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The weekly forum dedicated to helping you better understand your government

This week's question: **“What are the dos and don'ts of Grievance Day?”**

No one is perfect and mistakes do happen. This is why New York State's Real Property Law has created the Board of Assessment Review. It is their job to objectively review your concerns and the Assessor's decisions, to make sure every assessment is as accurate and fair as possible. So, what can you do, to be as successful as possible??????

1. **Do not** come to the board and say “ My assessment is way too high. I can't afford the taxes!” As much as they would like to help you out, they can NOT take that into consideration. It is all about making sure your property is being assessed at its correct value.
2. Provide evidence such as pictures of areas that are different from what one would expect looking at the property from the road. **Remember, the Assessor does not enter the home or building.** The property could look like it is in average condition, well maintained from the outside. The assumption will be that the same applies to the inside. If there is damage, old kitchens/baths, gutted rooms, etc. these will definitely affect the value of your property.
3. Make sure the inventory that is on file, is correct. For example, if you have demolished anything, it should be removed.
4. Be sure all paperwork is completed in full. The assessor's office may NOT do it for you. They can offer assistance, but cannot tell you what to write down. **You must have a value in mind that you are requesting. Asking for just any kind of reduction WILL NOT WORK.** Forms are available at the Assessor's office or on the town's website www.erie.gov/newstead
5. Find other properties that are as similar to yours as possible, with a current lower assessed value or a lower sale price from 2005,2006,2007. These were the sales used during the last revaluation. Newer sales will be used for the revaluation scheduled for 2012. Remember to consider the following: square footage, style of home, number of bedrooms, number of baths, fireplaces, garages, air conditioning, basement type (full, partial, crawl space), acreage. These are the most important items. Other things like pools, decks, sheds, vaulted ceilings, hardwood floors, granite countertops do matter, but are often not always known.
6. Make sure your land is classified correctly. This means if there are designated wetlands, they should be listed as such. Wetlands have a lower per acre value.

Grievance Day is always on the 4th Tuesday in May!!!!

Next Weeks's Question: “

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