

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT SURVEY – QUESTION 3

Regular Mail

Please provide other ideas and concerns you have regarding the property appeal process.

“Young couples bought in Fairview and paid a premium to live in this school district. On the sale papers, taxes were stated – then they were slammed with this unfair assessment! Very unfair!!”

“According to assessment office if I wish to appeal my assessment I cannot use as my argument what my neighborhood valuation is. If this cannot be used to reduce my assessment how then can it be used to raise an assessment?”

“I believe some people let the outside be a disaster to keep assessment low.”

“We just left Virginia where annual reassessments based on property sale values had been mailed out. Both our children agreed with the values they received.

“I feel the reassessment was unrealistic on many occasions. I feel reassessment should never have been necessary and every time a property sells the taxes should be adjusted to the sale price. And if someone remains in their home for 50 years, good for them. That is their reward for stability and loyalty to their community and if they had children they have long paid for their education. And if they are single and/or have never had children, then they have paid much more than their fair share already.

Including all three taxes I have to work, at my current rate of pay, for 9 weeks to pay them. 7 weeks for school taxes. I am single and never sent a child to a school as I have no children. This may not sound like a long time and it wouldn't be if a person was making \$100,000 or more a year, but \$12,000 a year, you do the math.

The whole system needs revamped in order for it to be more equitable. People should not have to make a choice between medicine and food or sending someone else's child to school.

County Council would be wise to spend our money for more important issues. Seems to me that since the last reassessment, there has been nothing but problems and shortfalls. No one seemed to be having so many budgetary problems prior to it!

What a Pandora's box!”

“It would be in the school district's better judgment to assess everyone's properties. It would increase their finances and improve the negative opinion that many people hold because of the current situation. An equitable system is the only way to go.”

“My concern is interference by the school district in a private purchase arrangement between the home seller and the buyer. Homes are placed on the market for many reasons. We bought our home in 1982 and the home had been vacant for 2 years and was up for sheriff’s sale. In a free market, the home buyer tried to make the best deal. It is then up to the seller to accept or decline the offer. If a home is assessed at \$100,000, but the seller is desperate to sell, they may accept an offer of \$65,000. In this case, both the seller and buyer benefit. The mortgage company sets up repayment plan based on the agreed upon price. In my opinion, the school district has no right to reassess the property for higher value. This would place an extreme burden on the buyer and Fairview would lose population and tax base. If a real estate transfer is suspicious, it should be investigated. If no illegal activity is proven, the mutually agreed upon selling price should be the basis for tax amount assignment.

I would also like to state that in my opinion, the school taxes are very high. The budget needs to be pared down.”

“Decrease total government spending!!!”

“It is an unfair system as currently utilized. If you are going to increase the assessed value of one home by \$100,000, as you did mine, you ought to look at the surrounding properties as all were fairly equally assessed at the time of the county wide reassessment.”

“Need frequent reassessment for all so all are paying fairly.”

“The entire system is highly flawed. Alternative financing of the school budget and real reforms of the entire payment system for school costs should be undertaken. However, I doubt the political will to do this will ever exist.”

“If the process is expanded, criteria must be established to ensure fairness. Over assessed properties should also be appropriately taxed – resulting in a tax reduction.”

“It is unfair to reassess based on selling price because “assessed value” never has meant “selling price”.”

“Sorry to say that the reassessment done by the county was poorly done. I hope that it will be corrected properly and maybe everyone will pay their fair share.”

“You should reassess one by one based on market value, competing sales and permits issued. Should be mandatory that they fill out a certain form with general vital info on it.”

“This has created ill-will amongst many Fairview residents. I appreciate the survey for input – there’s got to be a more fair way.”

“One possibility would be to take the 2003 assessed values and raise them all by 5%, that way the increase would be spread out to affect everyone. This would be a lot more fair as it would not be placing an unfair burden on a relatively small percentage of people. The people that are already paying taxes on a more accurate assessed value in the 1st place. That way, the people that have been underpaying for amounts of time, could pay their fair share. This would probably be the most cost effective for the school district as it would increase revenue quite a bit without throwing the 2003 assessment out entirely. As for the people that would appeal their assessments, there would be a lot fewer people that would feel the need to do so, saving the district a lot of money. As taxpayer’s we are willing to pay our fair share, provided it is fair. We would like to see our money used in a more productive manner. It would be very crucial to go back to a base value, such as the ones established before 2004 so that those of us that have already had multiple increases are not affected again.”

