



TOWN OF MILTON

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BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Brian M. Cronin, Chair

James A. Henderson, Vice Chair

William E. Bennett

Robert L. Bushway

Chief Appraiser

The Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes – August 23, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm in the Cronin Conference Room at Town Hall. In attendance were Brian Cronin, William Bennett and James Henderson, all members of the Board. Also present was Chief Appraiser Robert Bushway.

Mr. Cronin presided as Chairman and Mr. Bushway took the minutes. The primary reason to convene the meeting was to publicly discuss in a transparent manner an article in the Boston Globe on August 16th that accused the taxpayer at 95 Hinckley Road of not paying his fair share of property taxes due to improvements made at the house that were not listed on the assessors property record card. Mr. Cronin asked Mr. Bushway to provide an overview of this topic. Mr. Bushway explained the procedure of the permit inspection process which includes a visit to the property in an attempt to perform an interior inspection to update the property record card. If interior access is not gained, the standard procedure is to perform an exterior inspection which includes verifying exterior dimensions. A taxpayer has the legal right to refuse access to their property. Also discussed was the use of the internet as additional resources such as the broker's property listing brochure and Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in order to update the records.

With respect to 95 Hinckley Road, the assessor's records do not include the finished basement, living area over the garage and an additional bathroom. Records indicate that there were permits taken out by the developer and owner of the property, Norfolk Development prior to sale to the current owner in February of 2003. Those permit do not list those particular improvements to the property, however, after discussion with Building Inspector Joe Prondack, the 2002 permit may have included these improvements. There is no information to refute this. Taxpayer says that improvements were included in 2002 permit and therefore 2003 selling price (which became basis for subsequent assessments). We have no information to contradict this. Assessor's records indicate that the three most recent visits to the property were in 2002, 2005 and 2014. It appears that all of these were exterior inspections only. The taxpayer's assessment will be adjusted at end of year for Fiscal Year 2017, like any property in town where known changes (sales, permits, inspections, other) come to light over the year.

Someone attending the meeting questions about the inspection process and the use of other sources to update the record card. A reporter from the Patriot Ledger and Commonwealth Magazine asked questions regarding the property that were answered by the Board and Mr. Bushway.

Also discussed by the Board and Mr. Bushway was the need for additional personnel to assist in the inspection of properties throughout the town. This issue will be further discussed at budget time in the fall.

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Michael Joyce, son of the owner of the property Brian Joyce, joined the Board and read a lengthy statement refuting much of what the Boston Globe article stated. (Attached)

Jim Henderson then read the following statement:

I have a problem. Because of a Boston Globe article, we are convening a special meeting to address specifically one taxpayer's property, thus singling them out for undue direct scrutiny. This is not the way we should be acting as a board. But with the accusations being made, and misinformation and rumors being circulated, we had no choice but to respond as quickly as possible to be fair not only to this taxpayer, but all taxpayers of Milton who need to have faith and confidence in the Assessor's office. If the newspaper had contacted the Assessor's office and if the full board had had a chance to research and weigh in, it is my belief that the article would have been very different, if actually written at all, and harm would have been avoided for taxpayer. I doubt we would find any taxpayer in Milton who would want to go through what this taxpayer is presently enduring for their property's assessed value.

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Henderson to the newly created Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) Committee.

The Board decided to table the last item on the agenda, pending the viewing of a video of the issue. Mr. Bushway informed the Board that the taxpayer at 23 Parkwood Drive has filed an appeal with the Appellate Tax Board of the valuation of his residence for fiscal year 2016.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:20pm.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Bushway.



Brian M. Cronin



James A. Henderson



William E. Bennett