

**MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RIECKER BUILDING**

The Board of the Morgan County Commissioners met in their offices on Wednesday, January 23, 2008 with the following members present:

Dean Cain, President
Don Reynolds, Vice-President
Rick Shriver, Member

Also in attendance was Andrea Plummer, Clerk, Morgan County Commissioners, Janet Starling, and Becky Cooley, Recorder.

The Public Hearing was held at 10:00 am in the office of the Morgan County Commissioners, for the purpose of receiving public comment on the subject of increasing the real property transfer tax (conveyance fee) to the rate of thirty cents per hundred dollars in accordance with Section 322.02 of the Revised Code of Ohio to provide additional revenues for the General Fund of Morgan County.

Mrs. Janet Starling noted she has owned 72 acres in Marion Township since 1956 and has always paid her taxes - early. In September 2006, her husband passed away and she is now unable to keep up with the property and is forced to sell. The property has not sold even though she's lowered the price. She's a widow on a fixed income and believes the property owners bear the brunt of everything. Mrs. Starling noted tripling the tax seems harsh and believes there's been some mismanagement of county money. Mrs. Starling added that she did not mean to imply the current Commissioners had mismanaged funds.

There is the possibility of generating \$40,000.00 by increasing the real property transfer tax. Mrs. Starling believes this is not feasible with the house market not doing well.

Commissioner Cain noted they didn't decide this overnight. The General Fund is an estimated \$200,000.00 short, even though the budgets have been cut. By increasing the real property transfer tax, 3 county offices could keep running.

Commissioner Shriver noted the alternative is worse, which would be an operating levy. He sympathized with Mrs. Starling's situation.

Commissioner Reynolds inquired if Mrs. Starling has a written contract for the sale of her property. Mrs. Starling does not. Mr. Reynolds suggested she could increase the price of her property to off set the real property transfer tax increase.

Commissioners appreciated Mrs. Starling coming in and expressing her opinion.

Becky Cooley, Recorder, observed the county could use the additional money.

Commissioners,

Dean Cain, President

Don Reynolds, Vice-President

Rick Shriver, Member

Andrea Plummer, Clerk