

ANNOUNCEMENT

May 22, 2017

PROPERTY TAX APPEALS

Some questions arose last month regarding the District's intervention in property tax appeals. This issue requires some clarification. In addition, we sought input from Tim Fenzer, the Village Manager for Wilmette, to confirm our understanding.

- In the late 1990's, an appeal on a large commercial property resulted in an intergovernmental agreement that Village, Park District, and all impacted school districts would work together on large appeals to the Property Tax Appeals Board or PTAB. This would save on costs and ensure that these cases had a fair and reasonable outcome.
- We only receive notice of these cases when the amount being appealed to PTAB is at least \$100,000. That means these are high value properties. These large appeals happen only occasionally, but we are consistent in our practice.
- Cook County often settles these cases for about half of what the resident is asking, indicating that the County does not always properly defend these appeals. As a result, the people seeking reductions ask for unreasonably large amounts, knowing they will likely get half.
- If one property owner succeeds in lowering their taxes, the difference is then redistributed to other tax payers. This means other tax payers pay more to make up the difference going forward.
- The appeals also seek refunds for taxes already paid in prior years so, if a property owner's appeal is successful, the taxing bodies including District 39 are required to refund tax money already paid. When this happens, we need to take funds from our reserves to refund the amount of the appeal that is designated to us.
- Our joint intervention with other government units in these appeals is an important way the interest of other taxpayers are considered.