“If no improvements (additions, etc.) have been made to a property – then the amount of increase should have a reasonable cap. A gradual increase would help the homeowner to adjust.”

“Our water and sewer services, are more expensive in Fairview – Why? Also, all other related services. Why?”

“With planned increase in revenue – the school district should increase the length of the school year with fewer holidays and a markedly reduced summer vacation with stabilized employees salaries and benefits.”

“Try to establish a system where property values are assessed every 10 years. Appeal only the most obvious error within the first 1 – 2 years and then go with it until the next assessment.”

“If properties have been improved or if the area has been updated in any way to affect property values, reassess then.”

“I feel it is wrong. It makes it look like you are looking to line the pockets of the school district. I have kids at Fairview and think we pay a lot in taxes. You should instead look to cut, or reduce the waste of money that seems prevalent within the school district.”

“This whole matter is not a school board concern. You were elected to run the school system and not property assessment. The object being to funnel the incoming tax monies to the programs and areas of need for the student body...”

“Market value” cannot be determined by the price paid by a single buyer. It’s not “what the buyer paid value”, it is market value, determined by the overall market. Just because someone pays \$50,000 over market value doesn’t mean the assessment is wrong by \$50,000. That’s one possible explanation. Others include an out-of-control bidding war between two potential buyers with more money than sense.”

“There should be no property appeals – use the property values on record.”

“Everyone thinks they are getting a great education. They are more ignorant than ever and don’t realize it with a cost that is prohibitive. Please do not compound one mistake with another.”

“The value of anything is subjective. Perhaps the criteria should be broadened to include internal improvements not accounted for during reassessment. Things the assessment officer cannot see or possibly know about.”

“The school board should have adopted Act 72 so that we taxpayers could have a vote on tax increases imposed by the school board. Also we senior citizens might possibly receive tax relief.”

“Our school district is small. We should be looking at ways to reduce costs not increase costs. One way to cut costs is to eliminate the Assistant Superintendent’s job when Mr. Baran retires and that means not changing the name to Curriculum Director.”

“What are you doing with the money? Fairview has less programs, especially for kids that anywhere else I know. We don’t need anymore “fat” teachers. We’re not getting much for what we’re being taxed.”

“The appeal process is time consuming and costly for the township. If someone pays an amount for a property, that amount is the market value, plain and simple. Taxes are then assessed on the price a home owner paid.”

“Include transfers for father – children and husband – wife.”

“Senior discounts to people who no longer have school age children. Also tax renters with children in school.”

“I think the sale price assessments could potentially replace expensive county wide assessments.”

“Perhaps to avoid “sticker shock” to those property owners whose properties are increased, a gradual increase in assessment could be implemented over several years.”

“I feel the district has approached this whole process fairly and that it is necessary!”

“You can only tell the true value by what someone will pay, not someone walking around making judgments.”

“Anyone who has successfully appealed their property assessment should not be required to do so again.”

“You should accept the results of the county assessment as we do. Learn to live within the means that the present school tax brings in. Our pay remains the same buy you want more money.”

“Get the county out of the business of operating schools and lower taxes so people can afford to send their kids to the school of their choice.”

“The new buyer knows what he’s paying and should be taxed higher if it’s assessed below.”

“I have been to two meetings concerning property assessment. As far as I can tell these meetings came about because of one person’s insistence on not paying the extra taxes on his property after purchasing it.

This concerns me in that my family and a lot of my neighbors are of average to modest means who love being in this community and consider it a privilege to live here. As I listened to this one gentleman speak, I felt he was saying everyone is under taxed except for him.

My parents bought this land in 1953, my wife and I built on it in 1976; and hopefully we can pass it down to our children. I couldn’t imagine living anywhere else.

Please keep this in mind as you make your decision on this reassessment issue, to keep it fair for everyone so families such as mine can still afford to live in this wonderful community.”

