

Board to hear final appeals from Incline homeowners

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The last showdown over Incline Village property values could come Feb. 28, when a county tax board will hear appeals from up to 301 homeowners.

On Thursday, 204 cases were consolidated for the Feb. 28 hearing. Members of the Panel B of the Washoe County Board of Equalization are expected to consolidate the rest of the 301 cases. Reno lawyer Tom Hall is representing the appellants.

Officials expect Hall to argue all day for lowering the taxable property values. County appraisers also are expected to argue all day to defend the values set for the tax year beginning in July.

Ted Harris, a leader in the property value challenge, asked Panel B, a new board, to allow Panel A, the original board, to hear the cases because it has more experience.

After Thursday's hearing, original board chairman Steven Sparks said no change will be made in panels.

Beyond requirements

"Arguing Panel A has all the training goes beyond what the statutes requires," Sparks said.

Charles Marvin, one of about 10 Incline Village residents at Thursday's hearing, told County Clerk Amy Harvey that scheduling the hearing for 301 homeowners in a conference room with seating for 40 is not right. Harvey said no other room was available but she

would find out if the room, which can be doubled in size, can be opened up.

For each case, the assessor's staff prepares a six-page report.

Incline residents filed 558 tax appeals this year. Of 190 cases heard so far, the two boards upheld property values set by the assessor in 150 cases and reduced value in 40 cases.

In a Carson City District Court case, Judge William Maddox in January ruled the county assessor couldn't use Lake Tahoe views, beaches and two other rules in valuing properties for the last two years because they weren't certified by the state.

Until Monday, Panel B had rolled back land values to 2002-03 for properties where the assessor's rules had been applied, finding the Maddox case persuasive. Then for similar properties on Monday, it reversed itself and upheld the assessor's values.

With the contradiction, officials agree appeals to the state board of equalization are certain.

Of the cases heard so far, most involved condominiums and those with lake views were granted rollbacks in property values. In addition, values were reduced for 14 lakefront properties represented by Reno lawyer Norm Azevedo.

INFORMATION

A consolidated hearing, expected to involve 301 homes, will be at 8:30 am. Feb. 28 in the Washoe District Health Department conference room B, 1001 E. Ninth St., Reno.