

February 2022

Colchester, CT Revaluation Update

Pursuant to Connecticut State Law, every municipality must complete a new town-wide revaluation every five (5) years. Colchester last implemented a town-wide revaluation for the October 1, 2016 Grand List and therefore is required to implement a new town-wide revaluation for the October 1, 2021 Grand List which will be implemented at the end of February (2022).

The Town went out to bid for both “Commercial” and “Residential” Revaluation Services last year. After receiving all the bids, the “Commercial” project was awarded to Lawrence Revaluation Services (LRS) and the “Residential” project was awarded to Vision Government Solutions (VGSI). Both have prior experience in Colchester as VGSI was the vendor who completed revaluations in Colchester for the 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 Grand Lists. Similarly, Jason Lawrence, of LRS, prior to going out on his own, was the Senior Commercial Appraiser employed by VGSI and worked personally on Colchester’s Commercial appraisals for the 2006, 2011 & 2016 Grand Lists.

The majority of the revaluation regulations and process are governed by state statute and at least once every ten years, each town must “fully inspect” each property. Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 12-62 defines “fully inspect” as “viewing the inside of each property”.

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 12-62(b) (4) the Assessor may accept a Data Mailer Questionnaire in lieu of inspecting the interior of the property and, as part of this 2021 revaluation project, Colchester has opted to send out Data Mailer Questionnaires rather than ask our property owners to allow us inside their property in the middle of the COVID-19 world-wide pandemic.

Data Mailers were sent out to all property owners on March 17, 2021 and we asked that property owners return them immediately, or within five (5) days of having received them. For each property owner who did not return the Data Mailer Questionnaire, and whose property has not been inspected in the last ten years, Connecticut law required our vendors to send a Data Collector Employee out to the property and request to inspect the interior. Those inspection were recently completed.

There are five (5) phases of a revaluation. Data Collection, which includes the “full inspection” or “Data Mailer” process, is the first phase. The other four phases are: Market Analysis, Valuation, Field Review, and Informal Hearings.

The second phase, Market Analysis, began in December of 2020. As part of Market Analysis, the vendors looked at all the “Sale properties” (those which have sold between October 2020 – September 2021). These properties were used to determine the fair market value of every other property in town as of October 1, 2021. Since many times a new owner will make changes to the property they recently purchased, an ideal situation is when we are able to get a snap shot of exactly what sold in close proximity to the sale date.

It is not uncommon for new homeowners to see someone taking a photo of their home in the six months after they purchase it and VGSI employees were in the field inspecting sale properties. Many times, the Assessor’s office will want to drive by and look at the home as well as real estate appraisers that try to use recent comparable sales of no older than six months when they are performing appraisals and they will drive by and take their own photos. The Market Analysis phase is completed.

Field Review began in August 2021 with both Mimi Mackie of VGSI, and town assessor John Chaponis, out in the field each day driving every street, and down every driveway on rear lots, in order to complete the final field review of each parcel on location in comparison to existing town property record cards. The Field Review Phase was fully completed during the first week of November.

The valuation phase began in early/mid November and was completed in January.

Notice of Assessment Change began going out in the mail on February 1, 2022 to the address on record for every property owner. If you changed your mailing address recently, or got rid of a Post Office, box, please make sure to provide our office with your most current mailing address. Once you have received your notice with your new value, property owners wishing to have their new assessments reviewed through an informal hearing with a representative of VGSI (for residential) or LRS (for commercial) may do so by scheduling an appointment. Information on scheduling appointments was provided to property owners on the Notice of Assessment Change.

Additionally, property owners can view their assessment, as well as others in town, at the vendor’s website found here:

<https://gis.vgsi.com/ColchesterCT/Search.aspx>

Any property owners whom feels aggrieved by the assessment process after having conducted an informal hearing with our vendor, may file an appeal with the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA) which meets in April of 2022. In order to have a hearing before the BAA, property owners must submit to town hall a fully completed application **on or before March 18, 2022**.

POSTMARKS are NOT acceptable as the law requires that the appeal form must be received on or by March 20, 2022 and town hall is closed on Saturday and Sunday March 19 & 20. However, facsimiles and emails, with received time stamps, prior to midnight on March 20, 2022 will be considered a timely filing.

If anyone has any questions or concerns regarding any phase of the revaluation process, please feel free to contact Town Assessor John Chaponis directly.