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Long Island Residential Tax Assessments in the News

All of a sudden newspaper reporters are realizing that there are over 100,000 residential and 20,000 commercial tax assessment complaints in Nassau County alone each year. There seems to be a disproportionate number of complaints from the “affluent” communities on the North Shore and much less a proportionate number of complaints from the “less affluent” communities on the South Shore.

The Nassau Assessor has reduced many of the assessments protested on both commercial and residential properties. However, taxpayers have found out when their tax bills arrive that lower assessments do not necessarily mean lower taxes. Mathematically, when budgets do not decrease then assessments decreases mean higher tax rates. Another way to look at this situation is that if your neighbors or commercial competitors are getting tax assessment reductions, most assuredly your taxes are going to increase. Not checking your assessment every year is just plain negligent.

Tax assessments are not the only problem that taxpayers face. Tax rates vary from school district to school district, from town to town, from village to village. Some districts have literally double the tax rates of other school districts; so even assessment reductions are not going to create equality.

Would a single tax rate for all residences and a single tax rate for all commercial properties work? That is the way New York City has approached the problem. The worst part of the “broken” Nassau County system is that even after getting an assessment decrease the County has literally stopped issuing refunds.

But don't give up your rights to protest and get a fair assessment. Eventually, the settlements will turn into real dollars.

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