

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

June 2, 2016 - 6:00 P.M.

Presented by Marybeth Walker and Will Corcoran

Councilors Pepin, Dumont, Messier, and Cameron were present. Councilor Soldati entered at 6:10, and Councilor Witham entered at 6:15.

Mayor Hilliard opened the workshop at 6:00 pm.

Marybeth Walker, Assessor, and Will Corcoran addressed the council. Mr. Corcoran said their practices and procedures are in accordance with the Assessing Standards Board. The Board visits regularly and there haven't been any problems.

In 2014 they were at a rate of 110-112% of market value. It is now reduced to 100% on average. The amount fluctuates just a bit for the different categories. Market values for residential properties are at a slight increase of 2.5-3%.

There are currently 70 elderly exemptions, 6 blind exemptions and 440 veteran exemptions.

They currently have a four year cycle inspection plan and on the fifth year they do a full evaluation.

The assessing department looks at every property that sells to see that the data is accurate. They also visit properties that pull permits in the Economic Development department to review for accurate assessment. The property needs to be inspected when an abatement is requested. They research comparable sales, and make sure all data is accurate before a decision is made.

Councilor Dumont asked about commercial properties that are more or less valuable than the current assessment, and how the empty properties get assessed and how that affects the value of the property.

Mr. Corcoran said when a property is empty for a long period of time, that is not good for resale and the value of the property. The property starts to deteriorate. Owners should have a stronger marketing plan. A responsible manager/owner would fix a place up.

Councilor Dumont said he would like to continue the improvements that started in the downtown area and he'd like to look into a TIF District.

Mr. Corcoran said that current assessed value, not the market value is what the bank will look at. The old police department's assessed value in 2008 was \$200,000. It is now assessed at less than half that.

With TIF Districts, it is much like spending a dime to earn a dollar. It takes time and does not happen overnight.

Councilor Witham said the properties that are vacant for a short term are not a problem. It's the properties that are vacant for the long term that will affect the value. It is the property owner's inability or unwillingness to maintain their property that is creating the problem. If a person wants to lease or buy a property, they need to put a significant amount of money into the property. Compliance Officer, Joe Divine, needs turn up the heat!

The workshop ended at 6:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Harris, City Clerk