passing motorists. We could start by advertising the availability of this advertising opportunity on the banners with a phone number to call for details. Also, we could conduct a direct marketing campaign aimed at the business in Fairfax County who might benefit from such advertising. The cost of marketing, sign fabrication, erection and removal, etc would come from advertising proceeds with the profits going to the town. An advertising manager (perhaps town resident) would probably be willing to coordinate this entire effort for a small percentage of the advertising revenue.
- FIND new improved methods of income. Its time to think outside the box. WEEKLY BINGO could raise an enormous amount of funds. Why not set up a commission that would look at this specifically-- have you ever gone to see the amount of cars in the parking lot at the Centreville fire house n Bingo Nights? You can't find a parking space in that huge lot they have! You could also sell snacks from the kitchen - more revenue.
- Need more inviting signage on all entrances to the town. People should feel welcome here! Fix the streetscape! It's too drab!
- Buckley bridge repairs? The new town council said that the old town council was not taking advantage of some kind of \$50-\$60K grant and that the new council would. What would happen to that money?
- Fund specific projects following referendum and full town support.
- Parking and over scheduling are my main complaints. We have a town park and it would be nice to be able to use it without having the world in our backyards.
- Many thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important issue.