

Leyden Township event helps property owners get info on and file tax appeals: 'We know everyone got hurt this last go around.'

By Jesse Wright

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As the saying goes that death and taxes may be sure things in life, some Leyden Township area residents learned that the property tax rate, at least, may not be set in stone.

On Dec. 20, dozens of residents of the Leyden Township area gathered in the evening at the Schiller Park Community Center, in Schiller Park, to file appeals to the recently increased property tax rates. While those appeals don't automatically mean the individual rates will be lowered — the request is free, quick and, apparently, easy.



Residents of Leyden Township turned out Dec. 20, 2023 to begin the appeals process of their property tax rates. The event was held at the Schiller Park Community Center in Schiller Park.



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"The person over there was lickety split when it came to filing the appeal," said one woman, who asked to remain anonymous. She said she had no trouble with the process, but added she wasn't exactly optimistic her tax bill would come down. "Who knows, when you're dealing with the government, who knows."

Every three years homes and properties across the county have their values reassessed and, should that value go up, the owner is on the hook to pay more taxes. Residents learned that higher assessments may be optimal if looking to sell, but for those who aren't, not so much.

But also every three years, county authorities welcome appeals and with that, the possibility of a lower tax rate.

The deadline to file an appeal is Jan. 2 and, as Schiller Park Mayor Nick Caiafa pointed out, a lot of people are eager to try to do just that.

"We know everyone got hurt this last go around, so we thought we'd ask the Board of Review to come in," the mayor told an assembled crowd.

The municipalities that are part of Leyden Township include the cities of Nortlake and Park Ridge, as well as the villages of Elmwood Park, Franklin Park, Melrose Park, Norridge, River Grove and Rosemont.

Residents at the Wednesday night event had the opportunity to meet with county appeals workers, ask questions and file an electronic appeal — and the whole process took minutes for most homeowners.

Property owners may also file an appeal only by the Jan. 2 deadline.

The process is similar for business owners or owners of commercial property, though those owners must have legal representation while homeowners need not have an attorney. Condo and townhome owners may also appeal and while those tax rates are figured differently from single family home owners, it's still a free process and those owners don't need legal representation either, officials explained.

Frank Calabrese, an employee with the county Board of Review, reminded the crowd to be optimistic.

"The assessor has to assess almost two million properties a year and they could make a mistake, because that's a lot of property," Calabrese said.

He said the appeals process is worth a shot.

"If you appeal your assessment one of two things will happen," Calabrese said. "It will remain the same or it will get lowered. It will not get raised, so there's no harm in talking to us."