

Town of Adams

Office of the Assessor



REVALUATION

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Why is the Town conducting a decennial (10 year) revaluation?

A. Decennial revaluations are required by state law for every community in the Commonwealth.

Q. How long has this been the law/has this been done before?

A. For more than 50 years at least this has been law in the Commonwealth; this was done in Adams 10 years ago and the 10 years before that.

Q. What is a decennial revaluation?

A. A 10 year revaluation is a legally mandated inspection of all properties in a community to ensure that the physical make up (quality/condition of the building, business equipment, additions, etc.) is accurately recorded with the assessor's office.

Q. How will this be done?

A. Inspectors from the firm Bishop & Associates will visit each home and business in town.

Q. What information will the inspectors be looking for?

A. Inspectors will be looking for room count, bathroom count, finished basements, fireplaces, condition of roof, siding and windows; cellars – whether they are stone or concrete; dimensions of the house; style of home; garages; sheds, wood decks, pools. These are just examples of some of the data the assessor's need to value property as fairly as possible.

Q. How will this impact my taxes?

A. Typically a revaluation lowers the overall tax rate by picking up growth and changes that have not been reported to the assessor's office. For instance, buildings that have been remodeled, equipment for businesses that has been purchased, decks or sheds that may have been placed without a permit or not required a permit but were not reported to the assessor's office. All these items add value to the tax base. The bigger the base, the lower the tax rate. Revaluations that are conducted every nine to ten years are a mechanism to insure that the data in the assessor's office is correct. This is done so that each property owner in the community pays his or her fair share of the cost of local government – no more or less – in proportion to the amount of money the property is worth.

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Q. Does that mean the assessed value of my property will increase?

A. Possibly. Additions that are not on file with the assessor's office will add to your home's assessed value. The opposite is true as well, if you have removed a deck or the overall condition of your house has dropped that will be recorded as well and reflected in your new assessment.

Q. Why did the Town not go with a "local" firm or real estate company?

A. There are several parts to this question

1. Real estate companies do not do mass appraisal. Real estate agents are in the business of selling real estate. An appraisal company appraises one property at a specific point in time for a specific purpose, i.e. mortgages. Assessing, while similar to appraising, requires assessing all properties, from single family homes to commercial and industrial properties.

2. There are a limited number of companies in Massachusetts and New England that actually do this work.

3. The project was put out to bid in accordance with Massachusetts laws on procurement; and no local firms bid.

Q. Will an outside firm be able to complete a reassessment if they are not familiar with the "local market?"

A. Yes, for several reasons:

1. The company conducting inspections has worked in Adams and other communities in Berkshire County for many years; they have conducted data quality studies and triennial (every 3 year) reassessments in Adams.

2. Changes in a properties assessment based on market value are done by complex sales studies; anyone qualified would be looking at the same data that is provided. It is in fact considered a best practice to have an outside firm conduct revaluations to enhance objectivity.

For additional information, contact

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