

Joburg property owners hope online system for objections works

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Property owners in the City of Johannesburg have expressed concern about whether the newly introduced system which allows them to object to property valuations online will work.



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There are concerns that the new online system will experience technical glitches which were experienced when the Gauteng department of education introduced online applications in 2016.

"Our concern is whether the online system can handle the capacity of the amount of people that will be logging in to first check their property rates as well as make objections online. Our main concern is: can their system deal with that amount of objections?" said Angela Rivers, general manager of Johannesburg Property Owners and Managers Association.

But the city assured TimesLIVE that the system was well backed up and should be able to deal with the demand at hand.

Johannesburg MMC for finance Fonzela Ngobeni announced recently that property owners would be afforded an opportunity to object to the municipal valuation roll through a carefully coordinated programme, which would run for 45 days.

Property owners will be able to register their objections online which will reduce queues at the venues available for this across the city.

The new General Valuation Roll 2018 for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2022 will be open for public inspection effectively from 20 February 2018 to 6 April 2018.

Ratepayers have 45 days from the first date of publication of the roll to inspect the general valuation roll and lodge objections, if necessary. The prescribed minimum legislated objection period is 30 days. There will be 12 venues city-wide where property owners can inspect the roll.

The annual review of the rates policy is a legal requirement to ensure that the city complies with the Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004. The city's rates policy review is driven by submissions and comments from property owners, which is taken into account when drafting the final policy.

Public participation is critical in the formulation of policies and ratepayers are encouraged to take an active part in the public meetings during the process of policy review. Ratepayers will first be given the opportunity to inspect the General Valuation Roll from the first date of publication, and should they wish to object, they can do so by 6 April 2018.

The proposed 2018 valuation roll has recorded about 879,005 properties within the Johannesburg metropolitan area. Each property value is linked to its market value, which is a determinant of the rates payable by each owner. The valuation roll will be valid for four years and customer rates will be calculated on the same value for that period unless changes have been made that may affect the property's value.

The imminent General Valuation Roll will be implemented on Sunday, 1 July 2018.

In the current property rates policy, there are exemptions on properties owned and occupied by people who have limited income and are not pensioners but can show annual income falls within a limit determined by the council. In this category, the owner must apply every six months for the council's approval.

Property owners dependent on pensions will also enjoy exemption provided:

- the owner has reached 60;
- the owner must live on the property;
- the value of the property does not exceed R2m.

The rebate shall be as follows:

- if the owner received a national security grant, they will qualify for a 100% rebate.
- if the pensioner is 70 or above they qualify for a 100% rebate irrespective of income;
- if a pensioner has gross monthly income below and equal to R8,745, they qualify for a 100% rebate, provided the pensioner is at least 60 years of age.
- if a pensioner has gross monthly income above R8,745 but less or equal to R14,991, they qualify for a 50% rebate, provided the pensioner is at least 60 years of age.

Owners of properties who have become pensioners due to injury on duty who were members of the SAPS, SANDF, emergency services and JMPD also receive rebates. There are also exemptions for child-headed households.

Source: The Times

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