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# Hawkins pushes revalue petition

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An online petition has been created by Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. in which he asks residents to push the City Council into approving a plan to revalue properties within the city.

The petition, a link to which was placed in the city's latest online mailer, is part of Hawkins' plan to gather residential support as he has stated his intention to return the issue to the council. A proposal for a property reassessment failed to gain council approval in 2010.

Since his 2008 mayoral campaign, Hawkins has stated his belief that the tax assessments on properties, done in 2006 for the first time in nearly four decades, became skewed as property values declined from the market's peak. Hawkins said that caused many residential owners to experience tax increases of 40 to 100 percent.

As the property values declined, said Hawkins, the city has been forced to refund tax revenues.

"Because of tax appeals, the city lost about \$400,000 in revenues last year. All of that lost revenue has to be made up by taxpayers who have not appealed their assessments," said Hawkins in his statement.

Hawkins said part of the reason for the tax increase was a decline in the share of tax burden for commercial properties when compared to residential properties.

Hawkins, who will announce his campaign for re-election on Friday, said a cost estimate for a revaluation is about \$400,000. He claimed the cost would be about \$15 per year for five years on a residential property at the average assessment.

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