



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS
MINUTES

The Board of Assessment Appeals held a regular meeting on Monday April 26th, 2016 in Meeting Room 1, Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

Present: Marianne Brown (Chair), Maureen C. Owen, James McFarland
Also Present: Penny Mudgett (Assessor), Linda Koonz (Clerk)

Ms. Brown opened the meeting at 6:14 pm.

The Board held public hearings and acted on the following appeals:

Stephen and Nancy Sedensky
6 Greenleaf Farms Road

Number 18 is for sale/ 24 was sold
Stephen estimates the value is 550K. There is no finished basement. 3501 is full square footage. Stephen brought in paperwork from 2012 about other properties. Stephen says he recognizes there is a three-year difference, and he submitted what was not comparables.

Decision: Denied - Motion (MO) made to deny appeal based on insufficient info to support the claim of the appellant. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

Melissa Jones
16 Waterview Drive

Did not show up.

Decision: No action taken

Stephen and Shahin Madison
24 Oak Ridge Drive

Shahin said property is at \$600,599 and we think it is assessed too high. Other homes are larger and are assessed at square footage rate lower than ours.

James: Explains how the process works. For us to evaluate your claim we need to see information from the tax appraiser for the other homes because values are not based on Zillow values. We can look at homes similar to yours. You have to find a home in a similar neighborhood with similar square footage to figure out whether they are comparable.

Decision: Denied - Motion (MO) made to deny appeal based on insufficient info to support the claim of the appellant. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

S&F Associates LLC (Spiro Rountos)
43 South Main St.

Spiro: Field card says we have a full basement and two fireplaces. We don't have that, and it is on a slab. People always say the height of the ceiling is low. It is not as desirable as Ricci down the street, that has a 12-foot ceiling. And they say I have air conditioning in all the units and I don't. (where Filet is, and shoemaker). Shoemaker does not have air. 7 out of 8 do not air. There really have not been improvements. It is old. It was a motor lodge when it was first made. Weathervane Motor Lodge.

Decision: Approved - Motion (MO) made to change grade from C+ to C. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

Antonio and Patricia Joaquim
47 Forest Drive

Patricia said the credit for the wetlands seems to get lost every time, so I am here to make sure that has not happened. So, the new assessment takes into consideration the wetlands? And the square footage was corrected to 2780? It was 31. Marianne confirmed on the field card.

Decision: No action taken

Sprint Spectrum LP
Sprint Spectrum LP Personal Property

Did not show up.

Decision: No action taken.

Brian and Maureen Hunter
33 Forest Drive

Maureen Hunter: House is on a non-conforming lot, was built in 1959 and has had very few improvements to it. I think the building assessment is high and the land assessment is very high. Very steep terrain. Virtually no road frontage. No parking – there is a cliff. Neighbor's house, right next-door, has a conforming lot and their land is valued at 30 percent less. We have two rooms that are considered bedrooms but there is no closet in these rooms. Two bathrooms, showers only. Kitchen is extremely old. Little pieces of tile falling off. We have rented it on and off; we don't rent it all the time. Comps were provided on properties in the area.

Decision No. 1: Motion (MO) made to drop the appraised land value to \$139,000 based on a comp provided by the appellant. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

Decision No. 2: Motion (MO) made to change appraised building value to \$63 per square foot based on comps provided by appellant. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

Sabrina Keillor
9 Beechwood

Agent: Jay Keillor - This is property is 3.2 acres, extremely steep. It was laid out as three lots. On slope off of Beechwood the grades drop. It is negative 19 feet. We put in house 220 but road is 240. There is a ditch there, about 6 feet deep. You can walk in it. There is riprap. Instead of 3 lots, due to restrictions, there is really just one area where you get one house.

Decision: Approved – Motion (MO) to give appellant a reduction of 5% topography on the 3.64 excess acreage. JM seconded it. Motion unanimously carried.

Robin Buchanan
15 Little Brook Lane

Did not show up.

Decision: No action taken

Ronald and Michele Revere
18 Bryan Lane

Ronald: We just don't understand the increase. We have 5 acres it says 6001 footage. It is astronomical. We would like it looked at. It's unaffordable at this point. Nobody has ever come out to our house. It is a Shaker style ranch, contemporary; It has been gas since day 1, not oil. Marianne arranged for the Tax Assessor to look at the property. Thursday at 2pm.

Decision: The board chose to table deliberation on 18 Bryan Lane pending results of field inspection.

Auerbach Pediatrics
Auerbach Pediatrics Personal Property

Did not show up. A letter was submitted to the board.

