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**Property owners:
Coventry tax sale is unfair**
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COVENTRY - In the wake of the town's upcoming tax sale for the top 20 delinquent properties, homeowners and residents rallied to voice their frustration to top town leaders.

At the town council meeting Monday night in the town hall annex, those same homeowners and residents made it quite clear to the council they think the sale is unfair.

Resident Tina Green, whose home is not in the tax sale, asked the council why the tax sale has to happen.

Green said the town shouldn't have to resort to taking people's homes.

Resident Norman McClure told the council it "needs to look at the issue."

"We aren't just numbers, we are human beings," McClure said, adding his girlfriend found out she was on the top 20 list on Valentine's Day. "Work with us on this."

McClure said if the town didn't change its mind, the town could lose taxes from other taxpayers in town.

"We can always go somewhere else," McClure said. "We want some consideration from the town council."

The organizer of the pressure against the town council, Debra Arnold, co-owner of the Corner Store in Coventry, pleaded her case to the council, asking the town to reconsider the tax sale.

The Corner Store, which owes six years of back taxes, currently owes the town \$34,143.55. It has been in operation for 12 years.

"We have made a commitment to this community and are more than just a small business," Arnold said, adding the process has been "unfair."

"Please, members of the council, work with your residents and not against them. Help them during these difficult times," she said.

In February, Town Manager John Elsesser and Finance Director Beth Bauer began planning the sale, which is now scheduled for Nov. 3.

Elsesser and Bauer had previously notified the town's top 20 tax delinquents months ago and sent warnings to everyone in slots 21 to 40 of the upcoming tax sale.

Elsesser had Town Attorney Michael Wrona from Halloran & Sage LLP explain to everyone at the meeting the town only had four options to recoup more than \$860,000 in back taxes.

Wrona said the four options include: suing the property owner on their debt, handing over each property to the state marshal's office, have a tax sale or have a foreclosure on each house through the Rockville Superior Court.

Wrona said the foreclosure option exposes the property owner to more fees through the courts and provides less flexibility.

Nothing was done at the council meeting Monday night to quell taxpayer and resident concerns.

Planned for Nov. 3, taxpayers on the now top 17 delinquent taxpayers list (two on the list have already paid off their debt, with one being "very close") have already been sent a demand notice - via certified mail - as of Aug. 2.

The notice, which asks for payment by Aug. 15, signifies the start of the process until the date of the tax sale, with more fees being incurred to the taxpayer's total debt from advertising, legal fees and other costs.

Bauer said payments can be made any time before the tax sale, with properties that "come current" being taken off of the list.

After the tax sale, during the redemption period, property owners will still have six months until May 3, 2013, to pay off their debt and redeem the sale of their property.

That leaves taxpayers with about nine months to pay off their debt, with more fees added on.

Arnold said Tuesday afternoon that council Chairman Elizabeth Woolf had contacted her and said the council will continue to discuss the matter, with no special meeting being set, as of yet.

Arnold said she " wasn't pleased" and said she will continue to put more pressure on the town council.