# Milton's property values going up — What does it mean for property taxes?

### By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Christmas spending isn't the only thing going up this time of year.

value property assessments recently mailed out, the value of individual homes may be rising as well, Milton council heard Monday.

In a provincial attempt to bring both clarity and fairness to property values, another round of assessments is underway. And in this go round, the average value of both Halton and Milton homes has increased by about 16 per cent.

In Milton, that breaks down to a 17 per cent increase for detached homes, a 13 per cent increase for condominiums and a 23 per cent increase for farm properties, said Cathy Farr of the Ontario Property Assessment Corporation (OPAC).

But whether those increases add up to hikes in property taxes will depend on a number of factors, said Ms Farr.

"It's complicated by provincial legislation and what's going to happen to your budgets," she said. "If your budgets remain the same, then some properties will decrease."

Despite that, value hikes of more than 16 per cent will likely result in higher taxation, said Ms Farr.

But there are options for homeowners who can't easily swallow a dramatic rise in their assessment.

With the new provincial current "First of all, they should phone ther action in the future. us," said Ms Farr.

> OPAC numbers are 1-800-387-5909 or (905) 813-9930. These numbers can be found on the assessment notices. Or residents can drop by OPAC offices at 6745 Century Ave. in Mississauga.

"We're a good deal closer to Milton than we were last time," said Ms Farr.

But before doing so, she suggested property owners do their homework. "Before contacting us, I'd recommend they look around at comparable properties."

If the assessment still seems out of whack, the property owner can file a request for reconsideration to OPAC.

While there are forms available to do so, what's basically needed is appeal. the assessment roll number, phone number where the complainant can be reached and the nature of the problem, said Ms Farr.

"There's no fee for asking us to reconsider an assessment," she said. "We'll be looking at these

probably within the first week of the new year."

Though a reconsideration can be filed as late as December 31, 2001, there's no point in delaying if the property owner wants to take fur-

That's because there's a spring deadline for actually appealing the assessment.

"For some reason probably known only to God, an appeal has to be filed by March 31, 2001," said Ms Farr.

To help residents beat the clock, OPAC will attempt to respond to all reconsideration requests by mid-March.

There is a cost attached to filing an appeal, set at \$50 for farm or residential properties and more than \$100 for commercial and industrial properties.

The fee in non-refundable, which irked Councillor Ron Furik. He believed it should be returned should the property owner win the

"You've put me into a position where I have to pay money to appeal," he said. "Why don't I get it back?"

Ms Farr responded that the fee is administrative and isn't set by OPAC.



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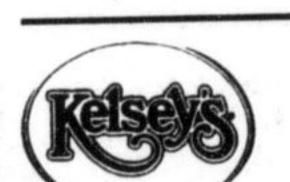


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