

Misinformation

In August of 2019, Commissioners Cornell and Hutchinson generated a short list of high-dollar sales of properties in Alachua County which had comparatively low assessed values. The assessed value to sale price ratios they generated were low. Based on this they asserted that I was undervaluing high dollar properties compared to low value properties. The indictment of these values was misplaced and based upon incomplete and erroneous facts. The sales used in the analysis included both market and non-market sales as well as some sales that had not been recorded and could not be verified. Some of the sales that they used involved multiple properties but when they computed the sales ratio, they only used the assessed value of one of the properties instead of all of them.

We met with Commissioner Cornell and provided him the data that disproved his assumptions and allegations. He was satisfied as to the errors contained in his analysis and satisfied that our values were appropriate. Additionally, the Department of Revenue, as our oversight agency, audits our sales and values every year when they review our tax roll to determine if it meets the legal measures of level of assessment and equity before the tax roll process can proceed. The tests for compliance include a review of all the sales to assure that they are being reported correctly and that the market versus non-market sales are being correctly identified. The tax roll itself is divided into six strata (Residential, Residential Multi-family of between 2 and 9 units, Agricultural and other Classified Use Properties, Vacant Lots, Nonagricultural acreage and Unimproved parcels, and Improved Commercial, Industrial and Multi-family 10 units and more) and each stratum is further divided into quartiles. For the tax roll to be approved each stratum and each quartile as well as the overall roll must exceed 90% and comply with tight equity measures. There is no bias in our tax roll favoring high-dollar properties, there can't be. The Department won't allow it.

Unfortunately, in cases like this there is no effective way to communicate back to those aware of the original accusations that they are wrong. In this case I do not think any attempt was even made. What has happened is that the candidates for Property Appraiser are being asked what they would do to correct this non-existent situation. It is not necessary to correct what doesn't exist.

On a final note my character is being attacked in editorials for something that I have not done by people I do not know and who do not know the facts they are basing their judgement on. The truth, as borne out by the Department of Revenue for 40 years now is that I do not have any inherent bias in the tax rolls and that there is no need for me to seek solace or forgiveness from my god as one editorial suggested.

Ed Crapo, AAS, ASA, CFA, FIAAO