

From: Daniel <daniel.shefter@yahoo.com>

Sent: Friday, August 12, 2016 3:22 PM

To: Mayor

Subject: Revaluation Fiasco

Mayor Mark:

I have been a Scarsdale resident for for most of the past 6 years, although I was living with my family in Europe for the past year and rented out my house on Fox Meadow Rd. While I have been out of town, I have still been paying close attention to the revaluation that was performed by J. F. Ryan and the assessor's office. This revaluation has been very distressing both from the perspective of the flawed analysis that resulted in highly distorted changes in property tax values as well as the incredibly opaque process that produced these results. Thus, I am writing to express my disappointment with the officials that have overseen this process as well as to encourage everyone in town hall to be more transparent with the residents they serve.

From a personal perspective, the revaluation resulted in a proposed assessed value that is more than 50% above the market value of my house. In fact the new proposed land value for my property is well in excess of what I paid for my house just 3 years ago and completely distorted from reality. Nobody that actually understands the Scarsdale real estate market and visited my property could have made such a mistake.

My even bigger concern is the opaque nature of the entire revaluation process and the unwillingness of those in charge to respond openly and candidly to the many residents that have worked very hard to understand how Ryan went about its revaluation exercise. In particular:

- it appears Ryan excluded a large percentage of sales transactions without justification and the town has been unwilling to disclose or explain these omissions
- it doesn't appear that anyone did any due diligence on Ryan before they were hired despite numerous complaints from residents of other towns
- it took a huge effort to get the town to agree to have Ryan come back to attend a public session where residents can ask questions about their process, and now that they are finally going to attend a meeting the town has established restrictive rules for how questions can be asked. Censoring residents by requiring them to submit questions on index cards and allowing officials to select the questions is not appropriate for this type of session
- it appears that the town has been unwilling to fulfill valid freedom of information requests from residents on a timely basis that would help residents understand important details of the revaluation process.

My belief is the results of the whole revaluation should be discarded given the flawed results. However, regardless of the decision, it is clear that this revaluation will be costly for Scarsdale both in terms of lost revenue (from those who received unjustified reductions in their property values) as well as the loss of trust of many Scarsdale residents in the governance of their village. Perhaps some of this trust can be regained by making an effort to be incredibly transparent going forward and not to try to censor residents at upcoming meetings rather than trying to ostracize those who are exercising their rights in our democracy.

Best regards

Daniel Shefter

