

Revaluation Questions Response

The March 31st Deadline is a deadline for **informal** assistance to our residents. If we extend this deadline, then we won't meet the deadline set by NYS to file the tentative roll on May 1st. This informal review process is NOT mandated by state law. They are offered as a courtesy to our property owners to have their issues and concerns addressed; basically to give them every chance possible to address those issues. If you call 683-1311 someone in the office can walk you through the process for this informal review. We understand the current health concerns, so if you are unable to leave your home the informal review application can be mailed in, faxed, emailed or put into a drop box outside the building so you can avoid any contact with people. Please keep in mind that NOTHING HAS to be done by the 31st, especially for those who are even more at risk than the norm. This is the cutoff date for the INFORMAL review. The elderly are not being forced to leave their homes; there are no hearings scheduled in March or April. If you are unable to get that informal review completed by March 31st and you feel there is additional information that the Assessor should consider which would directly affect the selling price of your property, there is the next step in the process, which is the Board of Assessment Review on May 26th. You SHOULD call for an appointment the first week in May (just so you don't have to sit and wait for an opening). You can present your concerns at that point and challenge your assessment then. This process IS mandated by the state. The Board of Assessment Review MUST hear every case that is submitted by 5pm on May 26th. If there is an executive order that changes that date we will deal with that in the future and get the word out but right now that is still on.

Regarding the cancellation or postponement of the project - this would NOT be in the best interest of the property owners of Lancaster for the following reasons:

1. **MOST IMPORTANTLY.....Notices have already been mailed..... and people know if they are potentially going to see a reduction in taxes. VERY UNFAIR TO THEM TO PAY MORE THAN THEY HAVE TO FOR ANOTHER TAX CYCLE.....about 50% of the properties**
2. The equalization rate will drop even lower than last year's value of 77% ...predicting about 72%.....meaning higher tax rates
3. Many exemption values will continue to decrease as a result of the lower equalization rate
4. We have already spent the money and the project is really complete.....we are just fine tuning it now
5. We would still have to increase assessments for the physical changes (new construction) that were completed
6. We would have to send out all 19,205 notices again with the old assessment, informing residents that this is the 2020 assessment)
7. There has been really NO impact to those wishing to file an informal review. The law states we don't have to offer these. The Board of Assessment Review will be held and that is where people can go to file their grievance. This is not scheduled until May 26th, giving them lots of time. Property owners will have had almost a month to file the informal review application. There are multiple ways to submit the application.
8. If we postpone until next year we have to either
 - a. Include another year's worth of sales, reanalyze, build new models, create new values, send out new notices, etc. This all costs \$ and there is absolutely no evidence that property values are decreasing, as a matter of fact, the sales that have occurred after July 1, 2019 (the cutoff of useable sales for this project) are coming in even higher. OR
 - b. Use this year's values, but then we wouldn't get state aid, because we didn't include the additional year's sales and we would most likely not be at 100%. Probably more like 95%, which again affects exemptions, sales tax review, etc.

It REALLY IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE TOWN TO MOVE FORWARD!

If next year we notice that the health crisis has had a profound impact on property values, it can be addressed then. But, as of now, homes are still selling for more than the assessments. The new values that everyone received are meant to reflect property values as of July 1, 2019. That is mandated by the state.

So, please don't worry. Your specific issue will be addressed. Please call the Assessor's office at 683-1311 and let them know how we can help you.