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# CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

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## **Increased Development Drives Down City Tax Rate**

**BIDDEFORD** — Rising property values and a spate of new development have led to a lower property tax rate this year, but residents are being advised escalating property values might still lead to increased tax bills.

Last year's tax rate was \$20.07 per \$1,000 of taxable property value. This year the City committed to a 37-percent reduction, \$19.70 per \$1,000, following a rise in overall real estate values of over \$100 million, a 5 percent increase.

“The growing interest in downtown redevelopment and investment has driven up the value of commercial real estate,” Assessor Nicholas Desjardins said. “That new development increased the value of the City’s residential properties.”

To offset these higher residential property values, the City Council reduced the tax rate. Some homeowners, however, may still see their bill go up.

“While nobody wants to see higher tax rates, it’s a good thing when the trends behind that increase show that development in the City is on the rise,” said Mayor Alan Casavant. “As the ‘Biddesance’ continues and more people start to realize everything that this community has to offer, it’s naturally going to be more valuable to own property here.”

City Manager James Bennett, meanwhile, said the City is doing what it can to support residents as local property values rise. “And remember,” he said, “over the long term this is very good news for City residents.”

One clear indication of Biddeford’s growth: the City saw a record-breaking number of building permit applications for the second year in a row.

“We’re crazy busy with permits and everything else we have going on,” Roby Fecteau, the City’s Code Enforcement Officer, said.

The City issued 597 building permits this year, breaking 2017’s record of 562 permits and surpassing the 482 permits issued in 2016 by nearly 24 percent. To keep up with the rapid rate of new development, the City now approves two to three new permit applications every day.

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