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Citizen's Forum

I WANT TO COMPLIMENT THE CITY OF DOVER AND THE WEBMASTER FOR A VERY COMPREHENSIVE WEBSITE. ONCE YOU LEARN TO NAVIGATE IT, YOU WILL FIND IT INFORMATIVE.

TO THE CITIZENS OF DOVER, MARCH 1ST IS AN IMPORTANT DAY. IT IS THE DEADLINE FOR YOU TO FILE FOR A TAX ABATEMENT ON YOUR PROPERTY.

AS AN EXAMPLE, WE PURCHASED OUR PROPERTY ON APRIL 17, 2002. THE ASSESSMENT ON THE FY 2001 TAX BILL WAS 36,800. WE MOVED TO DOVER IN OCTOBER, 2002. THE NEXT MONTH OUR TAX BILL ARRIVED FOR FY 2002 AND IT WAS 77,100...MORE THAN DOUBLE THE 2001 ASSESSMENT AND MORE THAN WE PAID FOR THE LAND!

WE STARTED TO EXPERIENCE GAS AND GARBAGE TYPE ODORS, AND SOMETIME LATER DISCOVERED THAT THERE WAS A HUGE WASTE MANAGEMENT LANDFILL A MILE NORTH OF US WHICH WAS NEVER DISCLOSED BY THE REALTOR. THAT YEAR WE APPLIED FOR AN ABATEMENT. WE WERE FORCED TO GO AS FAR AS THE BOARD OF LAND AND TAX APPEALS, AND WE WON. BECAUSE OF THIS, YOU CAN TODAY GO TO THE DOVER WEBSITE UNDER CURRENT TAX ASSESSMENTS AND YOU WILL SEE THAT PROPERTIES ON TOLEND ROAD, GLENHILL ROAD, COUNTY FARM CROSS ROAD, ROCHESTER NECK AND COVERED BRIDGE HAVE BEEN DECREASED CONSIDERABLY THIS YEAR. THE CITY OF DOVER MUST HAVE AN INTEREST IN THIS NEGATIVE LANDFILL INFLUENCE AS THEY RECENTLY APPROVED AN OVER 55 BUILDING PROJECT OUT ON TOLEND ROAD.

YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS, BUT THE CITY ASSESSOR, MR. CORCORAN, LIVES IN WOLFEBORO. HE IS ALSO THE ASSESSOR FOR WOLFEBORO AS WELL AS PLAISTOW. HE IS UNDER CONTRACT TO THE CITY OF DOVER TO WORK FOR ONLY 3 DAYS A WEEK. MOST OF THE FIELD WORK IS DONE BY HIS ASSISTANTS. IF THERE ARE MISTAKES IN YOUR PROPERTY CARD, AND YOU HAVEN'T CAUGHT THEM AND CORRECTED IT, THE ERROR WILL CONTINUE TO COMPOUND ON YOUR TAX BILL.

IN RECENT YEARS, INCREASES IN PROPERTY VALUES ARE SIMPLY A FUNCTION OF A MATH CALCULATION. IT SAYS HERE IN A REPORT FROM MOODYS, A BOND RATING AGENCY THAT RATES DOVER'S CREDITWORTHINESS, THAT OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS TAXABLE VALUES HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED IN DOVER DUE TO DEVELOPMENT AND **TAX BASE REVALUATIONS**. OVER THE SAME PERIOD FULL VALUATION GROWTH HAS INCREASED AT A **RAPID 14.2% RATE ANNUALLY**.

THIS EXPLANATION SAYS YOUR TAXES HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED IN THE PAST 5 YEARS AND THE INCREASES WERE CALCULATED AT ABOUT 14% ANNUALLY.

THAT'S BASICALLY HOW IT'S DONE. THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY OF YOUR FINDING ERRORS AND BEING OVERASSESSED.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE MARKET SOFTENS, PROPERTY VALUES DROP, WILL WE SEE A DROP IN OUR ASSESSMENTS? WE KNOW OF PROPERTIES LISTED FOR SALE IN DOVER FOR LESS THAN THE ASSESSMENT AND STILL NOT SELLING.

IT IS SIMPLE TO DO:

- GO INTO THE ASSESSORS OFFICE; GET A COPY OF YOUR PROPERTY CARD, IT'S FREE.
- CHECK THE DIMENSIONS OF THE BUILDING AND THE DETAILS ON THE ADDITIONS.
- CHECK THE LAND VALUE.
- LOOK AT YOUR NEIGHBORS PROPERTY CARDS. HOW DO THEY COMPARE TO YOURS?
- WHAT SALES DID THE CITY USE IN THEIR ANALYSIS AND WERE ANY COMPARABLE TO YOUR PROPERTY.
- IF YOU BELIEVE YOU WERE OVERASSESSED, FILE THE ABATEMENT APPLICATION FORM BY MARCH 1ST.

MOST OF THE RESEARCH CAN BE DONE ONLINE AT THE CITY'S WEBSITE. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE, THE ASSESSORS CLERKS ARE VERY HELPFUL.

SO, DON'T COMPLAIN, BE PROACTIVE AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK. IT COULD SAVE YOU MONEY.