“I’ve been paying school taxes for 47 years. I’m on a fixed income and it’s a hardship when taxes keep going up. Seniors shouldn’t be forced to give up their homes due to school taxes.”

“With natural growth things should work out in the coming years.”

“The realtor should inform his buyer that the taxes will increase.”

“The county has already spent more than \$2,000,000. Just cause a lot of trouble. A lot of appeals – I don’t think township should stir it up more.”

“A) The “facts” presented accompanying this survey are, as usual, one sided and self serving. None of the negative aspects are presented that would help derive a less biased response. The results of the survey are not impartial as a result and should be disregarded or viewed with suspicion.

B) I think the district’s motivation for the appeals is to continually inflate Fairview property values to conceal excessive budget increases.”

“Would the district depreciate properties next to a new sewage treatment plant? Building permits don’t indicate internal improvements. Unless there’s a sale and true market value, let it be.”

“I feel that citizens who care to work hard and improve their properties are making investments in the future – when those properties sell they will be reassessed. We shouldn’t be discouraging people from making improvements to property by taxing them for personally investing in the future. We do not get tax relief for our home improvements.”

“The Fairview School District, since the laws for shaking down taxpayers are what they are, should stay out of people’s business. Just tax based on selling price! We all wish we could figure out what we want to spend, and then just tell the company we work for to cough up more! That is what school districts do now. Build buildings, give raises, improve benefits and go get property taxes to cover it! School districts, by and large are a racket!!”

“When home owner reaches 65 years old they should have their taxes frozen at that rate. When home is sold or transferred to family then tax at new taxation level.”

“You have county reassessment in 2011, that will be enough. The school district’s problem is it has been banging the public for 6% or more each year. People in the private sector are out of money. The tax eaters in the country have the taxpayer in a death grip. A teacher retiring today could easily receive \$1,000,000 in their retired years. Few people in the private sector could equal that.”

- “1) Property taxes are considered when buying property. If people don’t know what their property taxes will be it will make them hesitant to buy.
- 2) The school district looks greedy – getting a bad reputation.
- 3) Property values do go down – the school district could lose money.”

“Are you going to lower my assessment if the values of property go down? No, because nothing goes down except incomes! A house or property is worth what somebody is willing to pay for it. But if we are all broke then you will own it. Remember us retirees.”

“If you need more funding do it the honest way by keeping teachers salaries and benefits where they would be under the Free Enterprise System. Share instead of duplicating facilities. Use those buildings in the summer. Optimize the facilities and buses.”

“With rising interest rates and increased Erie job loss I doubt selling prices will rise – only fall. Also some properties are grossly over priced and do not sell.”

“On your “Property Assessment Facts” sheet, you neglected to mention how much it has cost the school district to file these 127 appeals. State all the facts.”

“The school district should not use the appeals process as a monetary windfall and should keep spending within the budget.”

“The Erie County Board of Realtors knows reliable independent appraisers. If the reassessment effective 1-1-03 was so bad, do not retain the prior appraisers again.

The Fairview School Board had the opportunity to share in state revenues from casino gambling at the state’s race tracks. You chose to opt out of this golden opportunity. Your decision is and will continue to be a great loss to property tax payers, especially retirees on fixed incomes.

Other sources of raising revenue need to be considered by the State and Local Governments to provide equitable funding for public schools because the property tax base has been eroded and is no longer an adequate source of public school funding.

Start thinking outside of the property tax box which is broken. Property appeals by government entities will not fix it.

Be courageous and begin taxing those who can afford to pay for public schools and still have children benefiting from the public school systems.”

“Focus on business IE Wegmans, Country Fair, etc.”

“Why don’t you try to control spending like any business instead of always trying to find more \$ from taxpayers? With all state and local governments doing the same thing people can’t afford to own a home anymore. Stop the bleeding!!!”

“Abandon the appeals process.”

“Learn to cut spending like everyone else instead of socking everything to the home owner. Retired people are forced to sell their homes as I will have to as well.”

“I believe Fairview School District should cut back on their spending instead of looking for more money to spend on salaries, school buildings and sports.”

“We will be known as the “High Rent District” and properties will not sell, properties will stagnate.”