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June 28, 2011

City of West Allis Common Council

RE: 2012 City of West Allis Revaluation

As the Assessor for the City of West Allis, I am asking the Common Council to consider postponing the 2012 citywide revaluation until 2013.

There are a number of reasons I bring this request before the Council.

- 1). Real Estate Market Conditions
- 2). National Elections – Resource Concerns
- 3). Budgetary Concerns

First, we have seen a decrease in the residential market during 2010. The loss in value during this period was approximately 5%. Our commercial market has also decreased in 2010, with a loss of about 2%. There has also been a substantial decrease in the number of “market” sales over the last few years. In 2004, we had 1139 “market” sales and in 2010 the number was down to 358. At the same time an increase in the number of properties on the market is occurring. The market is simply oversaturated in relation to the available financing. The lack of sales makes it more difficult to select comparable properties for use in the market “sales” approach to determine value.

Second, 2012 will present the City with staffing and time constraints brought on by the National Elections. The Clerk’s Office provides us with support during the annual Board of Review. The support consists of accepting and certifying objection forms, scheduling appointments, acting as the clerk for the Board, transcribing testimony, and the filing of State required forms. During a revaluation year, the Board of Review is in session later in the year, which would conflict with election preparation for the Clerk’s Office.

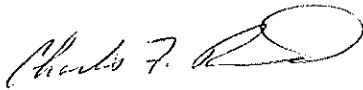
Third, budgetary demands are always a concern. This not only applies to our own budget expenditures during the revaluation, but now includes problems created by the State budget process. Gov. Walker as part of his budget is planning on freezing our Levy limit. As a result, Gov. Walker has already stated that the average property tax bill for 2011 would increase by just \$16 and \$36 for 2012. With a revaluation there is always a shift in tax liability, making the promises made by Gov. Walker meaningless.

We are also looking at our own expenditures during a revaluation, with rising postage costs a concern.

There has also been a revision to the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual which mandates all records be digital. Our records are digital at this time with the exception being building sketches. Our department will have to create just over 19,000 sketches that can then be file transferred to the Department of Revenue.

I present these reasons to the Council for their consideration of postponing the citywide revaluation until 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles F. Ruud". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Charles F. Ruud
City Assessor