

QC council to defer property tax hike

The Philippine Star · 29 Oct 2018 · 13 · Romina Cabrera

The Quezon City council wants to delay the implementation of an ordinance increasing property tax in the city amid the rising inflation.

The local government recently won a two-year battle against a homeowners' association questioning the legality of the ordinance before the Supreme Court (SC).

Councilor **Franz Pumaren**, majority floor leader of the council, announced that they have filed an ordinance to suspend the implementation of the property tax hike by two years or until 2020.

The proposed measure aims to defer the implementation of Ordinance No. 2556, which raised real property taxes in the city by as much as five-fold.

Pumaren said they wanted to suspend the property tax increase amid the economic difficulties faced by their constituents due to the rising prices of oil and other basic commodities brought by the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Law.

"We believe that it is our duty as elected representatives of the people to suspend the implementation of the ordinance so as not to further burden the Quezon City residents during these trying times," he said.

Once the proposed ordinance is passed, the property taxes for 2018 and 2019 would still be based on the 1996 schedule of fair market value.

Pumaren said they decided to put off the property tax hike for only two years as they are confident that the economy will bounce back.

He denied insinuations that the move was politically-motivated amid the 2019 midterm elections.

The ordinance was filed on Thursday by Pumaren along with Councilors **Allan Benedict Reyes**, **Alexis Herrera**, **Ranulfo Ludovica**, **Raquel Malangen**, **Ivy Xenia Lagman** and **Godofredo Liban II**.

Pumaren said they are hopeful that the measure would be passed and signed by Mayor Herbert Bautista before the city council goes on Christmas break.

Pumaren expressed confidence that Bautista, who considered the property tax hike as a priority law, would not veto the proposed ordinance suspending its implementation.

The SC recently dismissed the petition filed by a homeowners' group questioning the property tax increase in 2016.

The high court also lifted the temporary restraining order it issued in April last year, which stopped the implementation of the new tax measure that was supposed to raise around P700 million in additional revenue collections in the first year of implementation.

The schedule of fair market value in the city was last adjusted 21 years ago despite the local government code calling for an adjustment every three years, according to city officials.

The city council conducted 29 public consultations before approving the ordinance authored by Reyes. –