

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS
April 5, 2013

The Board of Assessment Appeals met on Friday, April 5, 2013. Members present were Stephen Palmer, Betty Richards and David Harma. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

The following appeals were heard:

Mathewson John & Barbara – 6 Avery Street

Mr. Mathewson stated his kitchen is average; nothing has changed except appliances. His pool is 25 years old. The only improvement to the pool is a new pump. It still has original liner. His fireplace has never had a fire in it; it is cracked and he does not think it would be safe. He has very small rooms and there have been no changes in living area since he purchased the property. The utility area noted on his card is the bulkhead to the basement. He compared his property to others on Avery Street and North Broad Street. Mr. Mathewson submitted pictures.

Mola Pamela & Douglas – 2 Church Street

They purchased the property in 2002 for \$650,000. That year was a revaluation and their assessment increased 115% while their neighbors increased much less. They compared their property to 118 Water Street and property on Gold Street. Their assessments were always comparable but now they are much higher. Both their baths still have old fixtures. 118 Water Street has had extensive renovations; new baths, hardwood floors, central air conditioning and they have dug out the basement and finished it.

Murch, William – personal property

Mr. Murch has a contractor's license but does not do commercial work. He has a full time job and has no insurance. He keeps his license active so he can get permits for personal use. He has some old beat-up tools.

DECISION: The Board voted unanimously to delete his personal property account.

Social Society of Frohsinn – personal property

Mr. Murch appeared for this appeal. Due to hurricane Sandy the club lost all of their equipment due to water damage. Everything will have to be replaced. It was explained to Mr. Murch that the storm was after October 1, 2012 and all assessments are based on that date. It was also explained that when he files his 2013 personal property form he should list all the lost equipment as disposals and they will be removed from the 2013 assessment.

DECISION: The Board voted unanimously to deny the petition.

Phillips Geoffrey & Beverly – 29 Quarry Path

Mr. Phillips submitted updated information for his petition. He feels there are errors in the living area of his home and the lot size. The assessment on his house is 96 square feet too high. He believes the error is due to the pitch of his roof so the square footage of the second floor is too high. He compared the per square foot prices of his neighbors houses to his. He has no central air. He is in a low elevation area; he is 2-5 feet lower than the surrounding property. Hurricane Sandy demonstrates the vulnerability of his property during storms. His neighbors did not receive the damage his property did. The water level is low off his dock. The house has leaky windows. Mr. Phillips showed a map of his property with a lower lot size but he did not know if the map was ever filed in the land records.

Rathbun David – 211 Cove Road

Mr. Rathbun's assessment went up and nothing has changed. He has spoken to Vision and the Assessor and no one can tell him why. The only thing he has done to the house is put in new windows.

M132 B2 L7 Cove Road

Mr. Rathbun stated he has no permanent docks. They are floaters that are anchored. There are no posts in the water.

River Company – Mechanic Street

Mr. Weiss and Howard Russ appeared before the Board. They withdrew their appeal on 5-3-18 and 5-6-10. Their issues are with 177-179 Mechanic and the lot across the street. The old commercial building has been vacant since the 1980's. This building is in disrepair and the roof is near caving in; it is unusable. An estimate to replace the roof has been received for \$27,000. The garage door is on the street; it would be very dangerous if a vehicle tried to use it due to the proximity to the road. Mr. Russ suggested an interior inspection of the building to see its condition and possible depreciation of the building. The house on the property is a 110 +/- year old house that has never been upgraded. He compared the house to 175 Mechanic Street.

Marina – The marina has 25 slips; they are of very light construction and are very small. The water there is only 2 ½ - 3 feet deep. The income from this property is the lowest on the river. There is very little parking; only enough for about half the number of slips they have. Less than half of the slips are rented. He feels there should be considerable depreciation given to the docks. The launch is unusable and the seawall needs replacing. Mr. Russ submitted an appraisal.

Ron-AI LLC – 66 South Broad Street

Attorney Hugh Manke appeared for the appeal. This property is leased to the U. S. Postal Service. This property receives a high rate of rent because the property was build to suit the Post Office's needs. A copy of the lease was submitted. If using the income approach for this property, it is above market rates due to the unique situation concerning the post office. The building is mostly warehouse with a small retail area. He compared the property to 78 South Broad Street which sold for

\$175,000 or \$22.00 per square foot. He admitted this was an inferior piece of property. He also submitted documentation of rents in Stonington for retail space at \$8-16 per square foot and industrial area at \$5-6 per square foot. He amended the value on his petition due to new research. He used a capitalization rate of 9% in an income approach to value to arrive at \$540,000 as a market value. He also stated that the US Postal Service pays the taxes on the building.

Santos, Timothy - 133 Pawcatuck Avenue

Mr. Santos purchased the property within the past year. It was a valid arms length transaction. He purchased the property for \$68,000. The sale was not used by the Assessor's Office as a valid sale and he does not understand why. He filled out the Assessor's questionnaire stating it was an arms length transaction. He feels the value is too high. It is currently rented. There is a partial dirt floor in the basement. The house has no major issues; it does need some cosmetic work only.

17 River Crest Drive

This property has 2 bedrooms and 4 rooms total. It has a combined living room dining room; a great room floor plan. It has no dormer and a one car garage. The previous revaluation the house was listed as an unfinished upper story; that is not the case. It was always had a finished upper story; that is not a change. There is a cathedral entrance to the house. They compared their home to #14 across the street.

Subak Edward & Andino Marta – 43 Clipper Point Road

The owners were represented by Melinda Carlisle. This property was on the market in 2011 for \$1,000,000. There was no interest and no showings. In March to July of 2012 it was listed again for \$900,000; they had one showing. From July to December of 2012 they had four showings and one offer. They had a valid sales contract in an arms length transaction for \$650,000. This sale fell through because the buyer could not sell their condo. This property has had good exposure and active marketing with no interest. She compared their property to 149 Whitehall Avenue and 1225 Pequot Trail.

Smith Jeffrey & Judith – 33 Wilbur Road

They compared their property to the neighbors on either side of their property. The average reduction was 44%; his reduction was 18%. He compared the land reductions and the cost per square foot on the buildings. The Right of Way is 9% of his land and 10% is wet.

Sundman, Robert – 9 & 13 Meadow Avenue

Mr. Sundman stated he cannot sell his house even if he wanted. The property card says severe flooding. He has had many claims to FEMA that they have paid. The Town has not fixed the water problem in violation of state statutes. The Town's failure to fix the underground pipe problem is the cause of the water problem. He showed pictures of the flooding. The vacant lot was purchased from the other

owners of the property for \$8,679. It also floods. He purchased the property to stop the other owners from storing boats and other unsightly things on the property.

Vail Donald & Sally – 64 Washington Street

Mr. Vail and Greg Erb appeared before the Board. This property is a mixed use dentist office. It has 1,000 square feet of a home occupation. The house needs updating. It has 1 ½ baths and a dated kitchen. They showed pictures of the kitchen. This is a unique property not of excellent quality. They submitted an appraisal done for tax purposes as of the assessment date.

White, John & Eve – 109 Asher Avenue

Mr. White submitted two appraisals that were done when he was refinancing the property. He compared his property to two recent sales; 82 and 123 Asher Avenue. These sales were at 77-85 percent of the values set by the Town.

TRM Copy Centers and Goran Subotic did not appear for their hearings.

The minutes for the April 4, 2013 meeting were accepted as read.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betty Richards
Secretary