

Why is the Data Collector at My Property?

In 2007 the town conducted a revaluation of the whole town and we were certified by New York State as being assessed at 100% of full market value. At that point, we entered an agreement with New York State to enter in to a cyclical plan. This plan calls for the town to inspect each and every property over a six year period. The plan also calls for re-appraisals at least every four years (conducted in the first and last year of the plan.) In the second and third years, the town conducts re-assessment years and trends values based on market conditions.

Field review requirement

The Rules (20 NYCRR Part 8201-3) state that review of all appraisal values is required as part of a reappraisal. This consists of a visit to each property, to include a review of the recorded inventory, examination and analysis of the appraisal estimates, and the determination and documentation of a final appraised value.

Updated inventory allows us to properly value the parcels in the town as it provides accurate and current information regarding the properties. Many think it is a bad thing and we are going to raise your assessment and ultimately that will raise your taxes. This is not necessarily true. Often properties are over assessed based on past inventory collected not reflecting the current conditions of the property, (removed pools, decks and typical depreciation), as compared to last inventory collection. The Assessor has no jurisdiction to the levy of taxes. The taxing bodies establish their own rates and establish a "tax" on the residents. The Assessors task is strictly providing a fair and accurate value of each and every parcel within the town which ensures a fair and equitable roll. Incomplete or inaccurate inventory produces poor values and leads to an inequitable Assessment roll.

Jon Barrett is our data collector. He is highly experienced in the assessment field having been an Assessor in two other towns within Dutchess County. His responsibilities include updating property records through a physical inspection of each and every property. This includes adding and removing items on the property records that are inaccurate or missing. Jon is currently conducting inspections in your neighborhood and throughout the Town of LaGrange which is based on a systematic plan as described above.

Can the Data Collector Come On My Property And Take Photos?

Assessor (powers and duties) (entry upon real property) - Real Property Tax Law, §§102(3), 500:

An assessor, **without first securing permission**, may enter on unenclosed real property from which the public is not excluded and take photographs of the land and the exterior of buildings thereon, for the purpose of assessment. Except as to buildings generally open to the public, however, the assessor may not enter a building for such purpose without permission.

The State requires we photograph each property with a date stamped photograph. You have the right of refusal to answer any questions or allow a physical inspection of your property by the data collector. We in turn must assess a property using whatever resources available to us. This is not desired by my department because often the data is incorrect or incomplete and may lead to an excessive over or under valuation. It is in the best interest of each and every taxpayer to have the correct value assessed on their properties, as well as others, that actually reflect the property in its current state.

I hope this helps to put you at ease and better understand the process my staff and I are required to follow. This cyclical plan is in the best interest to all the residents of LaGrange by having a fair and equitable assessment Roll.

You are encouraged to call me if you have any additional concerns regarding this matter.

Robert Taft, Assessor
Town of LaGrange
Dutchess County, NY

Revised: *October 2014*