Decision: No action taken

*These minutes are subject to the approval of the Board of Assessment Appeals at their next meeting.
A recording of the meeting is made available in the Land Use Office, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT.*

Frank Gavel Jr.
14 Willow Brook Lane

Frank: What was my assessed value?

Marianne: 523,320

Frank. So doesn't really matter what I paid for it. Don't know if anyone can pull houses that sold in the mid 700s like mine. Myself being completely ignorant of the process I could have walked in here saying I think it is too high. You will educate me as to why. You didn't do this. There was nothing like: These are the steps you should be prepared to present. Why is the onus on me to prove that the number is wrong? I am saying it is wrong. I know we are not going to really get anywhere tonight. I love my house but it is an older house. It does not have a lot of the bells and whistles as these. House is less than perfect. It is not an A-, bathroom info on card is not accurate.

Decision: Approved - Motion (MO) to change the grade from A- to B+ and to correct the field card to reflect 3 bathrooms and two half baths. JM seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Michael DeZanzo
69 Lakeview Terrace

Appellant took down BAA members' names and titles, asked if we work for the town or are volunteers. Mimi said we are elected volunteers. A series of questions were asked and answered. Michael : Why is company from another state determining our taxes? Mimi: Bids go out to vendors to do this sort of thing. James: You should ask the tax assessor or finance director how we get these people in here. Woman with him asked: Same vendor for entire town? Mimi: Same for whole town, might be different employees. Michael : My concern is it being an outside vendor they are assessing my property based on other properties. Lake Zoar. 60 degree slope my property if you are not prepared you are not gonna get to the spot. In case of an emergency there is really no access for police, fire department or ambulance. We have had appraisals done. Are you familiar with American Tax Leins or Green Law Firm? They tried to choke us out a bit. I have gone into the office here and asked the assessors have you ever approached this property personally because for an outside vendor to come in and assess by outside properties unsimilar to ours.... It is literally a camp site. ... I have a copy for myself. My attorney has a copy. I hope you look at this... My family has been here 75 years. Mimi: You have no running water? Michael: No. We have no sewer. We use a Porta Potty or catch basin and have it pumped out. Anything we drink or use to rinse dishes. We bring 20 to 30 gallons of water with us. Mimi – So it is a seasonal? Michael: Absolutely. It is hoisted down on a bucket on a zipline to bring stuff in. Mimi : We can reduce to a seasonal. Michael: There is no insulation. ... In 75 years nobody has gone to the school system. There is no parking or any of that stuff.

Maureen noted for the record that he presented in his package two appraisals but one was dated April 1, 2015 and the second was dated March 26, 2015 which do not coincide with Oct. 1, 2012 reval date.

Decision: Approved - Motion (JM) to change the grade to the lowest grade available and to change the style to cabin. MO seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

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Appeals from April 25, 2016 Meeting

Alex Dachenhausen & Son Excavating
Personal Property

Decision: Approved - Motion (JM) to remove the value of \$17,430 that was entered in error in code 16 (furniture and fixtures). MO seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Actions from hearings of April 11, 2016

Janice Butler
Personal Property

Decision: Approved – Motion (JM) to accept the submitted property declaration with zero property listed. MO seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Robert Zarnetsce and Catherine Dobbs
330 Berkshire Road

Decision: Approved - Motion (JM) to change the street index to reflect no water feature. MO seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Peter Tomasulo
4 Autumn Ridge Road

Decision: Denied - Motion (MO) to deny the appeal for insufficient information to support his claim. JM seconded. Unanimous

Kevin and Judy Corrigan
4 Driftway Drive

Decision: Approved – Motion (MO) to give them a 5 percent overall reduction for economic obsolescence. JM seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Waterfall Plaza LLC
259 South Main St.

Decision: Denied – Motion (JM) deny appeal due to insufficient documentation to support the appellant's claim. MO seconds. Motion unanimously carried.

Lindsay Farrenkoph
3 Daniels Hill

Decision: Approved - Motion (MO) to accept the assessor's changes. James seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Daniel Amaral
40 and 42 South Main (Amaral Motors Inc.)

Decision: Denied – Motion (JM) to deny appeal based on insufficient documentation to support the claim. MO seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Amaral Motors Inc.
Personal Property

Decision: Denied – Motion (MO) to deny the personal property appeal because after a review of the appellant's personal property declaration the board found the assessment to be correct. James seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

Anthony D'Angelo
18 Cedarhurst Trail

Decision: Denied – Motion (JM) to deny appeal due to insufficient documentation to support appellant's claim. Maureen seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

With no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 10:45 p.m, unanimously carried.